

THE STATE CORPORATION COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF KANSAS

Before Commissioners:                    Brian J. Moline, Chair  
   Robert E. Krehbiel  
   Michael C. Moffet

In the Matter of the Joint Application of Rural                    )  
Telephone Service Company, Inc. (RuralTel)                    )  
and Gorham Telephone Company, Inc.                    )                    Docket No. 06-GRHT-1095-COC  
(Gorham) for Permission of RuralTel to Cease                    )  
Operating as a Telephone Public Utility in                    )  
Two Kansas Exchanges it is Acquiring from                    )  
United and to Grant Gorham a Certificate of                    )  
Public Convenience for the Same Two                    )  
Exchanges, and for Authority to Transfer                    )  
Property, Plant and Equipment of RuralTel                    )  
Located in the Two Exchanges to Gorham and                    )  
Complete all Matters Incident to the Transfer.                    )

**PROTECTIVE ORDER**

The above matter comes before the State Corporation Commission of the State of Kansas (Commission). Being fully advised of all matters of record, the Commission finds:

1.        K.S.A. 66-1220a and K.A.R. 82-1-221a set forth requirements for the designation and treatment of information designated as confidential in Commission proceedings. The Commission finds that it is appropriate to issue this Protective Order to establish further procedures relating to confidential data and information. Before stating these procedures, the Commission notes that the parties have agreed to conduct discovery using an on-line Internet service. The Commission recognizes that the procedures set forth below may need to be adapted to accommodate such electronic discovery, but the Commission anticipates this will occur by agreement of the parties, unless the Commission is asked to decide an issue.

2.        K.S.A. 66-1220a limits disclosure of trade secrets or confidential commercial information of regulated entities. Under K.S.A. 66-1220a(a)(4), the Commission is to consider alternatives to disclosure that will serve the public interest and protect the regulated entity. This

Protective Order provides an interim procedure under K.S.A. 66-1220a(a)(4) to facilitate the prompt and orderly conduct of this case. This Protective Order will govern the treatment and handling of confidential information until further order of the Commission.

3. A party may designate as confidential any information that it believes, in good faith, to be a trade secret or other confidential commercial information. *The party designating the information as confidential must provide a written statement of the specific grounds for the designation at the time the designation is made.* K.A.R. 82-1-221a(a)(5). The party claiming confidentiality has the burden of proving the confidential status of the information. Designating information as confidential does not establish that the information will not be subject to disclosure after review by the Commission. See K.S.A. 66-1220a.

4. This Protective Order applies to all parties in this proceeding, unless specifically stated otherwise. The provisions of the Protective Order apply to Staff, except that Staff is not required to sign Nondisclosure Certificates or view voluminous materials on site, as discussed in Paragraph 6, and is not required to return or destroy confidential information upon request at the conclusion of a proceeding, as referenced in Paragraph 12. Outside experts and consultants used by Staff shall have access to information and voluminous materials on the same basis as Staff, except that outside Staff experts and consultants are required to read this Protective Order and to sign Nondisclosure Certificates as contained in Appendix A.

5. The following definitions shall apply:

INFORMATION: Information refers to all documents, data, including electronic data, studies, and other materials furnished pursuant to requests for information or other modes of discovery, or any other documents or information which are otherwise a part of the Commission record.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION: Confidential information refers to information which, if disclosed, would likely result in harm to a party's economic or competitive interest or which would result in harm to the public interest generally and

which is not otherwise available from public sources. Confidential information may include but is not limited to: (1) material or documents that contain information relating directly to specific customers; (2) employee-sensitive information; (3) marketing analyses or other market-specific information relating to services offered in competition with others; (4) reports, work papers or other documentation related to work produced by internal or external auditors or consultants; (5) strategies employed, to be employed, or under consideration; (6) contract negotiations; and (7) information concerning trade secrets, as well as private technical, financial and business information.

6. A party designating information as confidential shall make the confidential information available to parties seeking access or discovery under the restrictions in this Protective Order if such disclosure is not otherwise privileged or objectionable on other evidentiary grounds. Disclosure of confidential information shall be made to attorneys of record and to authorized representatives, including outside experts, who are consulting with parties or intend to file testimony in this proceeding. Attorneys or authorized representatives seeking access to confidential information shall first read this Protective Order and sign a Nondisclosure Certificate as provided in Appendix A. In cases in which a utility's rates are being reviewed, attorneys and representatives of the utility whose rates are being reviewed are not required to sign Nondisclosure Certificates in order to receive copies of documents containing the utility's own confidential information. The Nondisclosure Certificate shall contain the signatory's name, permanent address, title or position, date signed, and an affirmation that the signer is acting on behalf of a party to this proceeding. The Nondisclosure Certificate shall be filed in the docket. The party claiming confidentiality shall provide legible copies of the confidential information to requesting parties by serving one copy upon counsel for the requesting party. The requesting party may copy the confidential information and make it available to its authorized representatives who have signed Nondisclosure Certificates. If a response to a discovery request requires the duplication of voluminous material or the material is not easily copied because of its binding or size, the furnishing party may require that the voluminous material be reviewed on its

own premises. If duplication of voluminous material can be accomplished without undue burden on the party disclosing the information, the voluminous material may be copied at the expense of the requesting party. Voluminous material shall include documents or materials comprised of five-hundred pages or more.

7. A party may designate prefiled testimony and exhibits as confidential pursuant to this Protective Order. ***The specific grounds for the confidential designation shall be stated in writing at the time the designation is made or the testimony filed.*** Any party obtaining confidential information may use or refer to such information in prefiled or oral testimony provided that the confidentiality is maintained, unless otherwise ordered by the Commission.

8. If information to be disclosed in response to a data request contains confidential information designated by another party in this docket, the furnishing party shall maintain the confidential status by marking the information as confidential and only providing responses to parties which have signed Nondisclosure Certificates. If information that a party intends to use in this proceeding or that would be disclosed in response to a data request contains confidential information obtained from a source outside of this proceeding, the party intending to use or provide the confidential information must notify the original source which claimed confidential status to allow that entity to decide whether to claim confidentiality in this proceeding.

9. When pleadings, prefiled testimony or exhibits include confidential information, parties are to follow these procedures:

- a. File seven copies of the complete document, including all confidential information. The cover is to clearly state "CONFIDENTIAL VERSION." Confidential pages shall be stamped "CONFIDENTIAL" and the specific confidential information shall be identified by being underlined.

- b. File one copy with the confidential portions redacted, for use as a public document. The cover is to clearly state "PUBLIC VERSION."
- c. File one copy of the pages which contain confidential information in a separate envelope marked "CONFIDENTIAL." This filing will be maintained in the docket room file under seal. If there are multiple pages with confidential information and it is impracticable to separate the pages with the confidential information, the party may file instead one copy of the entire document which is stamped "CONFIDENTIAL."

10. Confidential testimony may be offered or subject to cross-examination at hearings. Parties have the right to object to the admissibility of confidential information on standard evidentiary grounds such as relevance. Confidential information that is received into evidence will be kept under seal. Confidential information shall be discussed only after the hearing is closed to all persons except the Commission, its Staff, hearing examiners, court reporters, attorneys of record and individuals to whom the designated information is available under the terms of this Protective Order. Parties shall make every effort at hearings to ask and answer questions in such a way as to preserve the confidentiality of the information without the need to close the hearing. The transcript of live testimony or oral argument disclosing confidential information shall be kept under seal and copies provided only to persons entitled to access to confidential information. Neither the parties nor their attorneys shall disclose or provide copies of the contents of such transcripts to anyone other than those who may have access to the designated information under the terms of this Protective Order.

11. If a party disagrees with a claim that information is confidential or should not be disclosed, the parties shall first attempt to resolve the dispute on an informal basis. If the parties

cannot resolve the dispute informally, the party contesting the confidential treatment may file a motion with the Commission. Commission Staff should also be prepared to challenge a confidential designation when Staff believes that information does not meet the definition of confidential information. When a dispute concerning confidentiality is brought before the Commission, the Commission will review the matter to determine (1) if the party claiming confidentiality has met its burden of establishing that the confidential designation is proper, and (2) whether disclosure is warranted under K.S.A. 66-1220a. The contested information shall not be disclosed pending the Commission's ruling.

12. All persons who are afforded access to confidential information under the terms of this Protective Order shall neither use nor disclose such information for purposes of business or competition or any other purpose other than the purpose of preparation for and litigation of this proceeding. During the course of this proceeding, parties shall keep confidential information secure in accordance with the purposes and intent of this Protective Order. At the conclusion of this proceeding, including judicial review, a party which claimed that information was confidential may require that other persons in possession of its confidential information return or destroy all such confidential information and all notes, tapes, documents, and any other medium containing, summarizing, or otherwise embodying such confidential information. If the party claiming confidentiality requests destruction, the person destroying the information shall certify its destruction. Counsel shall be entitled to retain memoranda or pleadings including or embodying confidential information to the extent reasonably necessary to preserve a file on this proceeding.

**IT IS, THEREFORE, BY THE COMMISSION ORDERED THAT:**

(A) This Protective Order shall govern the treatment and handling of confidential information in this docket.

(B) A party may file a petition for reconsideration of this Order within 15 days of the date this Order is issued. If service is by mail, three additional days may be added to the 15-day time limit to petition for reconsideration. K.S.A. 66-118b; K.S.A. 2005 Supp. 77-529(a)(1).

(C) The Commission retains jurisdiction over the subject matter and parties for the purpose of entering such further orders as it may deem necessary.

**BY THE COMMISSION IT IS SO ORDERED.**

Moline, Chr.; Krehbiel; Comm.; Moffet, Comm.

Dated:                     MAY 31 2006                    

**ORDER MAILED**

**MAY 31 2006**

 Executive  
Director

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Susan K. Duffy  
Executive Director

BL:jtg

**NONDISCLOSURE CERTIFICATE**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have been presented with a copy of the Protective Order issued in Docket No. 06-GRHT-1095-COC.

I have requested review of confidential information produced in Docket No. 06-GRHT-1095-COC on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_.

I hereby certify that I have read the above-mentioned Protective Order and agree to abide by its terms and conditions.

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2006.

Signature and Title \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Party \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_