

## LA SALLE COUNTY: CUB phone clinic offers savings advice

10/02/2009, 9:42 pm

[Comment on this story](#)

**Charles Stanley, charless@mywebtimes.com, 815-431-4063**

La Salle County Treasurer Don Lamps was happy: he learned how to cut his monthly home phone bill from \$48 down to \$32, for an annual savings of \$192.

"Whenever you can save a third of your costs that's a great deal. What the heck, you might as well have the money in your own pocket."

Lamps learned how to cut his phone bill after a personal counseling session with one of the three Citizens Utility Board representatives on hand Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the basement of the county building on Etna Road in Ottawa.

CUB is an Illinois nonprofit utility watchdog organization created by the Illinois Legislature.

Lamps' projected savings were almost dead on to the average of about \$200 a year that CUB says a typical phone bill can be reduced.

The session was set up by Lamps as a public service.

Besides advice, the visitors also were given energy-saving compact fluorescent light bulbs.

The event drew some 40 people, dead center on the average attendance of 30 to 50 people, said CUB outreach coordinator Shari Currie, who served as one of the three counselors.

Cutting Linebacker service, a \$7 monthly charge, is one of the easiest ways to save money, she said.

"That's an insurance that AT&T offers: Most people don't need it."

Another is by evaluating their long-distance service.

"All-distance plans don't make much sense for people who aren't making many long-distance calls."

Lamps found his savings by switching to Pioneer long distance service and AT&T's Consumer Choice Plus service.



**Photo: Charles Stanley**

Annie Warnock, a phone bill counselor from the Citizens Utility Board, provides savings advice to a La Salle County resident as part of a program sponsored by La Salle County Treasurer Don Lamps.

Currie said analyzing cell phone service for savings is a little more difficult. But for those who get online bills for their service the CUB Web site — [www.CUBCellphonesaver.com](http://www.CUBCellphonesaver.com) — allows them to be uploaded for analysis. Within moments there is a response identifying the cheapest calling plans and providing money-saving tips.

The service only works for T-Mobile, AT&T, Verizon, Sprint and U.S. Cellular.

For more information, call CUB's Consumer Hotline at 800-669-5556 or visit [www.citizensutilityboard.org](http://www.citizensutilityboard.org).

### **Slow â€ But Cheap â€ Internet service available**

As part of the concessions it made for federal approval of its merger with BellSouth, AT&T is offering Yahoo! High Speed Internet to new customers for \$10 per month for one year.

- The speed is 768 kilobits per second, about half as fast as most DSL hookups but about 10 times faster than most dial-up connections.
- The new customers must be an existing AT&T local phone customer who has not subscribed to AT&T Yahoo High Speed Internet during the past 12 months.
- Customers will be charged for a modem – either the basic modem at \$49.99 or the Wireless Gateway at \$79.99 and a shipping and handling fee on their first bill.
- The offer is available online only — meaning you must sign-up for it over the Internet — and expires Dec. 29, 2009.
- The sign-up site is at <https://swot.sbc.com/swot/promoLanding.do>.
- For assistance call AT&T at 1-800-244-4444 or CUB at 1-800-669-5556.