



PRC plans hearing on co-op

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The state Regulation Commission (PRC) plans to hold a meeting in Taos, Wednesday (Oct. 17), on whether Kit Carson Electric Cooperative should spin off its Internet subsidiary.

The commission will take public comment at the hearing, which will run from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Rio Grande Hall on Civic Plaza Drive.

Last September, the PRC granted the co-op a rate increase after nearly a year of bitter argument, mostly over the co-op's subsidiary ventures. At the end of the rate case, the PRC found no evidence the rate increase was prompted by losses in those side businesses, but the commission ordered the co-op to spin off the Internet company to protect electric ratepayers from potential losses.

Critics of the co-op contend that Kit Carson has failed to comply with the order. The coop says it is unable to separate the Internet company without jeopardizing a massive broadband installation project that is currently underway.

The co-op has already filed 150-pages of documents with the PRC relating to the upcoming hearing. The documents can be downloaded at www.taosnews.com.

In written testimony, co-op CEO Lu's Reyes argues that the co-op has complied with the PRC's order and will spin off the Internet company once its broadband project is completed. The co-op's critics say they are not against the broadband project but want to see the PRC order enforced.

The PRC has said it will consider evidence from both sides before acting. The commission insists it will take no action that could impede the broadband project.