

NEW MEXICO PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION

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NMPRC Makes Decision on Area Code Area B to Keep 505; Area A gets 575

New Code to be in effect by Early 2009

Santa Fe—The New Mexico Public Regulation Commission has voted to have Area B—a roughly five county area that includes Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Gallup, Farmington, Las Vegas, Espanola and most of the Navajo Nation—to retain the 505 area code and Area A, which includes the southern and eastern portions of the state—including Las Cruces, Alamogordo, Roswell, Silver City, Deming Clovis, Raton and Taos—to get the new 575 area code.

Commissioners last week reached a consensus that the geographic split is the preferred alternative for adding another area code for New Mexico. Today, a majority of the Commission adopted the order with Area B retaining the 505 area code and Area A getting the new 575 area code. PRC Chairman Ben R. Lujan (Dist. 3 Nambé), Vice-chairman Jason Marks (Dist. 1 Albuquerque), and Commissioner Lynda Lovejoy (Dist. 4 Crownpoint) voted in favor of Area B retaining the 505 area code. Commissioners David King (Dist. 2, Alamogordo) and E. Shirley Baca (Dist. 5, Las Cruces) maintained their support of the Area A retaining the 505 area code.

Chairman Lujan said the decision of which area was to get the new 575 area code and which would retain the 505 area code was very difficult for him, because District 3 represents communities that are within both Area B and Area A. “I grew up in a rural area and represent rural and metropolitan areas,” Chairman Lujan said. “This has been an extremely difficult decision because Commission District 3 is split the most, and I have had to weigh the impact of each alternative.”

Vice-chairman Marks also said his decision was based on the consideration of creating the lowest impact on the largest number of people, which he said would occur with the Area A getting the 575 area code. Com. Baca and Com. King based their choices for Area A to have the 505 area code on the number of constituent requests within their district.

Commissioners conducted 16 public hearings throughout the state where they received comments from residents and business people, and received more than 1,300 comments through the special PRC www.nm575.info website and by telephone. An overwhelming majority of comments from people throughout the state favored the geographic split.

The Commission anticipates implementation of the new area code will take up to 27 months.

Details about the implementation schedule will be worked out when the Commission meets with representatives of the telecommunication companies.