



## Telecom Decision CRTC 2007-42

Ottawa, 14 June 2007

### Code relief for area codes 403 and 780 – Alberta

Reference: 8698-C12-200700337 and 8698-C12-200410879

*In this Decision, the Commission makes determinations on a code relief solution for area codes 403 and 780 in Alberta. In this regard, the Commission directs that*

- *the relief be provided through the implementation of a distributed overlay of a single new area code on area codes 403 and 780; and*
- *the introduction of mandatory 10-digit local dialing in area codes 403 and 780 be coordinated with the introduction of 10-digit local dialing in British Columbia.*

### Background

1. In Alberta, there are two area codes in use: 403 and 780. Area code 403 consists of 182 exchanges located in the southern part of Alberta, including Calgary, Red Deer, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Banff, and High River. Area code 780 consists of 195 exchanges located in the northern part of Alberta, including Edmonton, Bonnyville, Sherwood Park, Drayton Valley, and St. Albert.
2. In 2004, the Numbering Resource Utilization Forecast results showed that area codes 403 and 780 were expected to exhaust in September 2009 and November 2011 respectively. Since then, the Canadian Numbering Administrator (CNA) has conducted semi-annual Relief Numbering Resource Utilization Forecasts to monitor the pending exhaust dates. The results from the January 2007 Numbering Resource Utilization Forecasts, published 27 March 2007, show that area codes 403 and 780 are now expected to exhaust in March 2009 and October 2009 respectively. The advancement of the exhaust dates have put these area codes into a jeopardy condition, which requires special code conservation procedures<sup>1</sup> to be used until code relief measures can be implemented.
3. In *Establishment of two new CISC ad hoc committees for area code relief planning in Alberta area codes 403 and 780*, Telecom Public Notice CRTC 2004-5, 7 October 2004 (Public Notice 2004-5), the Commission established two CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee ad hoc relief planning committees (RPCs) for the purpose of developing, examining, and making recommendations regarding the various relief options available for area codes 403 and 780.
4. On 5 October 2006, the two RPCs agreed to merge and to produce a single initial relief planning document for both area codes.

<sup>1</sup> The special code conservation measures are set out in section 8.3 of the Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guidelines as approved by the Commission. These guidelines can be found at: <http://www.crtc.gc.ca/public/cisc/n-docs/NPAGuidelines.doc>

5. The RPC filed its Planning Document, dated 8 November 2006, for Commission approval.
6. The Commission issued *Relief planning for numbering plan areas 403 and 780 in Alberta*, Telecom Public Notice CRTC 2007-1, 11 January 2007, in which it invited comments on the various options examined and the recommendations made by the RPC in its Planning Document.

### **Process**

7. Parties to Public Notice 2004-5 were made parties to this proceeding.
8. TELUS Communications Company (TCC) and Rogers Communications Inc. (RCI) filed submissions dated 8 February 2007. In addition, one comment was submitted by a member of the public.

### **The RPC's recommendations**

9. The RPC evaluated 16 relief options in its Planning Document. The RPC recommended that relief for area codes 403 and 780 be provided by a distributed overlay of a single new area code on both area codes 403 and 780.<sup>2</sup>
10. The RPC also made the following recommendations:
  - a) that mandatory 10-digit local dialing in Alberta be introduced coincident with the introduction of 10-digit local dialing for area code 250 in British Columbia.<sup>3</sup> The RPC submitted that aligning the introduction of 10-digit local dialing in British Columbia and Alberta would permit the development of a single joint British Columbia/Alberta customer education and network implementation plan, which would reduce costs and facilitate increased customer awareness;
  - b) that the jeopardy conditions in area codes 403 and 780 be revoked 60 days prior to relief implementation;
  - c) that any 7-digit local dialing that currently exists from Saskatchewan in the Lloydminster and Marshall exchanges into Alberta be allowed to continue after area code 780 relief while the customers living in the Alberta portion of this area will be required to use 10-digit dialing like the customers in the rest of Alberta;
  - d) that area codes 587 and 825 be reserved as the most suitable area codes for the current and next relief in Alberta.

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<sup>2</sup> Joint Plan 3a in the Planning Document

<sup>3</sup> Area code 250 is currently undergoing code relief planning.

## **Positions of parties**

11. Both TCC and RCI supported the RPC's findings and recommendations.
12. The member of the public suggested using two new area codes, keeping Calgary and Edmonton under separate area codes.

## **Commission's analysis and determinations**

13. The Commission considers that the RPC Planning Document and the comments by interested parties require the Commission to address the following issues:
  - A. The relief method and the timing of its implementation;
  - B. Retention of 7-digit local dialing for Lloydminster and Marshall areas;
  - C. The timing of the end of the jeopardy condition;
  - D. The reservation of area codes 587 and 825; and
  - E. The use of alternative measures for the consumer awareness program during permissive dialing period.

### *A. The relief method and the timing of its implementation*

14. The Commission notes that the main objectives for relief planning activities, as set out in the Commission-approved Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guidelines, are to provide relief that
  - will last for at least an eight-year period;
  - does not favour or disadvantage one group of carriers or users over another;
  - strikes a reasonable balance between economic, technical, and social impacts of implementation; and
  - makes the most effective and efficient use of Central Office (CO) codes serving a given area.
15. The Commission notes that the RPC recommended a distributed overlay of a single new area code on area codes 403 and 780. The RPC also requested that the timing of the introduction of 10-digit local dialing be coordinated with the introduction of 10-digit local dialing in British Columbia. The Commission also notes that the RPC stated that coordinating this activity would permit a common consumer awareness plan and network implementation plan to be used for both provinces.

16. The Commission notes that both TCC and RCI supported the RPC's findings and recommendations. The Commission further notes that although the member of the public suggested using two new area codes, there was no objection to an overlay approach where 10-digit local dialing becomes mandatory.
17. The Commission considers that relief options that would either require customers to take telephone number changes or increase the number of area codes required within the next 20 years are not the best solutions.
18. The Commission considers that the use of a single area code overlay on both area codes 403 and 780 is appropriate since it does not require customers to take number changes, preserves the identities of area codes 403 and 780, and simplifies future relief.
19. Accordingly, the Commission approves the relief measure proposed by the RPC, namely that a single area code be distributed over both area codes 403 and 780 effective 12 September 2008.
20. The Commission further considers that setting a common timeframe for the introduction of 10-digit local dialing in both Alberta and British Columbia will permit the use of common consumer awareness and network implementation plans, which will result in more efficient use of resources and less customer confusion. Accordingly, the Commission directs that the introduction of mandatory 10-digit local dialing in area codes 403 and 780 be coordinated with the area code relief measures for British Columbia as approved by the Commission.
21. The Commission notes that the permissive dialing period for introducing mandatory 10-digit local dialing has traditionally been four months. The Commission also notes that in a final report on the 2006 relief measures in southern Ontario and Quebec, the RPC suggested that a shorter two-to-three month permissive dialing period should be considered in the future. The Commission considers that given the coordination of relief activities between Alberta and British Columbia and the imminent exhaust situation within Alberta, it is appropriate to use a permissive dialing period of slightly less than three months for area codes 403 and 780.
22. With respect to the dates for area codes 403 and 780 relief, the Commission determines the following:
  - a) the introduction of permissive 10-digit local dialing should commence 23 June 2008, and carriers are permitted to phase-in this change from that date until 27 June 2008; and
  - b) the requirement for mandatory 10-digit local dialing should commence 8 September 2008, and carriers are permitted to phase-in this change from that date until 12 September 2008.

*B. Retention of 7-digit local dialing for Lloydminster and Marshall areas*

23. The RPC requested that any 7-digit local dialing that currently exists from Lloydminster and Marshall in area code 306 (Saskatchewan) into the same local calling area in area code 780 (Alberta) be allowed to continue after area code 780 relief.

24. The Commission notes that Lloydminster straddles the Alberta-Saskatchewan border. The Commission also notes that retaining 7-digit local dialing from the Lloydminster/Marshall Saskatchewan area to the Lloydminster Alberta area would result in 10 CO codes in area code 306 becoming unassignable in the Lloydminster Saskatchewan area but remaining assignable elsewhere in area code 306.
25. The Commission considers that the benefits of retaining 7-digit local dialing in the Saskatchewan portion of the Lloydminster Saskatchewan area are as follows:
  - those customers in Saskatchewan would not have a mix of 7- and 10-digit local dialing; and
  - customers and telecommunication service providers (TSPs) in Saskatchewan would not need to make changes in their equipment or networks to accommodate 10-digit dialing for some of their local calling.
26. The Commission determines that retaining 7-digit dialing in the Lloydminster/Marshall area in Saskatchewan will result in the least confusion and disruption to those customers on the Saskatchewan side of the border. Accordingly, the Commission approves this proposal.

*C. The timing of the end of the jeopardy condition*

27. The Commission notes that a jeopardy condition was declared for area code 403 in October 2006 and for area code 780 in April 2007. The Commission also notes that a jeopardy condition normally ends on the date that relief is implemented.
28. The Commission notes that the RPC recommended that the jeopardy condition in area codes 403 and 780 be revoked 60 days prior to relief implementation.
29. The Commission further notes that, in accordance with the Canadian Central Office Code Assignment Guidelines, the minimum period to place a new CO code in service from the date that it is requested from the CNA is 66 days. The Commission considers that if the jeopardy condition were revoked 60 days prior to relief implementation in area codes 403 and 780, CO codes requested and assigned in advance could be placed into service 6 days after the relief date, thereby permitting faster implementation of the relief measures.
30. Accordingly, the Commission determines that the current jeopardy conditions for area codes 403 and 780 will end 60 days prior to the commencement of mandatory 10-digit local dialing.

*D. The reservation of area codes 587 and 825*

31. The Commission notes that the RPC requested that area codes 587 and 825 be reserved for future assignment in Alberta.

32. The Commission further notes that, as noted by the RPC, area codes 587 and 825 are the only area codes on the list of projected future Canadian Geographic Numbering Planning Areas that have not already been assigned as CO codes in area codes 403 and 780.
33. The Commission considers it a good assignment practice to use an area code that has not been used as a CO code within the area to be served or in areas adjacent to it, as this reduces customer dialing confusion. The Commission, therefore, considers it appropriate to reserve area codes 587 and 825 for present and future area code relief in Alberta.
34. The Commission directs the CNA to reserve area codes 587 and 825 for present and future area code relief in Alberta.

*E. The use of alternative measures for the consumer awareness program during permissive dialing period*

35. The Commission notes that during the permissive dialing period leading to mandatory 10-digit local dialing, TSPs are to route calls to a brief recorded message before the calls are completed to educate subscribers about the pending change to mandatory 10-digit local dialing. The Commission considers, however, that some small TSPs may not be able to support a recorded announcement with automatic call completion due to network limitations.
36. The Commission notes that while this issue was not raised by the RPC, this situation did arise during the relief implementation of 10-digit local dialing and new area codes in southern Ontario and Quebec in 2006. The Commission also notes that in *Relief implementation plans for area codes 450, 514, 519, 613 and 819*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2006-26, 11 May 2006 (Decision 2006-26), it permitted certain TSPs that had network limitations to use alternative measures to notify customers of the upcoming change to 10-digit local dialing.
37. The Commission considers it appropriate to permit those small TSPs in Alberta that have such network limitations to use similar methods to those previously approved by the Commission in Decision 2006-26.
38. Accordingly, the Commission directs those small TSPs in Alberta that cannot complete calls after a recorded announcement due to technical network limitations to take the following alternative measures during the permissive dialing period for area codes 403 and 780:
  - a) monthly bill inserts are to be sent in July 2008 and August 2008;
  - b) two notices are to be placed in local newspapers, one in August 2008 and the other in September 2008, before the commencement of mandatory 10-digit local dialing;
  - c) each affected customer is to be sent a personal letter, to be received 10 days prior to the commencement of mandatory 10-digit local dialing;

- d) information is to be placed on the TSPs' websites in a prominent, highly visible location for the minimum period of July 2008 to the end of September 2008 inclusive; and
- e) the text to be included in the bill inserts and personal letters is to be filed with the Commission for its information at least 30 days prior to the bill inserts or letters being sent.

Secretary General

*This document is available in alternative format upon request, and may also be examined in PDF format or in HTML at the following Internet site: <http://www.crtc.gc.ca>*