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News Release

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For Immediate Release

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AMU Customers May Experience Telephone Calling Issues related to Least Cost Routing

Recently, some AMU Telephone customers have experienced Rural Call Completion issues created by Least Cost Routing (LCR). You may have been affected by LCR if you have experienced any of the following:

- Someone tells you they tried to call you but your phone never rang.
- Someone tells you they tried to call you and the phone rang on their end, but didn't ring on yours.
- A call came through but the quality was poor.
- A call came through but the Caller ID was incorrect.

Algona Municipal Utilities strives to provide excellent customer service. However, people who live in rural areas have reported that calls to them are not getting through or are coming through at very low quality.

The Rural Call Completion issue is a nationwide epidemic that negatively affects our community, businesses, public safety, and our relationship with our customers.

Rural Call Completion issues start with the long distance telephone company or wireless provider used to make the call, not your local telephone company. The problem can only be resolved by the long distance telephone company or wireless provider of the person who makes the call.

Long distance carriers or wireless providers responsible for transporting calls use "Least Cost Routing" (LCR) to minimize costs by passing calls in a "hot potato" fashion. Essentially, the call is passed from the long distance carrier or wireless provider to another carrier that will transport the call for the lowest cost. However, this second carrier might pass the call to another carrier searching for the lowest cost. Calls may be passed on in this fashion many times. In some cases the calls become looped in the network and are never completed. In other cases, the calls are delivered via a low quality network which results in poor voice quality.

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Rural areas are more affected by this call-completion epidemic because it is more expensive to serve rural areas. Certain long distance carriers and wireless providers do not want to incur the higher costs to transport long distance calls, so they refuse to transport calls to some rural phone companies' networks, or they route the calls using LCR to minimize costs.

Local telephone companies are working with long distance carriers and wireless providers, state commissions, national telecommunication organizations, and Congress to find solutions to the growing Rural Call Completion Problem and LCR. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has created a task force to investigate and address the Rural Call Completion Problem and LCR. Rural telephone company advocates are encouraging swift and severe action against all the providers who are the center of the problem.

Here's what you can do to help - Ask the caller to report the following information to their long distance provider/wireless carrier:

- The caller's number
- The called number
- The date and time the attempted calls or problem calls were made.
- The long distance telephone company or wireless telephone service provider that serves the caller.

The Algona Municipal Utilities website (www.netamu.com) has additional information and links on Least Cost Routing and to the Federal Communications Commission.