



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
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Washington, DC 20554

News Media Information 202-418-0500
Internet: www.fcc.gov

DA 25-982

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**DOMESTIC SECTION 214 APPLICATION FILED FOR THE TRANSFER OF CONTROL OF
AMHERST TELEPHONE COMPANY D/B/A AMHERST COMMUNICATIONS
AND ITS SUBSIDIARIES TO
AMHERST COMMUNICATIONS EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP TRUST**

STREAMLINED PLEADING CYCLE ESTABLISHED

WC Docket No. 25-309

Comments Due: December 8, 2025

Reply Comments Due: December 15, 2025

By this Public Notice, the Wireline Competition Bureau seeks comment from interested parties on an application filed by Amherst Telephone Company d/b/a Amherst Communications (Amherst) on behalf of its current stockholders and the Amherst Communications Employee Stock Ownership Trust (Amherst ESOP Trust) (collectively, Applicants), pursuant to section 214(a) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, and sections 63.03-04 of the Commission's rules,¹ requesting Commission consent for the transfer of control of Amherst and its subsidiaries, to the Amherst ESOP Trust.²

Amherst, a Wisconsin corporation, provides local exchange and other services as an incumbent local exchange carrier (LEC) in the Amherst, Polonia, and Rosholt exchanges in portions of Portage, Marathon, and Waupaca counties in central Wisconsin. Amherst provides local exchange service and other services as a competitive LEC in the Stevens Point and Waupaca exchanges in Portage County and Waupaca County, Wisconsin. Amherst's wholly-owned subsidiary, Union Telephone Company, a Wisconsin corporation, provides local exchange service and other services as an incumbent LEC in the Plainfield, Hancock, Coloma, and Almond exchanges in portions of Waushara, Portage, Adams, and Marquette counties in central Wisconsin. Applicants state that Amherst and Union Telephone Company are designated as Eligible Telecommunications Carriers (ETCs) that receive Universal Service Fund (USF) high-cost support in the form of Enhanced Alternative Connect America Cost Model (Enhanced A-CAM). Applicants further state that Amherst and Union Telephone Company participate in the Lifeline program and will continue to do so post-transaction. Union Telephone Company's wholly-owned subsidiary, Union Information Systems, LLC, (Union Information Systems) a Wisconsin limited liability company, provides resold domestic toll services and other services to customers in and around Union Telephone Company's local exchange service area. Amherst is governed by its Board of Directors, each

¹ See 47 U.S.C. § 214(a); 47 CFR § 63.03-04.

² Domestic Section 214 Application for the Transfer of Control of Amherst Telephone Company d/b/a Amherst Communications on behalf of its current Stockholders to Amherst Communications Employee Stock Ownership Trust, WC Docket No. 25-309 (filed Nov. 13, 2025) (Application). Applicants filed a supplement to the Application on November 20, 2025. Letter from John Kuykendall, Regulatory Advisor for Amherst Communications, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, WC Docket No. 25-309 (filed Nov. 20, 2025). Applicants are also filing applications for the transfer of international authorizations. Any action on the domestic 214 application is without prejudice to Commission action on other related applications.

a US Citizen.

The Amherst Communications ESOP Trust, a tax-exempt Georgia trust, is held for the benefit of Amherst's employees. At the time of filing the Application, the trustee of the Amherst ESOP Trust is Argent Trust Company (Trustee), an independent institutional trustee and wholly-owned subsidiary of Argent Financial Group, Inc., a widely held Louisiana corporation. Trustee is a fiduciary of the Amherst ESOP Trust and exercises the Amherst ESOP Trust's ownership rights over its assets.

Pursuant to the terms of the proposed transaction, the Amherst ESOP Trust will enter into a Stock Purchase Agreement with Amherst in which the Amherst ESOP Trust will purchase all of the issued and outstanding shares of Amherst. Applicants state that, upon consummation of the proposed transaction, the Amherst ESOP Trust will wholly-own Amherst, Union Telephone Company, and Union Information Systems. By participating in the Amherst ESOP, the employees will receive allocations of shares of company stock to their Amherst ESOP accounts, thus becoming beneficial owners of Amherst and its subsidiaries. Amherst's Board of Directors and officers would continue to have operational control of Amherst and its subsidiaries post-transaction.

Applicants assert that a grant of the Application would serve the public interest, convenience, and necessity. We accept the Application for streamlined processing under section 63.03(b)(1)(ii) of the Commission's rules.³

Domestic Section 214 Filed for the Transfer of Control of Amherst Telephone Company d/b/a Amherst Communications and its Subsidiaries to Amherst Communications Employee Stock Ownership Trust, WC Docket No. 25-309 (filed Nov. 13, 2025).

GENERAL INFORMATION

The transfer of control identified herein has been found, upon initial review, to be acceptable for filing as a streamlined application. The Commission reserves the right to return any transfer application if, upon further examination, it is determined to be defective and not in conformance with the Commission's rules and policies. Interested parties may file comments and reply comments on or before the dates indicated on the first page of this document. Pursuant to section 63.52 of the Commission's rules, 47 CFR § 63.52, commenters must serve a copy of comments on the Applicants no later than the above comment filing date. Unless otherwise notified by the Commission, the Applicants may transfer control on the 31st day after the date of this notice.

Pursuant to section 63.03 of the Commission's rules, 47 CFR § 63.03, interested parties must file comments using the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS):

<https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs>.

People with Disabilities: To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities (braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), send an e-mail to fcc504@fcc.gov or call the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau at 202-418-0530 (voice).

In addition, e-mail one copy of each pleading to each of the following:

- 1) Dennis Johnson, Competition Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, dennis.johnson@fcc.gov;
- 2) Svantje Swider, Office of International Affairs, svantje.swider@fcc.gov; and
- 3) Jim Bird, Office of General Counsel, jim.bird@fcc.gov.

The proceeding in this Notice shall be treated as a "permit-but-disclose" proceeding in accordance with the Commission's *ex parte* rules. Persons making *ex parte* presentations must file a copy of any written presentation or a memorandum summarizing any oral presentation within two business

³ 47 CFR § 63.03(b)(1)(ii).

days after the presentation (unless a different deadline applicable to the Sunshine period applies). Persons making oral *ex parte* presentations are reminded that memoranda summarizing the presentation must (1) list all persons attending or otherwise participating in the meeting at which the *ex parte* presentation was made, and (2) summarize all data presented and arguments made during the presentation. If the presentation consisted in whole or in part of the presentation of data or arguments already reflected in the presenter's written comments, memoranda or other filings in the proceeding, the presenter may provide citations to such data or arguments in his or her prior comments, memoranda, or other filings (specifying the relevant page and/or paragraph numbers where such data or arguments can be found) in lieu of summarizing them in the memorandum. Documents shown or given to Commission staff during *ex parte* meetings are deemed to be written *ex parte* presentations and must be filed consistent with rule 1.1206(b), 47 CFR § 1.1206(b). Participants in this proceeding should familiarize themselves with the Commission's *ex parte* rules.

To allow the Commission to consider fully all substantive issues regarding the application in as timely and efficient a manner as possible, petitioners and commenters should raise all issues in their initial filings. New issues may not be raised in responses or replies.⁴ A party or interested person seeking to raise a new issue after the pleading cycle has closed must show good cause why it was not possible for it to have raised the issue previously. Submissions after the pleading cycle has closed that seek to raise new issues based on new facts or newly discovered facts should be filed within 15 days after such facts are discovered. Absent such a showing of good cause, any issues not timely raised may be disregarded by the Commission.

For further information, please contact Dennis Johnson, Competition Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, at (202) 418-0809 or dennis.johnson@fcc.gov.

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⁴ See 47 CFR § 1.45(c).