

Long-distance phone services examined

For many consumers, the more they hear about long-distance phone services, the more confused they get. To reduce confusion and assist consumers in making an intelligent choice, the Better Business Bureau/Detroit and Eastern Michigan has released a new pamphlet, "Tips on Long-Distance Phone Services."

The pamphlet explains "equal access" in language understandable to every consumer. The equal access program means that customers of any long-distance company must be given equal access to the highest quality connections available. It was designed to assist in the development of fair competition among long-distance telephone companies.

Equal access not only means consistently high quality connections, but also makes using an alternative service much easier. Customers can use either a pushbutton or rotary-dial phone, and

do not have to dial additional digits to use an alternative long distance service.

"Tips on Long-Distance Phone Services" also walks consumers through the entire selection process. To determine which long-distance phone company is best for you involves three basic steps.

FIRST, DETERMINE how frequently you make long-distance calls. Many

long-distance services are worth using only if your average long-distance bill runs \$30 to \$40 per month. Second, consider the average length of your long-distance calls. Most long-distance services charge customers in one minute increments. And third, where you call is important, too. Phone rates and accompanying charges vary widely. Long-distance calls made within a state may be priced differently from long-distance calls made outside that

state. Once you have determined when, how often, and where you use long-distance service and know your phone service needs, you're ready to compare what the different companies have to offer.

The pamphlet also explains how to find out which phone companies offer long-distance service in your area, and provides a list of questions to ask in order to compare the different companies.

This timely pamphlet has been added to the Better Business Bureau Consumer Information Series, which offers helpful tips on more than 80 topics of consumer interest. For a copy of the booklet, send 25 cents and a stamped, self-addressed, business-size envelope to the Better Business Bureau/Detroit and Eastern Michigan, 150 Michigan Ave., Detroit 48226.

Help Channel 56

Two dozen employees at Crowley's will staff the pledge phones at the WTVS Channel 56 "Winterfest" fund-raising campaign.

Crowley's has joined with other companies in contributing to the WTVS challenge-grant fund used during on-air fund drives to match viewers' pledges.

Viewers who pledge \$100 or more will have their pledges matched by the challenge-grant fund. Crowley's is one of the contributors to this fund.

The station is hosting the Winterfest campaign as one of three on-air pledge drives to support future programming. Geared toward the individual viewer, the Winterfest campaign runs to Dec. 15.

Crowley's, headquartered in downtown Detroit, operates 10 specialty department stores in metropolitan Detroit, including Farmington Hills.

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Bring us a toy by December 13 or call 553-7300 and make plans to share the joy of giving.

MetroVision of Oakland County
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