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RATEWATCHER TELECOM GUIDE

VOLUME 13

JANUARY 2004

RATEWATCHER TELECOM

PUBLIC ADVOCATE FILES ANOTHER APPEAL TO THE MAINE SUPREME COURT AFTER THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION AGAIN REFUSES TO INVESTIGATE VERIZON'S PROFITS

In February, 2003 the Maine Supreme Court agreed with the Public Advocate that the PUC violated state law when it granted Verizon a new five-year regulatory plan, and local rate increases, without ensuring that local rates would be no higher than they would be under traditional cost-based regulation. The Court sent the case back to the PUC for further proceedings. However, seven months after the Supreme Court's decision, on September 25, 2003, the PUC simply reinstated the same rate plan that the Court had overturned. The PUC claimed that it is "not possible" to comply with the applicable law, and "not in the public interest" to investigate Verizon's rates to determine whether they are excessive. However, the PUC didn't make clear why investigating lower local rates would not be in the best interests of Verizon's customers.

Continued on page 2

MAINE
PUBLIC
ADVOCATE

THE BOTTOM LINE

Long-Distance Plans - Plans from Telrite, Touchtone, Pioneer and Norcom offer the best choices for most Maine customers. Telrite now offers the lowest full-service instate rate of 3.52¢ per minute, and great interstate and international rates, but charges a \$2 monthly fee if usage dips below \$20. USA is a good choice for certain customers who want to bundle local and long-distance service (see details on charts at pages 4, 6, and 7).

Local Service - If you use Caller ID, Call Waiting or Call Forwarding, USA offers an attractive residential local alternative to Verizon, along with a 3.9¢ rate for both instate and interstate toll calls. Business customers have several choices in the local service market (see details on page 4).

Prepaid Calling - Sam's Club/AT&T has lowered its rate to 2.96¢ and remains our top pick for prepaid calls in the U.S. (see details on page 7). Don't add minutes by phone — buy a new card to get the lower rate.

Internet Services - DSL service is expanding and priced as low as \$30/mo. by GWI. Statewide toll-free dial-up service starts at \$14.95. National no-frills dial-up plans with local access from parts of Maine can be had for as little as \$5.50/month from 550access.com (see details on pages 14 -15).

Wireless Services - Low-volume or emergency-only users should consider prepaid wireless (see p. 13). A monthly fee plan is best for those with moderate to high usage (see p. 12) but the best choice depends on many individual factors.

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Continued from page 1 - The Public Advocate believes this decision is illogical and illegal. In response, the Public Advocate has taken another appeal to the Maine Supreme Court and has asked state legislators to consider a new law that would require rate reviews to set a fair starting point before the beginning of any multi-year regulation plan. The Legislature last year required such a rate review before the start of rate plans for electric and natural gas companies but chose not to do so for Verizon and other local phone companies because of the Supreme Court appeal and PUC case that was pending at the time.

The Public Advocate believes that Verizon's local service customers may be paying well over \$100 million in excessive rates over a five-year period. Factors suggesting that rates should be lower include savings from the two huge mergers that formed Verizon, declining costs of the technology used to provide telephone service, and lower financing costs. We expect the Supreme Court to hear arguments in this latest appeal in early 2004, at about the same time that the Legislature will be considering our proposed legislation dealing with this issue.

DO NOT CALL!

Few people enjoy getting calls from a telemarketer at dinner time (or any time). The Federal Trade Commission's new "Do Not Call" list was so popular with telephone customers that some 50 million households signed up within the first few months. However, the new federal Do Not Call law is already having a bumpy ride. The Direct Marketers Association sued the government, claiming that the restrictions on telemarketers violate their free speech rights under the First Amendment to the Constitution. However, in the meantime, the new list is effective and customers may sign up online at www.donotcall.gov or call 1-888-382-1222 (TTY 1-866-290-4236). Maine customers who signed up on the Maine Do Not Call list need not sign up for the federal list - your name and number has been automatically transmitted to the federal "Do Not Call" list. After signing up, most, but not all, telemarketing calls should stop after 3 months. You may make a complaint about any telemarketer violating the new rules, or verify that you are already on the list, at www.donotcall.gov or 1-888-382-1222. Note that the new law does not restrict charities and political groups.

DO NOT SHARE! (PROTECT YOUR PRIVACY)

Verizon has the right to share what it knows about you with its "affiliates, agents and partners" for marketing purposes. If you wish to restrict Verizon from spreading information about you, call 1-866-483-3885 to protect the confidentiality of your personal information. If you are served by a different local phone company, you may make a similar request by calling their local office.

THOUSANDS OF ONESTAR CUSTOMERS LOSE SERVICE IS IT STILL SAFE TO CHOOSE A SMALL COMPETITOR?

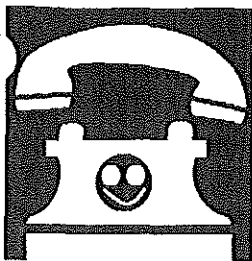
Last October, most customers of OneStar long-distance discovered, without any advance notice, that they could no longer make long-distance calls. A week or two later, many customers received a letter warning them that their OneStar local service would be shut off on November 7, 2003. OneStar owed money to Verizon and Verizon responded by shutting down OneStar's access to Verizon's facilities. Although Verizon would not be allowed to shut off service to its own customers without permission from the PUC, Verizon had no obligations to OneStar's retail customers.

This unfortunate situation revealed a gap in Maine's consumer protection rules. The PUC is already working on a new rule designed to prevent abandonment of service without proper notice to customers. In addition, a national consumer advocate organization, of which the Public Advocate is a member, will urge regulators across the country to adopt new rules that would require notice and customer education about alternatives before any customer's local service may be discontinued. Therefore, we do not expect this situation to occur again. In our view, customers should not hesitate to choose smaller competitive companies. After all, MCI demonstrated that even one of the biggest and most well-known telephone companies could become insolvent and bankrupt.

The Public Advocate is available to assist customers, including former OneStar customers, in finding the best local and long-distance service alternatives.

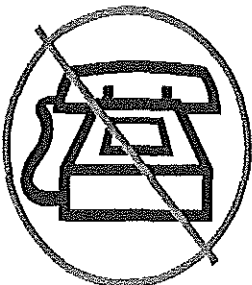
TELEPHONE DO'S AND DON'TS

DO:



Switch to a low-priced long-distance plan (see Bottom Line page 1).
Choose a good prepaid calling account, especially for use away from home.
Sign up with donotcall.gov or call 1-888-382-1222 -- to reduce telemarketing calls.
Use free directory assistance on the web (Verizon allows 3 free instate DA calls per mo.).
Choose special per-call offers or unlimited minute plans if you're a big talker (see page 5).
Shop for local service if you're a business, or if you're a residential customer using over 800 minutes per month or buy optional features like Caller ID and Call Waiting.

DON'T:



Dial 0 (either alone or before a telephone number) or any operator-assisted call.
Make collect calls (use or provide a prepaid account).
Use 10-10 dial around numbers (but see 10-10 News below).
Dial direct from a hotel room (unless you check and agree to charges in advance).
Dial direct from payphones (use your prepaid account access number).
Use calling cards that are not prepaid (most are very expensive).
Use calling plans with monthly fees or non-standard surcharges.
Pay for inside wiring insurance (Verizon calls it "Telesure").
Pay a dollar or more for a phone number for interstate directory assistance.
Connect to the Internet with a non-local or non toll-free number.
Dial numbers that begin with 900, 976, 940 or foreign area codes like 809, 284, and 876 -- to connect to pay per call or "information" services.

10-10 NEWS

USF Update

From January through March, 2004, the maximum USF surcharge on interstate and international usage is 8.7%. This rate also applies to the FCC line charge on local bills.

IS ANY DIAL-AROUND (10-10-XXX) SERVICE WORTH DIALING?

The Public Advocate does not recommend the regular use of any dial-around service because the rates are generally higher than the lowest rates available from the best direct-dial presubscribed long-distance calling plans. Customers who choose not to have a direct-dial long distance plan would do better with a prepaid service than any 10-10 service. Nearly every 10-10 service charges a substantial minimum price per call, making it an expensive way to talk for a short time. Also, unlike prepaid calling services, you don't avoid extra taxes and USF surcharges when you use 10-10 number. In fact, some even charge a monthly fee for any month in which you use their 10-10 service, even for just a minute (Vartec's 10-10-811 charges \$2.95/mo.). Also beware of the possibility of sudden rate changes when using a 10-10 number. However, dial-around services may be useful as a backup to your regular long-distance service.

10-10-297 by Vartec offers the same rates as MCI's 10-10-987. Both offer 3¢ per minute for all calls to the U.S., Canada, and much of Western Europe -- plus a per-call charge of 39¢. Our opinion -- a good deal for long calls (especially to Europe) but not so good for most calls under 4 minutes.

10-10-345 by AT&T offers 5¢ per minute for interstate calls and 10¢ per minute for instate Maine calls, but now bills an additional charge of 30¢ per call. This is not a good deal, especially for short instate toll calls.

LOCAL COMPETITION

LOCAL TELEPHONE COMPETITION — UPDATE

Local service includes unlimited calls within your local calling for a flat monthly fee. These local service options are available throughout Verizon territory except as noted. Rates shown exclude surcharges and taxes. Significant discounts for residential customers are limited to those who use optional local features such as Caller ID, Call Waiting, Three-Way Calling, Speed-Dial, Call-Forwarding, and Voice-Mail. Business customers may find significant discounts. Business rates depend on number of lines, time commitments, and bundled service packages. Business rates shown are for basic services -- call companies for information and rates that apply to enhanced services.

Name/Phone/Website	Bus. or Res.	Monthly Rates (Res./Bus.)	Notes
ChoiceOne (800) 353-6000, choiceonecom.com	B	\$29 to \$35 per line (\$29 requires 5-year contract)	
Conversent (800) 275-2088, conversent.com	B	\$25 to \$30.50 per line	Greater Portland area
CTC (800) 825-5282, ctcnet.com	B	\$29 per line	Emerging from Chapter 11
Direct Line (888) 619-4535, downeastcomm.com	B & R	R \$25 (including features*) B \$28 to \$35 (\$28 w/ 2-yr contract)	*Incl. all calling features on line at time of transfer
Lightship (877) 846-700, lightship.net	B	Small bus.- \$26.38* (lower rates for larger businesses)	*Rate available from agent - (888) 345-1488 (888) 262-7864
Mid-Maine (877) 643-6246, midmaine.com	B	B \$27 - \$34 + 0 to \$20 per account R - service may be available soon.	Rates slightly higher in some areas
MCI (800) 395-1926, theneighborhood.com	B & R	Unlimited local and long-distance Res. - \$50 Bus. - \$60	5 calling features included
Norcom (877) 484-7283, (877) 885-9844, (888) 262-7864, norcomld.com	B & R	B 10% discount from Verizon rates R 5% discount from Verizon rates	
Oxford (800) 520-9911, oxfordnetworks.com	B & R	R -16.63 - \$19.72 B- \$34.51- \$37.93 R - \$39.95 (with 5 features) B - \$32 (lower over 10 lines)	Norway/South Paris Parts of Lewiston/Auburn
PineTree (866) 746-3873, pinetreenetworks.com	B	\$28.65 - \$34.02 (incl. surcharges)	Portland/Lewiston areas
Time Warner (800) 833-2253, twmaine.com (Voice over Internet)	R	\$40 with digital cable or Roadrunner \$50 without the above	Southern Maine only Includes unlimited long-distance, Caller ID, etc.
USA Telephone (888) 872-9400, savewithusa.com	B & R	R - \$25 with 3 features B - \$30 per line with 3 features	3.9¢ instate and inter-state LD minutes (B and R)

OUR POLICY — The Public Advocate does not make any representations regarding the financial health of the telephone companies listed in our publications. However, we would not include any company that we know to be providing unreliable or inferior service.

VERIZON'S LOCAL RATES HAVE CHANGED -- HERE'S WHY

1. **Statewide rates have replaced rate groups** – In November, the PUC approved Verizon's request to charge one statewide local rate for premium local service and one statewide local rate for economy local service. Previously, the local rate varied, depending on the number of toll-free lines within the local calling area and generally, rural customers enjoyed lower rates than urban customers. Since this change caused a rate increase of as much as \$3/mo. for some rural customers, the Public Advocate urged the PUC to retain a separate rate for small rural exchanges and a separate rate for larger more urban exchanges. The PUC rejected our proposal.
2. **Local Calling Area Expansion** – As of December 15, nearly all local calling areas were expanded to add adjacent telephone exchanges to each calling area. The PUC allowed Verizon to recover the cost of these expansions, in part, by adding 64¢ to all local telephone bills. Customers of independent local telephone companies may see significantly higher rate increases due to calling area expansions. If you want to know which 3-digit prefixes are now included in your toll-free local calling area, and the difference between your new premium and economy calling areas, ask your local phone company, check our web site, or give us a call. The correct choice between premium and economy service depends upon whether you frequently call other exchanges within the premium area.

Verizon's statewide standard local rates are now \$17.31 for economy service and \$18.81 for premium service for residential customers. Standard business local rates are now \$34.90 for economy service and \$38.01 for premium service.

FEATURED COMPANY... USA TELEPHONE

A MAINE-BASED TELEPHONE COMPANY OFFERING LOCAL AND LONG-DISTANCE SERVICE TO RESIDENTIAL AND BUSINESS CUSTOMERS -- Is It a Good Deal?

Residential Rates - For \$25/month, you get unlimited local service including Caller ID w/name, call waiting, and call forwarding at no extra charge. This is about \$6 higher than Verizon's local rate without these features, but cheaper than Verizon's rates with these features. You also get instate and interstate long-distance minutes at 3.9¢ per minute with full-minute rounding.

Business Rates – For \$29.95 per line, you get unlimited local service plus the same 3 features described above. This rate is as much as \$7 less expensive than Verizon's business rate without features, and also comes with long-distance rates of 3.9¢ for all instate or interstate toll calls.

Our opinion – A good choice for many residential and business customers. **For residential customers** -- since the local rate is about \$6 higher than Verizon's local rate, it's a good deal mainly for those who are interested in the included extra features. USA's total rate is cheaper than Verizon's for customers who would buy Caller ID alone or a combination of the other included features. The 3.9¢ long-distance rate is excellent but comparable to other good stand-alone long-distance plans. **For business customers** -- USA's local rate beats Verizon's rate. While small business customers may find slightly lower local rates from other competitors, USA charges no connection fee and bundles an excellent long-distance rate of 3.9¢ per minute.

Note – Local service competitive plans are not available to customers of independent rural telephone companies. (USA also offers other rate plans).

LONG-DISTANCE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE MAKING CHANGES TO YOUR PHONE SERVICES

For the vast majority of people, switching phone service is a simple and easy process – usually requiring little more than dialing the toll-free number of the new phone company. But it's important to have a basic understanding of the different types of phone services in order to avoid unpleasant surprises. First and foremost, it is crucial to understand the difference between local service, instate long-distance service, and state-to-state/international long distance service. Each of these services can be chosen independently so customers need to make their intentions clear when making phone service changes.

Switching Long-Distance Service – The vast majority of customers will want to switch their instate (Maine) and state-to-state long distance service at the same time -- and to the same company -- because the best offers from the best companies now charge favorable rates for both types of long-distance service. There will be just one \$5 fee from your local carrier for making both changes at once and you will get one bill for all of your toll calls (the new company usually pays the \$5 fee upon request). You will still receive a monthly bill for local service from your existing local telephone company if you switch only your long-distance service. The switch is accomplished by simply calling the toll-free number of your new company of choice.

Canceling all Long-Distance Service – A growing number of customers have decided to ask their local phone company to disconnect all direct-dial long distance service from their line. Customers who make that choice usually do so to avoid getting bills for monthly fees and surcharges from a long-distance company. Once all long-distance service is canceled, it becomes necessary to use a prepaid calling account or a 10-10 dial around number to make any call outside of your local calling area.

However, there's a better way to avoid unnecessary monthly costs associated with long-distance service. Instead of canceling all long-distance service, customers should consider switching to a reputable full-service long-distance provider that charges no monthly fees or monthly minimum. Then, if you make no calls, you get no charges. But you will then have the convenience of direct-dial long-distance service whenever you need it. The cost of calls is just slightly more than the cost of prepaid minutes and much lower than the cost of the vast majority of 10-10 numbers. In fact, short calls using the best direct-dial services are often priced lower than a short call using a prepaid account because prepaid services always round-up to the next minute while the best direct-dial services offer billing in 6-second increments. (See page 7.)

Switching Local Service - Local service competition is not nearly as developed as long-distance competition in Maine, but Verizon's local customers do have other choices. For residential customers, those who use over 800 minutes per month of long-distance and those who purchase optional local calling features are the ones who may find significant savings from competitive local providers. Most business customers can save money by selecting a competitive local service provider. Switching your local provider can be accomplished in much the same way as switching your long-distance service – just call the new company. However, the cost of switching local service may be more expensive. While a change in your toll service costs only \$5, "installation" fees for a new local service may be much higher. Verizon's fee for new service or for switching back to Verizon's local service is \$44.75 (residential) or \$56 (business) but it may cost as little as \$12 if your local telephone company simply resells Verizon's service.

Customers are entitled to retain their existing phone number and directory listing when changing local service. If construction of a new line is needed, it may be best to order the new service from Verizon and then switch to a competitor after installation, if the competitive carrier charges higher installation rates.

HOW MUCH DO YOU SAVE BY USING PREPAID CALLING FROM HOME?

IS IT WORTH THE INCONVENIENCE? - A growing number of customers are canceling their subscribed long-distance plans and relying primarily on prepaid accounts for calls from home. However, given the disadvantages of prepaid service, this may not be the best solution for most people. Prepaid services always involve prepayment, extra dialing, full-minute rounding, and the risk of disconnection when minutes run out. Some prepaid services terminate your account when no new minutes are purchased in a 6-month period and most offer no record of your calls. On the other hand, almost everyone who travels should have a good prepaid account to make low-priced calls when *away* from home.

The following chart illustrates that some short calls may be priced lower when using a full-service 4.9¢ per minute long-distance plan with 6-second billing, as compared to the Sam's Club/AT&T prepaid card, which rounds all calls up to the next full minute. Your actual savings from 6-second billing depends on the exact length of your calls.

Cost of Call

<u>Call Duration</u>	<u>Sam's Club/AT&T</u>	<u>4.9 Cent Plan w/6-second billing</u>
18 seconds	2.96¢	1.47¢
66 seconds	5.92¢	5.39¢
2.1 minutes	8.88¢	10.29¢
5.1 minutes	17.76¢	24.99¢
10.1 minutes	32.56¢	49.98¢
20.1 minutes	62.16¢	98.49¢

Note - Sam's/AT&T now charges 2.96¢ per minute

PREPAID CALLING — UPDATE



	Sam's Club/AT&T	OneSuite.com	BigZoo.com
US Rate 48 (states)	2.96¢	2.9¢	3.9¢ (2.9¢ from Portland area)
Western Europe	5.92¢ - 8.88¢	3.9¢ - 10¢	3.9¢ to 6.4¢*
Canada	5.92¢	3.5¢	3.4¢
Other Fees	5% sales tax on initial store purchase and phone refills	None	75¢/month
How to buy?	Sam's Club (similar offers at BJ's & Costco)	www.onesuite.com	www.bigzoo.com
Expiration	Never	6 months from last purchase	6 months from last purchase
Record of call	No	Yes via Internet	No
Special Features	Can use from other countries	Can skip PIN #	Can skip PIN #
Customer Service #	800-530-6744	866-417-8483	800-230-4875
* Lower rates available using local access number from Portland area			

BIG TALKER DEPARTMENT

AT&T UNLIMITED - (1-800-288-4968) For \$30 per month, you get unlimited instate and interstate long-distance minutes to any U.S. phone number. This does not include local service. AT&T charges an extra 99¢ as a "regulatory assessment fee." This plan may be of interest to customers who make over 800 minutes in toll calls every month. AT&T does not offer this plan to customers served by rural independent local phone companies. The cost of this plan, added to your cost for local service, results in a slightly lower bill than MCI's Neighborhood (which includes local service), but results in two phone bills.

MCI NEIGHBORHOOD - www.theneighborhood.com (1-877-777-6271) Unlimited local and long-distance minutes, caller ID, call waiting (with ID), speed dial, 3-way calling, and voice mail, for a flat monthly price of \$50 (around \$63 with surcharges and taxes). This plan is good for residential customers in Verizon territory who use over 800 minutes per month or who currently pay for various calling features. Similar business plan is \$60 and lower rates may apply to additional lines.

USA DATANET - www.usadatanet.com (1-877-499-2368) Offers a maximum per-call charge of 99¢ for calls to ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA, D.C., DE, MD, VA, and WV. The maximum charge is \$1.99 for all other calls in the U.S. and Canada. The service is available only through local access numbers, which are available in most of Verizon territory. Service also requires advance sign-up and use of a PIN number.

VOICE OVER INTERNET - (See, for example: **Vonage**, www.vonage.com, **Packet8**, www.packet8.net, and **VoicePulse** www.voicepulse.com) If you have a DSL or cable modem Internet connection, you can buy a device that connects to your regular phone and allows your local and long-distance phone calls to ride on the Internet. There are currently about 20 providers of such services. For between \$20 and \$40/month, you get unlimited local and long-distance calling within the U.S. (limited usage plans are also available). Currently, most of the usual local phone bill surcharges do not apply, saving about \$10 per month in add-ons to regular local phone service. International calls are extra but at very low rates. Quality should be almost as good as regular phone service, but less reliable since it depends on electric power and your Internet connection. 911 service may be much less reliable. See also, Time Warner, P. 4

Working Assets: There's Fat in the Rates and in the Free Ice Cream

Working Assets Long Distance markets itself as an "idealistic" phone company. It offers a coupon for a pint of Ben and Jerry's ice cream for each of 12 months, a coupon for 60 free long-distance minutes for each of 6 months, and promises to contribute 1% of your bill to charities. Although these rates aren't so bad, when we do the math, we find that you can buy your own ice cream, make your own charitable donations, and buy your long-distance minutes from another company for significantly less money. Working Assets rates are similar to those of AT&T except that their monthly fee is \$3.95. By our calculations, a typical customer using 300 minutes per month with a lower-cost company would save enough to contribute about thirty times as much to charity (or save the money), even after spending \$2.95 for ice cream and paying for the 60 free minutes.

TOP FIVE WAYS TO GET A REALLY BIG PHONE BILL

1. Make an operator-assisted call to a cell phone in North Korea (if there are any).
2. Call Aunt Mabel on her Iridium satellite phone to talk about her health problems.
3. Call Miss Cleo for your horoscope every day.
4. Allow your two-year old to "play" with your telephone.
5. Allow your chat-room using teenager to randomly select an AOL access number.

SAMPLING OF RESIDENTIAL & BUSINESS LONG-DISTANCE TELEPHONE PLANS AS OF JANUARY 2004												
COMPANY	AT&T att.com		Covista kissld.com		IDT idt.net		MCI mci.com		Norcom norcomld.com		Pioneer pioneertelephone.com	
FEATURED PLAN (RESIDENTIAL)	One Rate 7¢		3 cent plan		5 cent plan		Nationwide Instate		3.9¢ Plan		Rate Buster	
	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate
RESIDENTIAL Per Minute Rate (excluding surcharges & taxes)	8¢	7¢	8¢	3¢	9¢	5¢	5¢	5¢	3.9¢	3.9¢	4.5¢	3.5¢
Monthly Minimum	none		none		none		none		none		none	
Monthly Fee	\$5.94		\$3.00		\$3.95		\$5.95		\$3.95*		99¢*	
RESIDENTIAL SAMPLE MONTHLY COSTS : INCLUDES 50% INSTATE/50% INTERSTATE MINUTES & MONTHLY FEES, EXCLUDING SURCHARGES & TAXES.												
LOW @ 10 mins. per month	\$6.69		\$3.55*		\$4.65		\$6.45		\$4.34		\$1.39*	
MEDIUM @ 100 mins. per month	\$13.44		\$8.50*		\$10.95		\$10.95		\$7.85		\$4.99*	
HIGH @ 500 mins. per month	\$43.44		\$30.50		\$38.95		\$30.95		\$23.45		\$20.00	
HIGHEST @ 1,000 mins. per month	\$80.94		\$58.00		\$73.95		\$55.95		\$39.00		\$40.00	
Hawaii/Alaska	7¢		10¢		16.2¢ / 14.9¢		5¢		19¢		12¢	
RESIDENTIAL INTERNATIONAL RATES*												
Canada	6¢		5¢		5¢		7¢/5¢*		10¢		7.5¢	
Ireland	12¢ (+\$3.95/mo.)		7¢		7¢ (+\$2/mo.)		16¢/8¢* (+\$2/mo.)		8¢		7¢	
Italy	12¢		7¢		7¢		16¢/8¢*		8¢		6.9¢	
Russia	15¢		18¢		19¢		31¢/23¢*		22¢		11¢	
Mexico (Mexico City)	10¢		18¢ (9¢)		19¢		39¢/25¢* (16¢/10¢*)		30¢		15.5¢	
AVAILABLE IN RURAL INDEPENDENT AREAS?	yes		no		yes*		yes		yes**		yes	
(BUSINESS)	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate
Business Per Minute Rates (excluding surcharges & taxes)	15¢	6.9¢*	10¢	3.9¢	8.9¢	5¢	10.9¢	6¢	3.9¢	3.9¢	3.5¢	3.5¢
Monthly Minimum	\$25.00**		none		none		\$10.00		none		none	
Monthly Fee	none		\$4.00		\$7.95**		none		none		none	
PICC Charges (per line)	\$2.20		\$4.31		\$2.29		\$5.00		\$2.95		\$2.95	
In-bound 800 Rates	6.9¢***	6.9¢***	10¢**	3.9¢**	7.9¢	7.9¢	10.9¢**	6¢**	3.9¢	3.9¢	3.5¢**	3.5¢**
TO SUBSCRIBE, CALL:	1-800-222-0300		1-800-323-6875		1-888-802-0082		1-800-444-3333		sold by agents***		1-888-492-6878***	
NOTE: Universal Service Fund surcharges are added to the rates shown (8.7% expected for January through March 2004).	*Interstate business rate drops to 6.5¢ with online billing.		*Atl. Plan - 8.9¢ instate, 3.9¢ interstate with no monthly fee (preferable for low-use customers).		*16¢ instate, 5.9¢ interstate applies in independent areas.		*Weekday/weekend.		*Fee waived when usage exceeds \$20 or w/2-yr. term.		*99¢ fee waived w/online billing or usage over \$15	
\$5 fee to change carrier is often covered by new carrier upon request.	**If \$25 business minimum is not met, monthly fee of \$14.95 applies.		**\$1/month per line for 800 inbound service.		**\$7.95 fee covers multiple lines.		**\$5/mo. fee and \$10 monthly minimum for 800 inbound service.		**7.9¢ rate for non-Vz areas		**99¢/mo. per 800 number.	
PICC charges (a per-line access charge) apply to multi-line business customers only.	***Toll free service fee \$10/mo.		\$2 per month extra for paper billing.		6-second billing.		MCI offers unlimited local and long distance plans; Res.-\$50/mo., Bus.-\$60/mo. See p. 8 for additional details.		6 second billing.		*** Plans also available from agent at 1 888 262-7864.	
1-minute billing unless otherwise noted.	Add'l .74% USF for bus. customers.		6 second billing.						***Innovative: 1-877-885-9844 Coastal: 1- 888-262-7864 GTI: 1-877-484-7283		6-second billing	
*Beware that international calls to mobile phones may be priced much higher.	Alt. Plan - unlimited long-distance for \$30/mo. See p. 8 for additional details.								Alt. Plans - 6.9¢ instate / 2.9¢ interstate with no monthly fee. 4.9¢ instate and interstate with 1-year term. Lower rates with local service.		Alt. Plans - Res. 4.5¢ instate/2.9¢ interstate with \$1.49 monthly fee w/1 min. billing	
Rates may vary between agents for some companies. Insist on lowest rates shown here.											Pioneer is a Maine-based company.	

SAMPLING OF RESIDENTIAL & BUSINESS LONG-DISTANCE TELEPHONE PLANS AS OF JANUARY 2004

COMPANY	Sprint sprint.com		Telrite telrite.com		Total Call *		Touchtone touchtone.net		USA usald.com		Verizon verizon.com	
FEATURED PLAN	7¢ Anytime				Nation's Favorite		4.9 ¢ Plan		Straight Talk *		5 Cents	
(RESIDENTIAL)	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate
RESIDENTIAL per minute rate (excluding surcharges & taxes))	10¢	7¢	3.52¢	4.05¢	6.4¢	4.4¢	4.9¢	4.9¢	3.9¢	3.9¢	5¢	5¢
Monthly Minimum	none		*		none		none		none		none	
Monthly Fee	\$6.94		\$2.00*		none		none		none		\$5.95	
RESIDENTIAL SAMPLE MONTHLY COSTS : INCLUDES 50% INSTATE/50% INTERSTATE MINUTES & MONTHLY FEES, EXCLUDING SURCHARGES & TAXES.												
LOW @ 10 mins. per month	\$7.79		\$2.38		54¢		49¢		39¢		\$6.45	
MEDIUM @ 100 mins. per month	\$15.44		\$5.79		\$5.40		\$4.90		\$3.90		\$10.95	
HIGH @ 500 mins. per month	\$49.44		\$20.93		\$27.00		\$24.50		\$19.50		\$30.95	
HIGHEST @ 1,000 mins. per month	\$91.94		\$37.85		\$54.00		\$49.00		\$39.00		\$55.95	
Hawaii/Alaska	7¢		7.31¢		30¢		15¢		22¢		5¢	
RESIDENTIAL INTERNATIONAL RATES*												
Canada	6¢		5¢		8.7¢		6¢		8¢		7¢	
Ireland	12¢ +\$2/mo.		11¢ +\$2/mo.		10.2¢ +\$2/mo.		10¢		5¢		10¢ +\$4/mo.	
Italy	12¢		6¢		9¢		11¢		5¢		10¢	
Russia (Moscow)	30¢		6¢ (5¢)		24.3¢		19¢		17¢ (5¢)		20¢	
Mexico (Mexico City)	19¢ (8¢)		14¢ (7¢)		29.7¢		18¢		23¢		18¢ (8¢)	
AVAILABLE IN RURAL INDEPENDENT AREAS?	yes		yes**		yes		yes		no		no	
(BUSINESS)	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate
Business per minute rates (excluding surcharges and taxes))	14.3¢	7.5¢	3.52¢	4.05¢	6.4¢	4.4¢	4.9¢	4.9¢	3.9¢*	3.9¢*	9¢	9¢
Monthly Minimum	\$50.00		none		none		none		none		\$7.50	
Monthly Fee	\$12.00*		\$2.00**		none		none		none		none	
PICC Charges (per line)	none		\$2.95		\$3.75**		none		none		\$3.10	
In-bound 800 Rates	14.3¢**	7.5¢**	7.76¢	7.76¢	10¢***	6.4¢***	4.9¢	4.9¢	7.9¢**	7.9¢**	9¢*	9¢*
TO SUBSCRIBE, CALL:	1-800-746-3767		1-888-619-4535		1-877-603-5757		sold only by agents*		1-877-872-5333		1-800-585-4466	
NOTE: Universal Service Fund surcharges are added to the rates shown (8.7% expected for January through March 2004).	*Bus. monthly fee waived if usage exceeds \$50.		*No monthly fee when usage exceeds \$20.		*www.total-call-long- distance.com		6-second billing.		*This long-distance plan requires USA's local service:		*\$5 monthly fee waived for first 6 months of 800 inbound service.	
\$5 fee to change carrier is often covered by new carrier upon request.	**\$5/mo. fee for 800 service.		**\$4.95 fee applies in non-Verizon areas		**applies only to multi- line bus. customers		Touchtone Agents in Maine: *1 800 619-2537 1 888 345-1488 1 877 885-9844 1 888 262-7864 1 888 594-2500 1 877 484-7283 1 866 764-8001		Res. \$25/mo. Bus. \$30/mo. See p. 5. for details.		Alt. Plans include - Interstate - Talk Time offers bulk min. as low as 4¢ per min. (4¢ applies w/1000 min.) Instate - Pine Tree plan \$5.40 monthly minimum incl 60 min. 8¢ add'l min.	
PICC charges (a per-line access charge) apply to multi-line business customers only.	Lower rates available for res. and bus. with online ordering.		6 second billing for business customers and 1 minute billing for residential customers.		***\$1 per month fee for each 800 service.		6-second billing for calls within 48 lower states.		**800 service fee - \$4.95 per line.		Bus. rates are lower for high volume customers (over \$75). 6-second billing may apply to bus. plans.	
1-minute billing unless otherwise noted.									USA is a Maine-based company.			
*Beware that international calls to mobile phones may be priced much higher.												
Rates may vary between agents for some companies. Insist on lowest rates shown here.												

WIRELESS DEPARTMENT

WHAT ARE THE RISKS WHEN YOU MAKE YOUR

CELL PHONE YOUR *ONLY* PHONE?

Should you drop your traditional wireline phone and rely on your wireless phone for all of your calling? While many people are generally satisfied after "cutting the cord," there are risks that suggest that it's not the best choice for most people in Maine.

Coverage: In rural areas, signal strength is often too weak for reliable communication. Don't consider using a cell phone as your primary phone unless you've carefully checked the signal strength at your home and in areas where you'll need it when traveling. Although you can view coverage maps on wireless company web sites, specific geographic details of adequate coverage are hard to determine. Poor signal strength, dead zones, and overloaded networks can cause disconnection, static, and other interruptions to your conversation. Always ask for a written grace period within which you may cancel your contract and return your phone for a full refund.

Price: Wireless service prices have declined to the point where they are comparable to wireline prices for many customers, and wireless service often includes extras such as Caller ID, voice mail, and long-distance minutes at no extra charge. However, wireless service gets very expensive when you exceed your allotted airtime minutes — and incoming calls also use your airtime allotment. Wireless charges can also get very high when you are roaming outside of your designated home area. Carefully consider how much you will use the phone, and where, before selecting a wireless plan.

Safety: If you dial 911 from your wired phone, the emergency operators can immediately determine your location, but, for now, this E911 service is not available from your wireless provider. Although wireless service provides less reliable access to emergency service, it does offer the *possibility* of emergency access when you're away from home — something your wired phone cannot do.

Service: The quality of your connection is often well below the quality of a wired phone. Wireless customer service is not regulated in Maine, so you're on your own when you have a billing dispute.

WANT A NEW WIRELESS SERVICE? SOON YOU CAN TAKE YOUR PHONE NUMBER WITH YOU!

The new "Number Portability" rule adopted by the FCC is finally being implemented after heavy lobbying against it by the wireless industry. The rules became effective on November 24, 2003 for customers in the 100 largest metro areas in the U.S. and the rest of us get it by May 24, 2004 (since Portland ranks 150, Maine has no metro area in the top 100). As numbers can be transferred from one wireless company to another, and from your landline to a new wireless service, consumers and businesses will be more free to shop around and switch — without worrying about notifying friends and customers of a new phone number. Since wireless companies know that their customers will be more likely to shop, many may try to lock-in their customers by enticing them to sign 2-year contracts. Customers should avoid that unless the deal is irresistible.


If you are changing your geographic location, you may not be able to keep the same phone number. The area code and first 3 digits of your wireless and wired phone number still determine how your calls are routed and may determine your wireless home (roaming-free) area. Also, for the people who call you, the area code and 3-digit prefix of your wireless or wired phone number will continue to determine which calls are local and which calls are toll calls.

Beware of costs: First, although you will be able to take your number with you, you probably won't be able to take your old phone. Second, some wireless carriers may charge new number portability fees to all customers and some carriers may charge a fee for each request to transfer an existing wireless phone number. Number portability is already in effect for plain wired local telephone service.

Convenience: When you switch your home wireline service to a new company, you can keep your telephone number and all of your home extension phones. Wireless phones do not permit you to connect extension phones, although multiple phones can be activated on the same account for additional fees. Also beware that wireless number directory assistance is not widely available.

SAMPLE OF MONTHLY FEE WIRELESS PLANS (see page 13 for Prepaid Plans)



	AT&T att.com (800-462-4463)						US Cellular uscellular.com (888-944-9400)						Unicel unicel.com (800-336-4455) - local (800-462-3558) - national						Verizon verizon.com (800-256-4646)						
	mLife Local			mLife National			Local		Regional		National		Local		Regional		National		Local		National Single Rate				
Monthly Fee	\$20	\$30	\$40	\$20	\$30	\$40	\$25	\$40*	\$35	\$40	\$35	\$50	\$25	\$30	\$30	\$40	\$30	\$40	\$40	\$60	\$35	\$50	\$35	\$55	
Anytime Minutes	45	250	600	300	200	250	125	1100	500	650	200	400	250	375	250	500	120	200	400	700	300	500	150	400	
Offpeak Minutes	0	unlimited		0	unlimited				0				0	1000*	0	Unl*	0	0	Unlimited + 1000 mobile minutes*				0		
Cost per extra minute	45¢		40¢		45¢		40¢		40¢				49¢ to 69¢ depending on distance				40¢	35¢	45¢	40¢	45¢	40¢	40¢	35¢	
Toll Rate (Per Minute)	20¢	0		0				0						0 (toll free from home area only)				0	20¢				0		
Roaming Rate (Per Minute)	69¢			69¢*					65¢		0		69¢				0	69¢		0		0			
Toll Free/ Roaming Free (Home) Area	ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NYC, NJ			Various parts of the US but with smaller local home area than with mLife local plans. (See web- site or retailer for coverage map.)			ME, NH, Southern VT (Excludes Portland to Portsmouth Area)		ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA		Most of US		Most of ME, excluding Port- land Parts of NH, VT, MA, Northeast NY state		ME, NH, VT, + MA or NY		**11 States	Most of US		ME, NH, VT		Most of US		All of US	

*Toll and roaming apply to national plan when outside of AT&T's network area
\$36 activation fee applies only to 1-year plans.
All plans include free voice mail, call forwarding, and three-way calling upon request.
Extra \$1.75 "regulatory fee" applies to all plans.

US Cellular does not serve residents of the Portland area.
Voicemail and Caller ID included except in the \$25 plan.
*Online promotional plan—includes unlimited incoming minutes.

Detail billing is \$1 to \$3/month extra. Unicel offers unlimited air time from one local zone for \$40/month. Includes Caller ID, Call Forwarding, Three-way Calling, and Call Waiting. Off-peak starts after 9 pm (7 pm for \$5 extra). *Unlimited from local home area.
**ME, NH, VT, MA, CT, RI, NY, PA, NJ, DE, MD

No activation fee with 2-year contract.
Verizon markets plans in Portland, Lewiston, and Brunswick areas.
*Except for \$35 national plan.

Notes

Roaming charge applies when calling from outside home area.

Toll rate applies when call destination is outside home area. (Verizon charges toll rates for incoming calls while roaming).

Important: call and check websites for latest promotions and always verify coverage quality in area of use.

Activation fees (\$25 to \$36) often apply but are sometimes waived upon request when purchasing online, or when signing 2-year contract. (All companies have additional plans with more minutes and additional lines).

Cancellation fees (\$150 to \$175) generally apply.

Cost of Phone - Phone is often free when signing a 1 or 2-year contract. Ask about current promotions.

Right to terminate - Carriers reserve the right to terminate service if 50% of usage occurs outside of licensed area.


NOTE—These are low to moderate usage plans. For minimal or emergency usage, see prepaid plans (page 13). High usage and multi-line plans are also available.

Beware that the phone offered with wireless plan may not be compatible with other wireless plans when you change service. Beware that many advertised promotions require two-year contracts, which should be avoided if possible. Dial 611 from cellular phones for customer service. 911 emergency calls (not E-911) may work from cell phones even without activation.

T-Mobile, Sprint PCS, and Cingular do not market to customers north of Portland, ME. Verizon and AT&T market plans principally in urban areas.



SAMPLE OF PREPAID WIRELESS PLANS (see page 12 for Monthly Fee Wireless Plans)

	Tracfone (tracfone.com) sold at local retailers (800) 867-7183	US Cellular TalkTracker (uscc.com) (800) 944-9400	AT&T Free2Go (attwireless.com) (800) 888-7600		Verizon Free Up (verizonwireless.com) (800) 922-0204	Unicel SmartPay (unicel.com) (800) 244-9979
Initial Cost - Including phone & starting minutes	\$50 to \$100 (includes 10 minutes)	\$125 (includes \$20 airtime)	\$99 (includes 20 minutes)		\$130 (includes 100 minutes)	\$80 (no minutes included)
Home Area	Part of Maine, depending on billing address — see coverage map	ME, NH, Southeast VT except Portland & Portsmouth areas	<u>Local</u> Coastal ME & NH	<u>National</u> Most of US	Portland, Maine area and select areas in the US	Most of Central and Northern Maine
Airtime Rate Per Minute	24¢ to 63¢*	35¢ day 10¢-14¢ night/weekend	12¢ to 50¢**	22¢ to 85¢**	30¢ day time 15¢ night/weekend	15¢ to 25¢*
Roaming Charge Per Minute	Double the airtime rate	75¢-99¢	85¢	0	99¢	95¢
Toll Charge - Per Minute	0	25¢	0		0	85¢
Minimum Recharge Dollars	\$18	\$15	\$10		\$15	\$10
Expiration of Minutes (days)	60 - 365 (depending on card chosen)	60	45		30 - 120 (depending on price of card)	30-60*
Minimum <u>Annual</u> Cost (Does Not Include Cost of Initial Package or Roaming Calls)						
10 minutes/month	\$95 (1 - 365-day 150 min. refill)	\$75 (5 - \$15 refills)	*\$70 (7 - \$10 refills)		\$165 (11 - \$15 refills)	\$70 (7 - \$10 refills)
50 minutes/month	\$240 (6 - \$40 60-day refills)	\$200 (8 - \$25 refills)	*\$225 (9 - \$25 refills)		\$165 (11 - \$15 refills)	\$120 (12 - \$10 refills)
100 minutes/month	\$320 (8 - \$40 60-day refills)	\$420 (12 - \$35 refills)	*\$400 (8 - \$50 refills)		\$330 (11 - \$30 refills)	\$180 (12 - \$15 refills)
NOTES Customers who use more than 100 minutes per month should consider regular monthly fee cellular plans. Watch for and ask about promotions.	*Depending on number and duration of minutes purchased. *You can double your minutes by paying \$15 per month or \$150 per year.	Minimum annual cost of minutes calculated at daily rate. ----- Bonus minutes with refills of \$25 or more.	*Minimum annual cost based on local plan. ----- **Price per minute depends on \$ amount of card purchased. ----- Alt. Plan— prepaid “go phone” with \$20 per month minimum for 80 minutes national usage and no annual contract.		Minimum annual cost of minutes calculated at weekday rate. Roaming charges (not included in annual cost shown) would apply in most of Maine. ----- Bonus minutes included with phone and refills of \$30 or more.	*Plan A - 15¢ min (30 day refill). *Plan B - 25¢ min (60 day refill). ----- Minimum annual cost of minutes calculated at Plan A. ----- Not licensed for Cumberland, Androscoggin, Hancock or Washington Counties.

INTERNET DEPARTMENT

Broadband -- The availability of high speed (broadband) Internet Service is continuing to expand in Maine. By some accounts, Maine currently has one of the highest rates of broadband use in the country -- with approximately 32% of Internet users now connected via DSL, cable-modem, or wireless broadband -- the U.S. average is only 25%. However, access to broadband is still severely limited in most of Maine's rural areas.

Verizon has continued to equip more of its local switching offices to provide DSL service. Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and independent phone companies may also offer DSL service. Great Works Internet (GWI) has been aggressively expanding DSL availability around the state and charges a relatively low price of \$30/month).

Dial-Up - Approximately 66% of Maine homes are connected to the Internet, and toll-free dial-up service is now available everywhere in Maine. In addition, there are a few very inexpensive national ISPs that offer toll-free service in the majority of Maine's local calling areas (see page 15). There are also over a dozen Maine-based ISPs offering statewide toll-free service using the special 500 area code.

SAMPLE OF RESIDENTIAL INTERNET SERVICES IN MAINE AS OF JANUARY 2004

COMPANY NAME	PHONE #	SERVICE FEATURES	RATES CHARGED Price Range Depends on Payment Method
STATEWIDE Internet Service Providers (ISPs) with Toll-Free 500 Access			
CC Net clinic.net	207-443-2211	2 email addresses, 5 MB personal web space, Broadband wireless -- see below	Unlimited dial-up—\$17.50-\$20.00/month Wireless— see p.15
Coastal Computers coastal-computer.com	866-708-7998	email addresses for all members of the household, 5 MB web space	Unlimited dial-up—\$14.95-\$19.95/month
DialMaine/Arcus Digital arcusdigital.com dialmaine.com	800-624-6800	5 email addresses, 50 MB web space, web development	Unlimited dial-up—\$21.95-\$23.95/month
Great Works Internet gwi.net	866-494-2020	2 email addresses, 40 MB web space, domain registration, co-location, DSL	Unlimited dial-up—\$19.95/month (\$15 setup) \$8.95/mo. - 10 hours; \$15.95/mo. - 40 hours DSL starting at \$30/month.
hyperMedia hypernet.com	800-935-0040	2 email addresses, web design, and hosting	Unlimited dial-up—\$16.95 to \$22.95/month
Mid-Maine midmaine.com	877-643-6246	2 email addresses, 5MB web space, Remote email access	Unlimited dial-up—\$14.95 to \$19.95/month (\$14.95 - 1-year payment - \$10 setup fee) (\$15.95/month requires 6-month payment)
MPDU mpdu.com	800-721-1063	5 email addresses, 5 MB web space, Web design, hosting. DSL for business only	Unlimited dial-up—\$14.95 to \$19.95/month (\$14.95 requires quarterly payment)
NNEI nnei.net	866-500-6634	1 email address, 5 MB web space	\$18.25-\$21.95/month
Northern Lights Internet nlis.net	207-761-0257	Web mail, 3 MB web space	Unlimited dial-up—\$16.66-\$18.33/month
Panax.com www.panax.com	888-452-5100	3 email addresses, 5 MB web space, and Web design.	Unlimited dial-up—\$14.92 to \$18.95/month (\$14.95 requires 6-month payment)
Points South psouth.net	866-490-0100	Email address, 10 MB web space	Unlimited dial-up—\$15.83 to \$19.50/month (\$15.83 requires advance 1-year payment) 10 hours - \$9.95/month
Route 1 wiscasset.net	888-682-4488	2 MB web space, business high speed dedicated access, network admin.	Unlimited dial-up—\$19.95/month
USA Internet link2usa.com	877-872-2800	2 email addresses, 5 MB web space	Unlimited dial-up—\$17.95/month Available in all states except HI and AK
Verizon verizon.com	888-427-1405	9 email addresses, 10 MB web space, and DSL	Unlimited DSL starting at \$34.95 (ask about available introductory discounts)
XpressAmerica xpressamerica.net	888-504-6200	5 email addresses, 5 MB web space	Unlimited dial-up \$12.95-\$14.95/month (\$12.95 requires advance 1-year payment)

CABLE TV, SATELLITE & WIRELESS ISPs

COMPANY NAME	PHONE #	SERVICE FEATURES	RATES CHARGED Price Range Depends on Payment Method
Philadelphia Power Link aephiphia.net	800-336-9988	Cable modem. Available in Central Maine area	\$45.95/month (when combined with cable TV) No equipment cost or activation fee
CC Net clinic.net	800-645-9815	High speed wireless. 2 email addresses, 5 MB personal web space. Available in parts of Cumberland, Androscoggin, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, and Aroostook counties	\$49.95 and up, \$875 equipment fee or \$10/month equipment lease
Comcast comcast.com	888-633-4266	Cable modem. Available in Berwick, So. Berwick, Eliot, & Kittery areas	\$45.95/month (incl. \$3/month for modem rental)
Direcway direcway.com or local retailers	866-556-9662	Satellite broadband. 5 email addresses, 10 MB personal web space. Need clear view of southern sky. Available statewide	\$59.99/month + \$599.98 equipment cost
Downeast Wireless downeastwireless.net	207-667-7414	High speed wireless. Available in Hancock County area	\$49.99/month for one computer + equipment cost of \$450 to \$700
MetroCast Online metrocastonline.com	207-324-3700	Cable modem. 2 email addresses, 40 MB web space. Available in Sanford area	\$34.95- \$44.95/month \$100 installation charge
Mid-Coast Internet Solutions midcoast.com	207-594-8277	High Speed Wireless. 4 email addresses, 10 MB of web space. Available in parts of Waldo, Knox, and Lincoln counties	\$50/month, \$695 setup cost \$300 discount with 1-year payment
Pine Tree Cablevision ptc-me.net	800-220-3320	Cable modem. Available in Machias area	\$21.95/month \$50 setup fee, \$4/month lease
Pioneer Wireless work pioneerwireless.net	866-335-1254	High Speed Wireless. 3 personal email addresses, 10 commercial email addresses, 10 MB web space. Available in parts of Aroostook and Washington Counties.	Residential \$34.95/month (\$99 installation) Business \$44.95/month (\$199.99 installation)
Starband Starband.com	800-478-2722	Satellite broadband. 20 email addresses, 10 MB web space, requires clear view of southern sky	\$69.99/month + at least \$500 equipment cost
Susquehanna Comm. Suscom-maine.net	207-729-0663	Cable modem. 5 email addresses, 10 MB web space. Available in Brunswick area	\$29.95-\$53.95/month (depending on speed) \$29.95 setup fee, \$199.95 equipment purchase or \$3.95/month lease
Time Warner twmaine.com	800-213-4367	Cable modem. 8 email addresses, 10 MB personal web space	\$44.95/month (free installation)

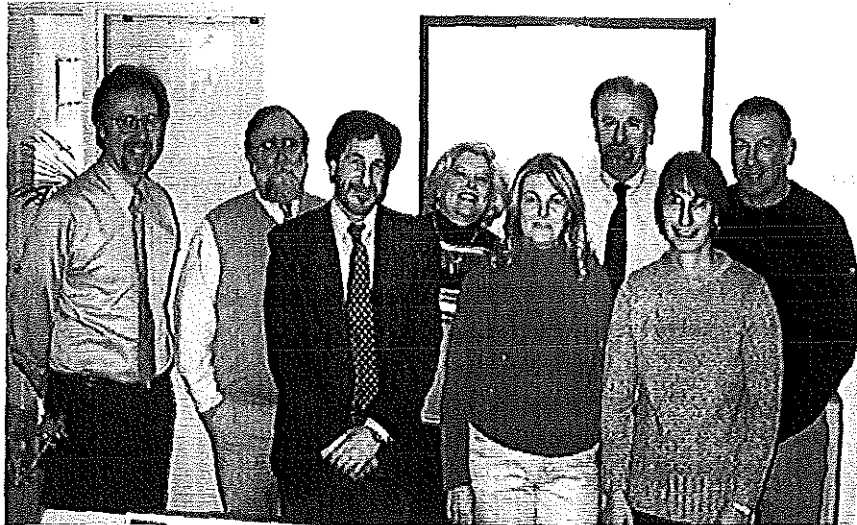
NATIONAL ISPs (Dial-up)

550access.com www.550access.com	Sign-up online	No email accounts , check the website for local access in your calling area	150 hours of dialup service -- \$5.50/month \$7 setup fee
650dialup.com www.650dialup.com	866-255-2164	5 email accounts, 10 MB storage, check the website for local access in your calling area	Unlimited dial-up -- \$6.50/month \$8 setup fee
AOL aol.com	Sign-up online	Check website for local access in your calling area	Unlimited dial-up -- \$19.95 to \$23.90/month \$4.95 for 3 hours (+\$2.50 add'l hours) \$9.95 for 5 hours (+\$2.95 add'l hours)
AT&T Worldnet att.com	800-400-1447	6 email accounts, check website for local access in your calling area	Unlimited dial-up -- \$21.95/month \$16.95 for 150 hours/month (+.99 each add'l hour)
Earthlink earthlink.com	800-395-8425	Toll-free access available in Augusta, Bangor, Portland, & Rockland only	Unlimited dial-up -- \$21.95/month \$9.95 for 10 hours/month (ask about specials) DSL starting at \$41.95/month
Netzero netzero.com juno.com	Sign-up online or call 800-333-3633	Toll-free access available in Augusta, Bangor, Kittery, Lewiston, Portland, Presque Isle, and Rockland only	Free 10 hours/month Premium service with less advertising \$9.95/month

**Public Advocate Office
112 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0112**

Calling Plans **INTERNET SERVICES** **LOCAL COMPETITION** *Wireless Services*
SURCHARGES **BUSINESS PHONE RATES** **PREPAID SERVICES**
INTERNATIONAL SERVICES **TELECOMMUNICATIONS NEWS** **SHOPPING TIPS**

PUBLIC ADVOCATE AND STAFF:



**ABOUT THE PUBLIC
ADVOCATE'S OFFICE**

Stephen G. Ward, the Public Advocate, and his staff of seven represent Maine's telephone, electric, gas, and water customers before the Maine Public Utilities Commission, the courts, and federal agencies. Our mission is to work for reasonably priced, safe, and reliable utility services for Maine people. Public Advocate staff are also available to speak to interested groups about regulated utilities, competitive markets and developments in Congress and the Maine Legislature affecting consumers.

**From left to right:
Eric, Steve, Wayne, Patty, Debbie, Bill, Mary & Ron**