



Texas Department of Criminal Justice

Bryan Collier
Executive Director

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW OFFENDER PHONE SYSTEM CONTRACT APPROVED BY TEXAS BOARD OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

(AUSTIN) – The rates charged to offenders and their families for the use of the Offender Telephone System are dropping by 75% off the current per minute charge.

A new Offender Telephone System (OTS) contract was formally approved by the Texas Board of Criminal Justice at its monthly meeting this morning in Austin. The competitively bid contract was awarded to CenturyLink and the rate charged per minute drops to six cents per minute no matter the destination of the call. A typical 15 minute phone call currently costs about \$3.90 but under the new agreement that same call will cost just 90 cents.

“The new OTS contract is going to benefit not only family of offenders who are hoping to stay connected, but enhance the agency’s focus on re-entry,” said TDCJ Executive Director Bryan Collier. “The system is used to maintain relationships with friends and family that are a vital part of a successful re-entry and reintegration of offenders into the community.”

As a part of the contract, CenturyLink will be updating hardware throughout the system. It will also be installing new technology to allow for video visitation from several major metropolitan areas to units in remote areas of Texas.

There are nearly 127,000 active offenders enrolled to use the system, with an additional 172,000 friends and family enrolled. Each month there are about 1.5 million calls completed totaling nearly 17 million minutes. By law proceeds from the OTS goes to the states Crime Victims Fund. Last year alone the OTS provided nearly \$15,000,000 to the Texas Crime Victims Fund to help victims of crime all over the state. TDCJ receives no revenue from the operation of the system.

Offenders are allowed to communicate only with persons who are registered to receive calls on a call list pre-approved by TDCJ. Offenders and their families can pre-pay for calls from the contractor or make collect calls that will be billed.

The new contract provides for a 30 minute per call limit which is up from the current limit of 20 minutes. The increased call limits will accommodate the expected increase in call volume, CenturyLink will install additional equipment to handle increased demand as needed.

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Note to media: For more information, contact Jeremy Desel, TDCJ Public Information Director, at 936-437-6052 or by email at jeremy.desel@tdcj.texas.gov – For video of the system in use please visit the TDCJ Youtube channel or Facebook Page...

Our mission is to provide public safety, promote positive change in offender behavior, reintegrate offenders into society, and assist victims of crime.

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