



Contact: Stan Wise  
Phone 404-657-4574  
Fax 404-657-3020

## Georgia Public Service Commission

244 Washington St., S.W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334  
Phone: 404-656-4501  
Toll free: 800-282-5813

### From the Office of Commissioner Stan Wise News Release

#### **Commissioner Stan Wise Initiates Georgia Public Service Commission Probe of IDT America for Possible Extended Area Service Billing Violations**

Atlanta, October 5, 2004 – Commissioner Stan Wise announced today that he has directed the Georgia Public Service Commission (Commission) staff to begin an investigation of IDT America, Corporation regarding the billing of Extended Area Service (EAS) calls in Georgia.

During the staff's preliminary investigation of a consumer complaint forwarded to the Commission by State Representative DuBose Porter (D-Dublin), staff has uncovered evidence that the company may be incorrectly billing consumers for long distance charges for calls that should have been billed as local calls.

Commissioner Wise stated, "The Commission established Rules for the implementation of House Bill 888 in 1998 which approved certain 22-Mile EAS Routes. It is the expectation of this Commission that all telecommunication companies comply with the Order which specifically addresses interexchange carrier traffic associated with interLATA routes. The issue raised by this one complaint is troublesome in that this investigation may lead to other consumers who have also been incorrectly billed for local calls." Representative Porter stated, "My concern is the Commission staff's preliminary investigation appears to indicate a disregard for customers in our area and I look forward to the findings of their investigation into IDT's practices."

IDT America Corporation is headquartered in Newark, NJ serving as a provider of wholesale and retail telecommunications services, worldwide.

The Staff is now conducting a formal investigation including the issuance of a Data Request to IDT America to determine the scope of the problem. If the company is found to be in violation of the Commission order, it would be required to refund any charges that have been billed in error and could face further penalties up to and including the revocation of their Certificate to operate in the state of Georgia.

The Commission staff's investigation should be complete and a recommendation made to the full Commission for its consideration by late November.

Commissioner Wise is serving in his second six-year term on the Commission having been re-elected in November 2000.

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