

Phone companies to bridge long distance gap

By Tim Smith
staff writer

West Bloomfield's Larry Wasserman said it costs as much to call his parents' winter home in California as it does to call them during summer months when they live in Farmington Hills.

Some people calling areas of West Bloomfield from Bloomfield Township also have been charged long-distance telephone rates.

"But you can call way to the north and west and it's for free, but nobody's calling there. That's the oddball thing," said 17th District state Sen. David Honigman, the West Bloomfield Republican who also represents Orchard Lake Village, Bloomfield Hills and Bloomfield Township.

But it won't stay that way for too long, thanks to Honigman's efforts — four years of litigation that ended in December when Gov. John Engler enacted the senator's amendment to

SD 124 (the Telecommunications Reform Act of 1991). Honigman announced Monday that Michigan Bell and other local telephone carriers have until April 1 to implement plans that would bridge the gap of telephone bill inequity. Michigan Bell officials said Tuesday the new calling plan begins Saturday.

UNDER THE new plan, residents could call 20 miles in any direction from their homes without being charged long-distance rates.

Previously, West Bloomfield residents making routine phone calls to the south and east of their homes were charged with "toll" calls that inflated monthly phone bills to more than \$100.

"I've received more complaints about these high phone bills than about any other thing, high property taxes," Honigman said.

Many West Bloomfield residents — many whom Honigman said had

migrated from Southfield, Oak Park and Detroit — were, in effect, penalized for calling "their friends, family, the old neighborhood store" in their former communities.

"The migration is heading out to the north and west and everyone's calling back" to their former neighborhoods, Honigman said. "You can't call very far to the south and east without it being a toll call, that's the problem."

Calls made from one exchange boundary to an adjacent one are considered local; those made to non-adjacent exchanges — regardless of distance — are considered long distance.

A number of residents who registered complaints to Honigman about the high phone bills also testified in September, 1988, at a Michigan Public Service Commission hearing in Pontiac. Wasserman was among those arguing for an expansion of local calling areas.

ULTIMATELY, THE PSC ordered

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— State Sen. David Honigman
R-17th District

phone companies to submit plans allowing residents to call at least 15 miles in any direction from their homes.

In August 1990, Michigan Bell submitted the first version of those plans officially introduced this week. Expected to provide some relief for customers are the Circle Calling 20 and Circle Calling 30 plans.

According to Laird Spencer, senior director of marketing and business development, the plans will enable people to save \$20 and more than \$5 a month, respectively.

Circle Calling 20 will give customers seven hours of long distance and zone calling up to 20 miles for \$20 a month. A 30 percent discount will apply to calls that exceed the seven-hour limit.

Circle Calling 30 will provide a 30 percent discount on toll and zone charges up to 30 miles. 24 hours a day, seven days a week and includes 30 minutes of toll and zone calling for \$3 a month.

"WE ESTIMATE that nearly a million of our customers could save with these plans," Spencer said.

He added that the new plans are in direct response to changing customer needs.

"People who've moved away to the suburbs or rural areas have been demanding a way to reduce their bills for calls to family, friends and

businesses back in the old neighborhoods."

Honigman said the average phone bill for customers who make frequent toll calls (to non-adjacent exchanges within their area code) could be reduced from about \$85 to about \$42.

Another problem area he hopes the new plans will successfully address is phone bill inequity between Oakland County residents and those people living in outstate Michigan. In those areas, people can call further from their homes and businesses without being charged with long-distance calls.

"You pay, under this (new) system, for the cost you cause as opposed to the current system, which is based on the fortuity of geography," Honigman said.

Each child stars in own book

By Tim Smith
staff writer

Forget the electric blender. Some recipes in Susan Kalisky's kitchen are concocted with an IBM home computer and laser printer.

In that room, the West Bloomfield resident follows a special cookbook of sorts and serves up as many as 100 personalized books weekly — each spotlighting somebody's child.

For example, a mother might call Kalisky up on Monday, requesting a book about her 5-year-old son Ryan. By the next day, the finished product would be in the mail, with Ryan depicted as the star of the show.

"When they see their name in print they really get a kick out of it," said Kalisky, herself a mother of two children who operates "My Create-A-Book," from the comfort of her home.

With about 5,000 books sold in fiscal 1990-91, her business actually is one of the top U.S. franchises of the Florida-based "Create-A-Book." The parent company was founded in 1980 by Karen and John Hefly, a reading specialist and computer programmer, respectively.

AS TOLD by Kalisky, it all started when the Heflys (since then) decided to save a children's story they wrote about their son on computer. "One thing led to another . . . they thought, 'Why not also do one for our daughter?'"

Karen Hefly ran with the concept. Although today there are 12 titles such as "The Sports Book" and "My Fishing Adventure" available for franchise holders, no two copies of any title are alike.

That's where people like Kalisky and that cookbook come into play.

• The first step is investing a significant sum (\$15,000) on the hardware and materials (distributed by the parent company) required to set up shop. The latter include computer software, disk covers and illustrated pages, for example.

• Then, franchise holders find a good location and go to work, doing their own marketing, advertising and soliciting for customers. More on that part later.

• After an order is received, Kalisky sits down at her computer and types in the data required for printing a personalized book. Important facts such as name, age and hometown are plugged into the text provided by Hefly.

FOR "BABY'S Create-A-Book," which Kalisky produces for every newborn at Detroit Sinai Hospital, obvious facts about the birth are inserted.

"When mothers have their babies and a week later have personalized

books, they call me up and are almost in tears because they think it's so great."

• After punching a button on her computer keyboard, Kalisky within moments is collating laser-printed text and illustrations. Subsequently affixing a binder, photo sticker, and then slipping on a dust cover, the final product is ready to mail. The entire process takes minutes.

But having a successful business requires hard work and knowing how to open doors, something Kalisky admitted was aided by her previous experience as a marketing representative.

She mailed letters to a number of metropolitan Detroit hospitals about producing the personalized baby books. Eventually, Sinai Hospital called and offered a contract. Kalisky said is her "bread and butter."

For more information about obtaining a book from Kalisky, call 851-1160.

Wellness program teaches teamwork

Continued from Page 11

The wellness committee at Hillside Elementary has organized a weekly aerobic class on Mondays, and on Thursdays invites all employees from the district to play volleyball. Some people use the activity for Dump Your Plump points and others just come out to play.

Teachers Cheryl Jackson and Tamara Brewer head the Hillside wellness committee. Jackson said the Thursday games are "lots of fun" and include staffers from many schools and all departments and people of all skill levels.

"You really get to play with all different people," she said. "It keeps people together, especially in a big district."

O'Malley said the overall wellness concept came from an Employee Wellness and Recognition Committee made up of union presidents. In 1988, a select group of buildings in the district piloted a program, with employees getting wellness screenings and analysis.

Though it has saved the district no money in insurance premiums to date, O'Malley believes it will pay off in the long run. "A lot of the benefits are intangible," she said.

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SALE
Your Attor of Farmington Hills, located at 2875 Grand River, Farmington Hills, MI 48331, will hold a public sale on March 4, 1992 at 1:00 P.M. to satisfy the lien against the following tenants unless the same are satisfied before the sale date:
Joseph J. Tompkins, Unit B-48, Household, 1549 E.
James L. Stephens, Unit B-48, Household, 1549 E.
Steven C. Rittenberg, Unit C-251, Household, 1572 E.
William K. Abraham, Unit D-219, Household, 1549 E.
Pete Hagan, Unit F-2, Household 1549 E.
The contents of these units will be available for inspection the day prior to the sale and will be sold in the highest bidder. Sale will be held at Your Attor of Farmington Hills Telephone 475-6111
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