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**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
UTILITIES COMMISSION
RALEIGH**

News Release

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**NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION AWAITS INDUSTRY'S OVERLAY
IMPLEMENTATION REPORT FOR THE 919/984 AREA CODES**

On March 28, 2001, NeuStar, as the North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA), announced that 984 will be the new area code to be implemented in North Carolina as an "overlay" in the 919 area code. Under the overlay relief method, the 919 geographic area will have two area codes. All existing customers will continue to have the 919 area code, but new telephone numbers will ultimately be assigned the new 984 area code. Under Federal Communication Commission requirements, in areas with two area codes, all local calls must be dialed with ten digits. The cost of local calls will not be affected.

The NCUC's goal and intent is to prolong the life of the 919 area code by extensive number conservation measures, specifically thousands-block number pooling, which will conserve numbers. Thereby, the Commission intends to postpone for as long as possible the use of the new 984 overlay area code as well as mandatory 10-digit local dialing. The Commission will issue an order in the near future addressing thousands-block number pooling for the 919 area code.

The process of adding a new area code began with NANPA's determination that the 919 area code was in "jeopardy," meaning that available telephone numbers would exhaust unless actions were taken. The advent of new technologies and more competitors in the marketplace is the driving force behind the need for a new area code.

Coupled with the overlay Order, the NCUC will implement vigorous number conservation and reclamation efforts directed to the various carriers, so as to stave off as long as feasible the advent of mandatory ten-digit local dialing. The NCUC will require extensive educational efforts regarding the new area code and the overlay for the general population. The alarm industry has been signaled out for particular attention. Earlier this year, concerns about the readiness of the alarm industry hindered planning and implementation of the overlay in the 704 area code.

The schedule for full implementation of the overlay in the 919 area code is yet to be determined by the Commission. The industry will meet on April 5, 2001 to develop an Implementation Report which will also recommend a schedule for the 984 NPA overlay. The 984 area code will be the second overlay area code approved by the North Carolina Utilities Commission for North Carolina. In 1999, the NCUC authorized an overlay for area code 704, for which mandatory 10-digit local dialing became effective March 15, 2001.

For more detailed information about area code overlays and area code relief in general or to see the text of the Commission's Order, you may visit the NCUC's website at www.ncuc.commerce.state.nc.us.