



## CUB calling out: You may be able to save money

Citizens Utility Board says many pay more for phone plans they don't need

**By Steve Tarter (starter@pjstar.com)**  
**Journal Star**

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WASHBURN — You may be paying too much for your AT&T landline telephone service.

That's the message that the Citizens Utility Board brought to Peoria and a number of other downstate cities on Wednesday.

"There's an alternative to the bloated, all-you-can-eat call packages offered by telephone companies," said CUB spokesman Patrick Deignan at a news conference at the Lakeview branch of the Peoria Public Library.

Three telephone plans - called Consumer's Choice Basic, Consumer's Choice Extra and Consumer's Choice Plus - provide a low-cost alternative, he said.

Plans range in cost from \$9.50 a month (up to 30 local calls per month) for the basic plan to \$15 for the extra plan allowing for unlimited local calls and the choice-plus plan for \$19.50 that allows for unlimited local calls and two features such as caller ID and call waiting, said Deignan.

A local call is one made within 15 miles, he said.

"What we've found is that many people never use all the features they pay for in some phone plans," said Deignan, noting that CUB helped devise the low-cost plans as part of a legal settlement with AT&T in 2006.

"Converting to one of these plans could mean big savings for the public. CUB estimates that \$485 million could be saved by Illinois consumers in a year," he said, adding that, as a result of passage of the state's Telecommunications Act last month, prices would remain in effect through June 2013.

Randy Fritz, a Williamsfield resident who represents this area on the CUB board, said 40,000 people have been able to cut their phone bills through assistance at the CUB website, [www.citizensutilityboard.org](http://www.citizensutilityboard.org).

"The average savings for people who used one of the cost-cutter plans has been \$194 a year. We've also been able to save cell-phone users an average of \$300 a year by recommending different plans," he said. CUB offers help at [www.CUBcellphonesaver.com](http://www.CUBcellphonesaver.com), said Fritz.

For long-distance calls, Deignan recommended customers use Pioneer Telephone, based in Portland, Maine, that offers AT&T customers long-distance rates of 2 to 3 cents per minute plus a one-time \$10 "CUB" credit. AT&T's basic long-distance plan charges 5 cents per minute and a \$5 monthly fee.

For more information, call CUB at (866)688-4282. AT&T can be reached at (866) 582-0713.

Steve Tarter can be reached at 686-3260 or [starter@pjstar.com](mailto:starter@pjstar.com).

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