

From: Ruth Ann Baker <ratbaker@juno.com>
To: <psccal@state.ut.us>
Date: Thu, Mar 30, 2000 1:04 PM
Subject: Third Utah Area Code Questions

Thursday, March 30, 2000

To PSC Chariman Stephen Mecham:

I take issue with your comment reported in the Deseret News Monday, March 27th, and the headline for the Deseret News article about the third area code for Utah on Wednesday, March 15th. Both of these make it sound like the average phone user is not interested. That is far from the truth. Taking input primarily at public meetings where information is only presented and those attending have a limited opportunity to speak individually is a poor way to use as your primary source of how we feel. Both articles say nothing at all about businessmen. From this I gather you have somehow given them information in a different manner. When school boundary changes were necessary, the meetings were held IN the area where those lived who would be affected. When additional meetings were necessary, they were scheduled in new locations in order to reach new individuals.

Sure the four meetings were held in different locations. BUT you ignored central Davis County in setting these up. Why was Bountiful chosen instead of a place in Kaysville or Layton? The commission may not have wanted to face the terrific travel congestion on I-15 between Bountiful and the center part of the county. Layton has a population as large or larger than Bountiful and Bountiful access to a Salt Lake location is not difficult.

ALSO you did not consider people who cannot drive at night AND for whom UTA bus service would not work in the evenings to reach locations of the meetings. The major routes in our county do not go close to many facilities without two transfers being needed, some of which would make travel time one way from home to the meeting over two hours. In order for a diabetic person to eat at the proper time plus allow four hours travel and wait time, without even including a lengthy meeting is impossible.

Why couldn't some basic details about the two options have been included in the paper before the meetings, in our regular monthly phone bills, or in city newsletters. This is a major lifestyle change that warrants reaching more people more adequately with more details. And what about those who never read a paper?

I fear the commission has already made up their mind for the overlay code and are holding the meetings as a formality. Has the commission fully considered how many regular citizens will be adversely affected by the overlay choice?

Selecting the overlay code will penalize those who can least afford it:

1. newlyweds
2. college students
3. elderly who move to smaller homes
4. new small businesses

Handwritten notes: "Ruth Ann Baker" and "CRW 4/3" with a signature.

5. low-income renters who have to move because their rent has been raised higher than they can afford.

It seems unfair to require a family who finds a need for a second phone line in their home to make the second one long distance. If they wish to have it, that is okay, but they should not be required to have it be long distance.

The overlay code will also penalize someone new who moves into the state. Shouldn't we try to create a favorable situation for newcomers to the state?

Kaysville residents currently have the highest basic phone rate in the state I understand because we are able to call both Salt Lake and Ogden without it being long distance. Under the two proposed plans, overlay and geographic, what will happen (1) to our basic rate cost, will it be lowered (2) to the size of the geographic area we can call without it being long distance. I for one would not mind not being able to call both Ogden and Salt Lake without it being long distance, but I feel we still should be able to call one of them. If our ability to call without long distance charges is cut back, then I would expect our basic rate to be lowered accordingly.

The articles also make it sound to me like the businessmen are swaying the commission's thinking. Sure they would have to print new letterhead and forms. BUT they knew when the 435 area code went into effect that a third code would come quite soon. It would have been a good business practice, when the 435 change was made and until now, not to print too much to have on hand since they already had this information. All the businesses affected by the 435 change had to reprint or adjust their materials. It only seems fair to expect the same at this time from a portion of the current 801 area code businessmen. They should not be allowed to stay 801 just solely so this would not be needed. PLEASE DO NOT SELECT THE OVERLAY CHOICE just to cave in to the current businessmen.

Is it not possible to divide Salt Lake County geographically between the current and the new area code so the total numbers in each would work. This seems far better than forcing all newcomers to a neighborhood to be long distance from their neighbors. In effect, for those with limited income, I fear the overlay choice would over the long run tend to break up the close knit relationships that can develop in a neighborhood. I do realize that putting all of Salt Lake City or Salt Lake County on one area code is not possible. Could you not, for example, put downtown Salt Lake City and the University of Utah in one area code, and all the others cities in Salt Lake County in a different area code. It is known where the numbers of phone connections are and this one time change should not be that difficult. It may require a little extra work initially but I feel the outcome would be better.

Approving the overlay option appears to be a cop-out. Sure it causes less work initially, BUT are the problems it creates worth it?

This note is to encourage the commission to consider the average residential phone customer in their choice and approve the geographical method when the new third area code is put into effect.

Thank you.

Ruth Ann Baker