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CUB offers clinic on phone bills

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The Citizens Utility Board is teaching consumers how to save money on their phone bills with a free clinic Thursday night.

Board experts will sit down with residents for a one-on-one phone-bill analysis from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Rockford Public Library, 215 N. Wyman St., in Meeting Room B. Participants should enter through the Mulberry Street entrance.

"We've helped save the average consumer who attends the clinic about \$20 a month on their bills," said Dave Kolata, CUB executive director.

The board offers three key recommendations to customers, the first being to switch to one of AT&T's Consumer Choice plans for local service. The company is required to offer the plans, which were designed by the utility board as part of a legal settlement.

Residents also can opt for Pioneer's Rate Buster plan, which offers a 2 to 3 cents per minute rate. Customers who switch to Pioneer Telephone service also get a \$20 bill credit.

Lastly, Kolata said consumers should watch out for "all-you-can-eat" \$39.99 or \$49.99 plans that include features they might not be using, such as three-way-calling or AT&T's Line-Backer service, an optional inside-wire protection plan. Kolata said often, people don't make enough calls to benefit from the extra services.

Illinois Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn's office is cosponsoring the free phone-bill clinic. CUB was created by the Illinois Legislature to represent the interests of residential and small-business utility customers.

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