**PENNSYLVANIA**

# **PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

## Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265

Public Meeting held August 15, 2013

Commissioners Present:

Robert F. Powelson, Chairman

John F. Coleman, Jr., Vice Chairman

Wayne E. Gardner

James H. Cawley

Pamela A. Witmer

Pennsylvania Telecommunications Relay M-00900239

Service Advisory Board

**OPINION AND ORDER**

**BY THE COMMISSION:**

The Pennsylvania Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) is a communications service that offers persons who are hearing, deaf, and hearing or speech impaired three ways to connect to the service using various means: Traditional Telephone Relay, Video Relay and Internet Relay. Users who access TRS by telephone simply dial 7-1-1 to connect to a skillfully-trained Communications Assistant, or CA, who follows a strict code of ethics and confidentiality for telephone TRS communications. The CA then relays messages to the other person. TRS is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

By Order entered May 29, 1990, the Commission established the Telecommunications Relay Service Advisory Board (Board) for the purpose of reviewing the success of TRS in Pennsylvania. The Board was also assigned the task of identifying any additional improvements which might need to be implemented to ensure the continued success of the TRS program. The Board is comprised of representatives from the following: AT&T, Hamilton Relay, the Pennsylvania Telephone Association, the Commission, the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry’s Office for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing, and from the community of persons who are, or who have experience with people who are deaf or hard of hearing, or those with language and speech disorders. The Board meets quarterly in Harrisburg and functions as a user group providing guidance in such areas as problem solving and future enhancements. The normal term of a TRS Board member is two years.

There are two nominees for the TRS Board for two-year terms ending two years from the date this Order is entered. The first nominee is Joyce Edmiston, who identifies herself as a deaf person and a relay service user. Additionally, Ms. Edmiston has experience teaching sign language to Kindergarten and First Grade students and has also done volunteer work with the Bay Area Resources for the Disabled (BARD).

The second nominee is Donald J. Kovacic, who identifies himself as a deaf person and relay service user. Additionally, Mr. Kovacic is an officer of the Greater Pittsburgh Society for the Advancement of the Deaf (PSAD) and a past officer of ASL Friends, Inc., of Pittsburgh. The expertise and input of the nominees could prove to be beneficial to the TRS Board; **THEREFORE,**

**IT IS ORDERED:**

1. That the nomination of Joyce Edmiston to the Telecommunications Relay Service Advisory Board is approved for a term ending two years after the date this Order is entered.

2. That the nomination of Donald J. Kovacic to the Telecommunications Relay Service Advisory Board is approved for a term ending two years after the date this Order is entered.

3. That Ms. Joyce Edmiston and Mr. Donald J. Kovacic shall be served with a copy of this Opinion and Order.

 **BY THE COMMISSION,**

Rosemary Chiavetta

Secretary

(SEAL)

ORDER ADOPTED: August 15, 2013

ORDER ENTERED: August 15, 2013