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From: Collins, Angela [acollins@cgrdc.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 07, 2012 4:32 PM
To: Filings@psc.state.fl.us
Subject: New Matter - Notification of Customer/Asset Transfer
Attachments: Birch-Astro Tel Florida Notice.pdf

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NEW MATTER- Notification of Customer/Asset Transfer

This document is being filed on behalf of Birch Telecom of the South, Inc. dba Birch Telecom dba Birch Communications ("Birch") and Astro Tel, Inc. ("Astro Tel").

The total number of pages is 6.

The document is a notification to the Commission of the pending transfer of substantially all of Astro Tel's telecommunications assets and Florida customers to Birch.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Collins

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CAHILL

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FPSC-COMMISSION CLERK

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February 7, 2012

Via Electronic Filing

Ann Cole
Commission Clerk
Florida Public Service Commission
Office of the Commission Clerk
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850

**Re: Birch Telecom of the South, Inc. dba Birch Telecom dba Birch
Communications and Astro Tel, Inc. - Notification of Transfer of Customers
and Assets**

Dear Ms. Cole:

Birch Telecom of the South, Inc. dba Birch Telecom dba Birch Communications (“Birch” or “Purchaser”) and Astro Tel, Inc. (“Astro Tel” or “Seller”) (Purchaser and Seller collectively, the “Parties”), hereby respectfully notify the Florida Public Service Commission (“Commission”) of a pending transaction pursuant to which Astro Tel will transfer substantially all of its telecommunications assets and Florida customer base to Birch (the “Transaction”).

It is the Parties’ understanding that no prior Commission approval is required to consummate the Transaction described herein. The Parties therefore submit this notice for the Commission’s information. The Transaction is scheduled to be consummated on or after March 16, 2012.

I. PARTIES

**A. Birch Telecom of the South, Inc. dba Birch Telecom dba Birch
Communications**

Birch Telecom of the South, Inc. dba Birch Telecom dba Birch Communications is a Delaware corporation with headquarters located at 3060 Peachtree Road NW, Suite 1065, Atlanta, Georgia. Birch Telecom of the South, Inc. dba Birch Telecom dba Birch Communications is authorized by the Commission to provide local exchange and interexchange services in Florida.¹ Birch Telecom of the South, Inc. dba Birch Telecom dba Birch

¹ CLEC Certificate No. 7552 and IXC Registration No. TJ414.

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Communications is a wholly owned subsidiary of Birch Communications, Inc. (“BCI”), which is a Georgia corporation with principal corporate offices located at 3060 Peachtree Road NW, Suite 1065, Atlanta, Georgia. Birch Communications, Inc. is authorized by the Commission to provide local exchange and interexchange services in Florida.² The customers to be acquired in the Transaction will be served by Birch Telecom of the South, Inc. dba Birch Telecom dba Birch Communications.

B. Astro Tel, Inc.

Astro Tel, Inc. is a Florida corporation with headquarters located at 820 1st Street West, Bradenton, Florida, 34208. Astro Tel is authorized to provide interexchange telecommunications services in Florida under IXC Registration No. TJ810 and competitive local exchange services in Florida under CLEC Certificate No. 8164.

II. DESIGNATED CONTACTS

Correspondence concerning this matter should be directed to:

For Astro Tel, Inc.	Birch Telecom of the South, Inc. dba Birch Telecom dba Birch Communications
Barlow Keener Keener Law Group 259 Walnut Street Newton, MA 02460 617-671-1202 (telephone) 617-795-2702 (facsimile) bk@keenerlawgroup.com	Angela F. Collins Cahill Gordon & Reindel LLP 1990 K Street, NW, Suite 950 Washington, DC 20006 202-862-8930 (telephone) 202-862-8958 (facsimile) acollins@cgrdc.com

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE TRANSACTION AND PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

On December 21, 2011, BCI (the parent company of Birch) and Astro Tel entered into an Asset Purchase Agreement (“Agreement”) pursuant to which BCI will purchase certain assets and customers of Astro Tel (the “Transaction”). The Agreement was submitted to the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Middle District of Florida (Case No. 8:10-bk-29992-MGW), and was approved by the bankruptcy court on January 4, 2012. Pursuant to the Agreement, BCI will purchase the following assets from Astro Tel: certain customer accounts and receivables, certain customer agreements and contracts, certain vendor agreements and contracts, certain equipment, and certain intellectual property. BCI, however, will not assume any of Astro Tel’s pre-closing liabilities or obligations.

Birch will make any necessary revisions to its rates, terms, and conditions to incorporate Astro Tel’s current services and rates so that affected customers will continue to receive the same services that they currently receive without any immediate changes to their service

² CLEC Certificate No. 7130 and IXC Registration Nos. TJ268 and TX326.

offerings, rates, terms, or conditions. The ownership structure of Birch and BCI will not be affected by the Transaction. Upon consummation of the Transaction and after completion of the customer transfer, Birch will provide Astro Tel's customers with the same service quality they have come to expect and all billing will be handled under the Birch name. Consummation of the Transaction is contingent on, among other things, receipt of all necessary regulatory approvals.

The proposed transfer will affect all of Astro Tel's current Florida customers, none of whom will experience any material change to the terms and conditions of their services as a result of this transfer. The transfer is scheduled to take place on or after March 16, 2012. The Parties will provide notice to affected customers in accordance with state requirements and the rules and regulations of the Federal Communications Commission. A draft customer notice letter is attached as **Exhibit A**.

The proposed Transaction serves the public interest, and will ensure that affected customers enjoy continuity of high-quality telecommunications service. Astro Tel's current customers will be given prior written notice of the transfer of their account to Birch, in compliance with state and federal customer notice rules. Following the Transaction, the affected customers will receive high-quality service supported by Birch's experienced and well-qualified management team. Consequently, the proposed Transaction will be transparent to customers and will not have a negative impact on the public interest, service to Florida customers, or competition.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



Angela F. Collins
Counsel for Birch Telecom of the South,
Inc. dba Birch Telecom dba Birch
Communications

Attachment

Exhibit A

Draft Customer Notice



IMPORTANT NOTICE
REGARDING A CHANGE IN YOUR TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

Dear _____

Birch Communications ("Birch") and Astro Tel, Inc. ("Astro Tel") are pleased to announce that Birch will acquire Astro Tel's local and long distance telephone customers. Subject to approval by the Federal Communications Commission and state regulators as necessary, Birch will replace Astro Tel as your current telecommunications service provider on or after March 16, 2012 (the "Transfer Date"). As a result of this transaction, Birch will assume responsibility for all services previously provided to you by Astro Tel. Birch is excited about the opportunity to provide your telecommunications service(s) and looks forward to a long and successful business relationship.

Please rest assured, the transition will have little or no impact on your current services, nor will there be any interruption of your service. The agreement between Birch and Astro Tel has been structured so that the transfer of service will be virtually seamless other than the possibility of a minor change to your voice mail service for which you will receive additional information.¹ There may, however, be other changes to your service plan based on Birch's unique billing systems (e.g., customers currently utilizing a message or measured local service plan may be switched to a flat rate plan). In those cases, Birch will transition you in a neutral manner and **with no increase to your regular monthly recurring charges**. You will retain all other service rates, features, terms, and conditions of service and your telephone phone number. Birch will not impose any charges for the transfer of your services to Birch and **no action is required from you to continue your telecommunications service(s) with Birch**. You will receive your first billing statement from Birch starting with your April 2012 or May 2012 bill. As in the past, you are responsible for paying all bills rendered to you by Astro Tel during the transition of service.

You do have the right to select a different carrier for the telecommunications service(s) at issue. If you choose to switch to an alternate carrier for services, you may incur a fee from that alternate carrier for the transfer of services to that alternate carrier.

¹ It will be necessary for you to reset your password and re-record your message greeting(s). Additionally, saved messages at the time of the transfer will no longer be retained. Birch will provide further details in a follow-up letter.

If you select a local telephone service provider other than Birch, you should also contact your current long distance provider to ensure that your current long distance plan is not changed. Please note that if you are a customer of Astro Tel on the Transfer Date set forth above, your account will automatically be transferred to Birch. In addition, should you have a term commitment with Astro Tel and you disconnect services or transfer to another carrier prior to the end of that term, you will be liable for applicable any early termination charges. Please note that when your service is transferred to Birch, any preferred carrier "freeze" you have placed on your existing telephone lines to prevent unauthorized transfer of your services to another carrier will be over-ridden for purposes of this transaction and will need to be reinstated by you by contacting Birch after the transfer is complete.

If you have any questions about this transaction or your service or billing prior to the Transfer Date set forth above, you should contact Astro Tel at **866-962-7876**.

If you have any questions regarding this transaction or your service or billing after the Transfer Date set forth above, you should contact Birch at **888-772-4724**.²

Astro Tel thanks you for your business and Birch looks forward to providing you with quality service for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Astro Tel, Inc. and
Birch Communications

² **About Birch Communications** - Headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, Birch Communications is one of the largest competitive local exchange carriers in its 38-state southeast, southwest, midwest and northeast regions serving residential and business customers. Birch was the first in its class to deploy its own private IP network utilizing soft switch technology to deliver innovative, high quality, affordable voice and broadband communications services to small and medium business customers.