

SUPPLEMENT TO ANNUAL FUNDING NOTICE  
 OF WINDSTREAM PENSION PLAN FOR  
 PLAN YEAR BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2016 AND ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2016 (“Plan  
 Year”)

This is a temporary supplement to your annual funding notice. It is required by the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, the Highway and Transportation Funding Act of 2014, and the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015. These federal laws changed how pension plans calculate their liabilities. The purpose of this supplement is to show you the effect of these changes. Prior to 2012, pension plans determined their liabilities using a two-year average of interest rates. Now pension plans also must take into account a 25-year average of interest rates. This means that interest rates likely will be higher and plan liabilities lower than they were under prior law. As a result, your employer may contribute less money to the plan at a time when market interest rates are at or near historical lows.

The “Information Table” compares the impact of using interest rates based on the 25-year average (the “adjusted interest rates”) and interest rates based on a two-year average on the Plan’s: (1) Funding Target Attainment Percentage, (2) Funding Shortfall, and (3) Minimum Required Contribution. The funding target attainment percentage of a plan is a measure of how well the plan is funded on a particular date. The funding shortfall is the amount by which liabilities exceed net plan assets. The minimum required contribution is the amount of money an employer is required by law to contribute to a plan in a given year. The following table shows this information determined with and without the adjusted interest rates. The information is provided for the Plan Year and for each of the two preceding plan years, if applicable.

<b>INFORMATION TABLE</b>						
	2016		2015		2014	
	<b>With Adjusted Interest Rates</b>	<b>Without Adjusted Interest Rates</b>	<b>With Adjusted Interest Rates</b>	<b>Without Adjusted Interest Rates</b>	<b>With Adjusted Interest Rates</b>	<b>Without Adjusted Interest Rates</b>
Funding Target Attainment Percentage	96.57%	80.04%	96.48%	78.60%	96.11%	75.74%
Funding Shortfall	\$34,138,533	\$239,754,874	\$34,465,320	\$257,487,536	\$39,798,172	\$315,113,610
Minimum Required Contribution	\$35,659,899	\$69,662,842	\$36,081,884	\$73,119,170	\$29,343,133	\$75,192,729

ANNUAL FUNDING  
NOTICE For  
WINDSTREAM PENSION PLAN

Introduction

This notice includes important information about the funding status of your single-employer pension plan (the "Plan"). It also includes general information about the benefit payments guaranteed by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation ("PBGC"), a federal insurance agency. All traditional pension plans (called "defined benefit pension plans") must provide this notice every year regardless of their funding status. This notice does not mean that the Plan is terminating. It is provided for informational purposes and you are not required to respond in any way. This notice is required by federal law. This notice is for the plan year beginning January 1, 2016 and ending December 31, 2016 ("Plan Year").

How Well Funded Is Your Plan

The law requires the administrator of the Plan to tell you how well the Plan is funded, using a measure called the "funding target attainment percentage." The Plan divides its Net Plan Assets by Plan Liabilities to get this percentage. In

general, the higher the percentage, the better funded the plan. The Plan's Funding Target Attainment Percentage for the Plan Year and each of the two preceding plan years is shown in the chart below. The chart also shows you how the percentage was calculated.

<b>Funding Target Attainment Percentage</b>			
	2016	2015	2014
1. Valuation Date	1/1/2016	1/1/2015	1/1/2014
2. Plan Assets			
a. Total Plan Assets	\$984,069,236	\$1,004,270,438	\$1,055,267,466
b. Funding Standard Carryover Balance	\$0	\$0	\$0
c. Prefunding Balance	\$22,106,813	\$58,177,649	\$71,426,129
d. Net Plan Assets (a) - (b) - (c) = (d)	\$961,962,423	\$946,092,789	\$983,841,337
3. Plan Liabilities	\$996,100,956	\$980,558,109	\$1,023,639,509
<b>4. Funding Target Attainment Percentage (2d)/(3)</b>	<b>96.57%</b>	<b>96.48%</b>	<b>96.11%</b>

Plan Assets and Credit Balances

The chart above shows certain "credit balances" called the Funding Standard Carryover Balance and Prefunding Balance. A plan might have a credit balance, for example, if in a prior year an employer contributed money to the plan above the minimum level required by law. Generally, an employer may credit the excess money toward the minimum level of contributions required by law that it must make in future years. Plans must subtract these credit balances from Total Plan Assets to calculate their Funding Target Attainment Percentage.

Plan Liabilities

Plan Liabilities in line 3 of the chart above is an estimate of the amount of assets the Plan needs on the Valuation Date to pay for promised benefits under the Plan.

Year-End Assets and Liabilities

The asset values in the chart above are measured as of the first day of the Plan Year. They also are "actuarial values." Actuarial values differ from market values in that they do not fluctuate daily based on changes in the stock or other markets. Actuarial values smooth out those fluctuations

and can allow for more predictable levels of future contributions. Despite the fluctuations, market values tend to show a clearer picture of a plan's funded status at a given point in time. As of December 31, 2016 the fair market value of the Plan's assets was \$807,361,903. On this same date, the Plan's liabilities, determined using market rates, were \$1,068,354,034.

### Participant Information

The total number of participants and beneficiaries covered by the Plan on the Valuation Date was 11,835. Of this number, 3,459 were current employees, 6,414 were retired and receiving benefits, and 1,962 were retired or no longer working for the employer and have a right to future benefits.

### Funding & Investment Policies

Every pension plan must have a procedure to establish a funding policy for plan objectives. A funding policy relates to how much money is needed to pay promised benefits. The funding policy of the Plan is that Windstream Services, LLC intends to make contributions to the pension fund sufficient to comply with the minimum funding standards imposed by the Internal Revenue Code. Windstream's contributions are determined at least annually. Each contribution made to the Plan is made on the condition that it is currently deductible under section 404 of the Internal Revenue Code for the year.

Pension plans also have investment policies. These generally are written guidelines or general instructions for making investment management decisions. The investment policy of the Plan is to prudently invest pension assets in order to meet benefit obligations over the life of the Plan, while considering asset class diversification, cost and risk tolerance. Asset classes (such as stocks, bonds and real estate) and benefit payment projections are reviewed to set the percentage of total assets to invest in each asset class (i.e., the "policy asset mix"). Assets can be shifted away from the policy asset mix, due to market related events, within defined limits. Assets and benefit payments are reviewed regularly and the policy asset mix is adjusted as appropriate.

Under the investment policy, the Plan's assets were allocated among the following categories of investments, as of the end of the Plan Year. These allocations are percentages of total assets:

<b>Asset Allocations</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1. Cash (interest bearing and non-interest bearing)	5 %
2. U.S. Government securities	28 %
3. Corporate debt instruments (other than employer securities):	
Preferred	0 %
All other	4 %
4. Corporate stocks (other than employer securities):	
Preferred	0 %
Common	7 %
5. Partnership/joint venture interests	14 %
6. Real estate (other than employer real property)	0 %
7. Loans (other than to participants)	0 %
8. Participant loans	0 %
9. Value of interest in common/collective trusts	34 %
10. Value of interest in pooled separate accounts	0 %
11. Value of interest in master trust investment accounts	0 %
12. Value of interest in 103-12 investment entities	0 %
13. Value of interest in registered investment companies (e.g., mutual funds)	7 %
14. Value of funds held in insurance co. general account (unallocated contracts)	0 %
15. Employer-related investments:	
Employer Securities	0 %
Employer real property	0 %
16. Buildings and other property used in plan operation	0 %
17. Other	1 %

For information about the Plan's investment in any of the following types of investments - common/collective trusts, pooled separate accounts, master trust investment accounts, or 103-12 investment entities- contact the Windstream Investment Committee, at 4001 Rodney Parham Road, Little Rock, Arkansas 72212.

### Events Having a Material Effect on Assets or Liabilities

By law this notice must contain a written explanation of new events that have a material effect on plan

liabilities or assets. This is because such events can significantly impact the funding condition of a plan. For the plan year beginning on January 1, 2017 and ending on December 31, 2017, the Plan expects one event to have such an effect. In October 2016, the Plan purchased group annuity contracts with Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company (MassMutual) to satisfy the payment obligations for approximately 2,800 retirees. As a result, these retirees were removed from the Plan, and their monthly annuity benefit payments were assumed by MassMutual beginning on January 1, 2017. A total of \$137.6 million in trust assets were transferred to MassMutual in October 2016.

The effect of this event on the Plan’s projected liabilities as of December 31, 2017 is shown below.

Projected Liabilities Before the Event	Projected Liabilities After the Event	Decrease in Liabilities	Percentage Decrease
\$969.0 million	\$854.2 million	\$114.8 million	12%

### Right to Request a Copy of the Annual Report

Pension plans must file annual reports with the US Department of Labor. The report is called the “Form 5500.” These reports contain financial and other information. You may obtain an electronic copy of your Plan’s annual report by going to [www.efast.dol.gov](http://www.efast.dol.gov) and using the search tool. Annual reports also are available from the US Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration’s Public Disclosure Room at 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room N-1513, Washington, DC 20210, or by calling 202.693.8673. Or you may obtain a copy of the Plan’s annual report by making a written request to the plan administrator at Windstream Benefits Committee, Windstream Services, LLC, 4001 Rodney Parham Rd., Little Rock, AR 72212. Annual reports do not contain personal information, such as the amount of your accrued benefits. You may contact your plan administrator if you want information about your accrued benefits. Your plan administrator is identified below under “Where to Get More Information.”

### Summary of Rules Governing Termination of Single Employer Plans

There is no current intention to terminate the Plan. The following information is provided as required by law.

If a plan terminates, there are specific termination rules that must be followed under federal law. A summary of these rules follows.

There are two ways an employer can terminate its pension plan. First, the employer can end a plan in a “standard termination” but only after showing the PBGC that such plan has enough money to pay all benefits owed to participants. Under a standard termination, a plan must either purchase an annuity from an insurance company (which will provide you with periodic retirement benefits, such as monthly for life or for a set period of time when you retire) or, if the plan allows, issue one lump-sum payment that covers your entire benefit. Your plan administrator must give you advance notice that identifies the insurance company (or companies) selected to provide the annuity. The PBGC’s guarantee ends upon the purchase of an annuity or payment of the lump-sum. If the plan purchases an annuity for you from an insurance company and that company becomes unable to pay, the applicable state guaranty association guarantees the annuity to the extent authorized by that state’s law.

Second, if the plan is not fully-funded, the employer may apply for a distress termination. To do so, however, the employer must be in financial distress and prove to a bankruptcy court or to the PBGC that the employer cannot remain in business unless the plan is terminated. If the application is granted, the PBGC will take over the plan as trustee and pay plan benefits, up to the legal limits, using plan assets and PBGC guarantee funds.

Under certain circumstances, the PBGC may take action on its own to end a pension plan. Most terminations initiated by the PBGC occur when the PBGC determines that plan termination is needed to protect the interests of plan participants or of the PBGC insurance program. The PBGC can do so if, for example, a plan does not have enough money to pay benefits currently due.

### Benefit Payments Guaranteed by the PBGC

When the PBGC takes over a plan, it pays pension benefits through its insurance program. Only benefits that you have earned a right to receive and that cannot be forfeited (called vested benefits) are guaranteed. Most participants and beneficiaries receive all of the pension benefits they would have received under their plan, but some people may lose certain benefits that are not guaranteed.

The amount of benefits that PBGC guarantees is

determined as of the plan termination date. However, if a plan terminates during a plan sponsor's bankruptcy, then the amount guaranteed is determined as of the date the sponsor entered bankruptcy.

The PBGC maximum benefit guarantee is set by law and is updated each calendar year. For a plan with a termination date or sponsor bankruptcy date, as applicable in 2017 the maximum guarantee is \$5,369 per month, or \$64,432 per year, for a benefit paid to a 65-year-old retiree with no survivor benefit. If a plan terminates during a plan sponsor's bankruptcy, the maximum guarantee is fixed as of the calendar year in which the sponsor entered bankruptcy. The maximum guarantee is lower for an individual who begins receiving benefits from PBGC before age 65 reflecting the fact that younger retirees are expected to receive more monthly pension checks over their lifetimes. Similarly, the maximum guarantee is higher for an individual who starts receiving benefits from PBGC after age 65. The maximum guarantee by age can be found on PBGC's website, [www.pbgc.gov](http://www.pbgc.gov). The guaranteed amount is also reduced if a benefit will be provided to a survivor of the plan participant.

The PBGC guarantees "basic benefits" earned before a plan is terminated, which include:

- pension benefits at normal retirement age;
- most early retirement benefits;
- annuity benefits for survivors of plan participants; and
- disability benefits for a disability that occurred before the date the plan terminated or the date the sponsor entered bankruptcy, as applicable.

The PBGC does not guarantee certain types of benefits:

- The PBGC does not guarantee benefits for which you do not have a vested right, usually because you have not worked enough years for the company.
- The PBGC does not guarantee benefits for which you have not met all age, service, or other requirements.
- Benefit increases and new benefits that have been in place for less than one year are not guaranteed. Those that have been in place for less than five years are only partly guaranteed.
- Early retirement payments that are greater than payments at normal retirement age may not be guaranteed. For example, a supplemental benefit that stops when you become eligible for Social

Security may not be guaranteed.

- Benefits other than pension benefits, such as health insurance, life insurance, death benefits, vacation pay, or severance pay, are not guaranteed.
- The PBGC generally does not pay lump sums exceeding \$5,000.

In some circumstances, participants and beneficiaries still may receive some benefits that are not guaranteed. This depends on how much money the terminated plan has and how much the PBGC recovers from employers for plan underfunding.

For additional general information about the PBGC and the pension insurance program guarantees, go to the "General FAQs about PBGC" on PBGC's website at [www.pbgc.gov/generalfaqs](http://www.pbgc.gov/generalfaqs). Please contact your employer or plan administrator for specific information about your pension plan or pension benefit. PBGC does not have that information. See "Where to Get More Information About Your Plan," below.

#### Where to Get More Information

For more information about this notice, you may contact Windstream Benefits Committee, at 4001 Rodney Parham Road, Little Rock, Arkansas 72212, or by calling the Participant Service Center at 1-800-228-4015. For identification purposes, the official plan number is 001 and the plan sponsor's name and employer identification number or "EIN" are Windstream Services, LLC and 20-0792300. Please refer to your Summary Plan Description for more details concerning the Plan. An additional copy of the Summary Plan Description can be obtained by contacting the Plan administrator as noted above. For more information about the PBGC and benefit guarantees, go to PBGC's website, [www.pbgc.gov](http://www.pbgc.gov), or call PBGC toll-free at 1-800-400-7242 (TTY/TDD users may call the Federal relay service toll free at 1-800-877-8339 and ask to be connected to 1-800-400-7242).

#### Pension Benefit Statement

You may access your Plan's pension benefit statement, including an estimate of your total benefits accrued and whether you are vested (or, if you are not vested, the earliest date you could become vested), through Merrill Lynch's Benefits OnLine® Web site by logging into [www.benefits.ml.com](http://www.benefits.ml.com). If it is your first time to log into the Merrill Lynch Benefits OnLine® Web site, you will need to create a User ID to access your information. You may also access

pension benefit statement information by calling the Participant Service Center at 1-800-228-4015.

### Disclaimer

This notice is intended to comply with the requirements of section 101(f) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended (ERISA).

The disclosures provided in this notice are based on information available and believed to be accurate as of the date this notice is provided. Several disclosures are based on estimates, unaudited financial information and certain actuarial assumptions. All computations reflected in these disclosures have been performed based on a good faith interpretation of the applicable statutory and regulatory guidance in effect on the date this notice is provided. Such information and computations include, but are not limited to, the measurement of Plan liabilities, reported values of Plan assets and allocation of assets.

However, actual results for the 2016 Plan Year may change and will not be considered final until filed with the Department of Labor as part of the Annual Report (i.e., the Form 5500). Subsequently, such results will change only by amendment of the Annual

Report for the 2016 Plan Year. See the Right to Request a Copy of the Annual Report section for information about how to obtain a copy of the Annual Report.

Windstream does not undertake any obligation to update or publicly release any revisions to this notice, and no such revisions will be issued to reflect any changes, including, but not limited to, changes in the manner in which particular calculations are performed, changes in expectations, the adoption of Plan amendments or any other events or circumstances occurring after this notice is provided.

Windstream reserves the right to amend or terminate the Plan in any respect at any time. In the event of any discrepancy between this notice and the Plan documents, the Plan documents will control.

### Electronic Transmission

This notice and other important Plan information may be delivered to you through electronic means. In this case, you are entitled to request a paper copy, free of charge, from Windstream. The paper version of this notice will contain substantially the same style and format, and the same content, as the electronic version.