

CUB announces phone credit

By **DAVID KOLATA**

Letter to the Editor

Posted Apr 15, 2008 @ 11:42 AM

When I tell consumers across the state that they shouldn't be paying more than a nickel a minute to call long distance, they're shocked. Just imagine the look on their faces when I tell them that now they're also eligible for an automatic \$20 long-distance credit.

That's right. The Citizens Utility Board has negotiated the credit for one of the best long-distance plans we've ever seen: Pioneer Telephone's "Rate Buster."

Most long-distance companies have high rates and slap you with a monthly fee, even if you don't make a single call. However, Pioneer's rate is just 2 to 3 cents per minute for most Illinois consumers. (Others may have to pay a still-reasonable 3.3-4.9 cents per minute.)

A 99-cent monthly fee only applies if you want a paper bill (as opposed to an online bill) – and then only in months you make less than \$15 worth of long-distance calls.

CUB's ongoing analysis of the long-distance market consistently shows Pioneer as the best deal for most callers. When the Portland, Maine-based company discovered that our analysis led to new Illinois customers, Pioneer notified CUB that we were eligible for compensation.

Seeing a golden opportunity, we said "no thanks," but asked if Illinois consumers could get the money instead.

The resulting \$20 credit could cover several months, even a year, of long-distance bills.

To get the credit, Illinois consumers should call Pioneer at 1-877-492-6878 and ask for the "CUB discount." If you want more tips on how to cut your phone bill, visit CUB online, at www.CitizensUtilityBoard.org, or call CUB, at 1-800-669-5556. — David Kolata, executive director of the Citizens Utility Board

Copyright © 2008 GateHouse Media, Inc. Some Rights Reserved.

Original content available for non-commercial use under a Creative Commons license, except where noted.