



NEWS RELEASE

CenturyTel Calls for Suspension and Review of LNP Order

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MONROE, La.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Nov. 21, 2003--CenturyTel, Inc. (NYSE: CTL) has requested that the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia delay implementation of the wireline-to-wireless local number portability (LNP) Order released by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) November 10, 2003. Yesterday the Commission denied CenturyTel's request to stay implementation of the Order.

"We understand the FCC's desire to provide consumer choice but the LNP Order raises fundamental network, operational and cost issues that cannot be ignored in a rush to implement portability for portability's sake," Glen F. Post, III, CenturyTel chairman and CEO, said. "We cannot stand quietly by in the face of an Order that could significantly increase customers' rates in the small and mid-size communities served by companies like CenturyTel."

The Order did not address important issues such as the availability of dependable E-911 service for those customers who choose to port their wireline number to wireless and deferred implementation of fully reciprocal wireless-to-wireline portability.

"It is difficult to understand the Commission's rush to require local number portability while many open issues remain and without requiring reciprocal wireless-to-wireline portability," Post said. "Some consumers who have previously chosen a wireless-only option might choose to port their wireless number back to the more reliable wireline network. Unfortunately, the Order enables such porting only in limited circumstances."

The Order requires LNP implementation in certain markets by November 24, 2003. Due to the short notice and many unanswered technical questions, CenturyTel is unable to fully implement the Order by that date in the 15-20 percent of its access lines requiring early implementation. The company has filed waivers with state commissions to temporarily suspend the implementation of the Order in those markets.



CenturyTel, Inc. provides communications services including local, long distance, Internet access and data services to more than 3 million customers in 22 states. The company, headquartered in Monroe, Louisiana, is publicly traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol CTL, and is included in the S&P 500 Index. CenturyTel is the 8th largest local exchange telephone company, based on access lines, in the United States. Visit CenturyTel at www.centurytel.com.

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