

PRESS RELEASE

GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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**PSC Approves Rate Center Consolidation Plan To Conserve
Metro Atlanta Telephone Numbers**

ATLANTA—The Georgia Public Service Commission (also referred to as “PSC” and “Commission”) voted unanimously today to approve a rate center consolidation plan for the Metropolitan Atlanta local calling area. The adoption of a comprehensive rate center consolidation plan is one measure taken by the PSC that is expected to stem the demand for telephone numbers by new local telephone companies and reduce the number of new area codes needed to serve the ever-growing number of Atlanta area residents.

Under the terms of the plan approved by the PSC, BellSouth will consolidate 27 of its existing rate centers into three, thereby reducing the total number of rate centers in this area from 59 to 35. With fewer rate centers, the lives of area codes will be extended and the shortage of available number resources will be lessened. BellSouth originally filed its plan for rate center consolidation in Metro Atlanta on July 15, 1999. One month later, the PSC directed that the plan be reviewed at a series of workshops, which were attended by BellSouth, other companies in the telecommunications industry and the Emergency 911 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) Administrators. Together, the workshops' participants resolved the many technical issues raised by the plan and arrived at a consensus for rate center consolidation that will provide for a reduction in the existing number of BellSouth rate centers.

“The Commission is keenly interested in implementing a Rate Center Consolidation Plan that will not only conserve telephone numbers but will also function efficiently and allow for the uninterrupted operation of the Emergency 911 System,” commented Commissioner David Burgess. “The plan we approved today should accomplish these goals and serve as a model for rate center consolidation in other areas throughout Georgia and in other states as well.”

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