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RATEWATCHER TELECOM GUIDE

VOLUME 15

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RATEWATCHER TELECOM GUIDE

VOICE OVER INTERNET - IS IT READY FOR PRIME TIME?

The Regulatory Debate - VOIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) is often called a "disruptive technology." It is disruptive because it represents a whole new way of making local and long-distance phone calls that bypass expensive equipment and are not subject to taxes and universal service contributions paid by traditional telephone companies. Recently the FCC announced that states may not regulate Internet-based telephone services, but failed to answer many troubling questions. For example, if rural phone companies lose their biggest customers to VOIP, will they need to substantially raise rates in order to serve their remaining customers who have no access to broadband and continue to rely on traditional local phone service? There's also a concern that many VOIP services don't reliably provide E911 service. Eventually, Congress may have to act in order to resolve the problems presented by two different sets of rules governing two similar services.

Is It Right For You? - VOIP customers should know that audio quality is not always as good as traditional phone service and that generally, VOIP will not work during a power interruption. However, VOIP services offer numerous high-tech advanced features that are either not available or are very expensive when offered by your traditional phone company. In addition, VOIP is a portable service - if you take your VOIP phone or adaptor to China and plug into a broadband connection, your phone can ring in China and generally, no additional charges apply. But the E911 emergency responders won't find you in China - they may think you're calling from your local residence, based on your phone number. Finally, you generally won't find taxes, FCC line fees, universal service fees, or state-imposed surcharges on your VOIP bill (but Vonage has been known to charge the USF fee to customers even though it doesn't directly contribute to the USF).

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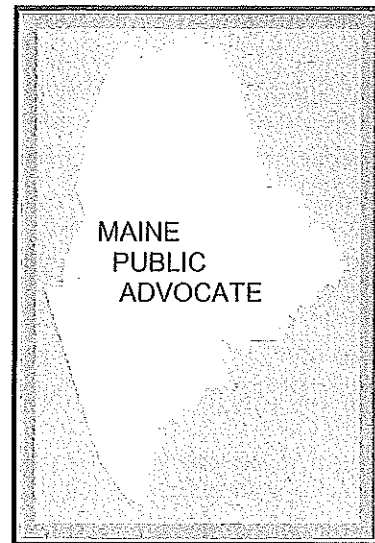
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THE BOTTOM LINE

Long-Distance Only - Touchtone and Pioneer are still the lowest-priced services while continuing to provide very good customer service. If you are served by an independent (not Verizon) local phone company, Touchtone is the clear choice.

Local Service - Small business customers have several options but savings depend on many factors. Residential customers have fewer options but may find significant savings on bundled services if ...
1) Your monthly long-distance usage is over 800 minutes; 2) Your instate long-distance usage is over 300 minutes; or 3) You use optional calling features. Such customers should consider bundled services from USA, IDT, MCI, Homefield or Verizon.

Prepaid Calling - Onesuite and AT&T/Sam's are neck and neck but offer different benefits as shown on the prepaid comparison chart.

Wireless - Low-volume users should compare prepaid wireless offers. If you use over 100 minutes per month, compare the regular wireless plans. Your best choice depends on many details, including your location in Maine.

Internet - Broadband is best if you can get it. For dial-up, choose between low-cost national services such as 650dialup if it offers local calling access to your telephone number, or pay a bit more for a Maine company with local or statewide toll-free access, often with better customer service and features.

VOIP - A new choice for those with a broadband connection. Even moderate users can save money and replace their traditional local and long distance phone company, but quality, reliability, and/or emergency access issues may exist, depending on the provider. Currently, no VOIP service is likely to work when the power is out. Beware that VOIP services are unregulated.

PROSPECTS FOR PHONE AND DSL COMPETITION LOOK BLEAKER BUT THE MAINE PUC CAN HELP

The last few years have not been good for small companies who offer local telephone services in competition with the giants like Verizon. The ability of small firms to access Bell company (e.g. Verizon) networks was the central theme of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. However, recent FCC and federal court decisions have narrowed that access and may result in decreased local competition. One glimmer of hope is that Maine's Public Utilities Commission will exercise its state authority to promote local competition and encourage the expansion of broadband services.

For example, Skowhegan Online, a one-man company in the Skowhegan area, has developed a clever way to extend high-speed DSL Internet service to rural customers who have no access to fast Internet services. This service requires access to unused Verizon wires in a way that is somewhat different from the exact "network element" that is available under federal rules. The PUC ordered Verizon to make that facility available and Verizon promptly appealed that decision to the Maine Supreme Court. This scenario is consistent with the Bell companies' strategy of using litigation to try to block competition whenever possible.

Another competitive service at risk is DSL service that relies on "line sharing" – the use of Verizon's wires to simultaneously provide DSL with Verizon's voice service. The Public Advocate and competitive providers have asked the PUC to maintain line sharing at affordable rates even though the FCC has decided to phase-out the requirement for Verizon to share its lines. This complex mix of changing federal rules and potential state authority has created enormous uncertainty for the industry and for consumers.

Broadband (high-speed Internet) availability has become more important, not only because it provides much better Internet access, but also because Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) telephone service is expected to overtake traditional phone service over the next few years. Most VOIP services require a broadband connection.

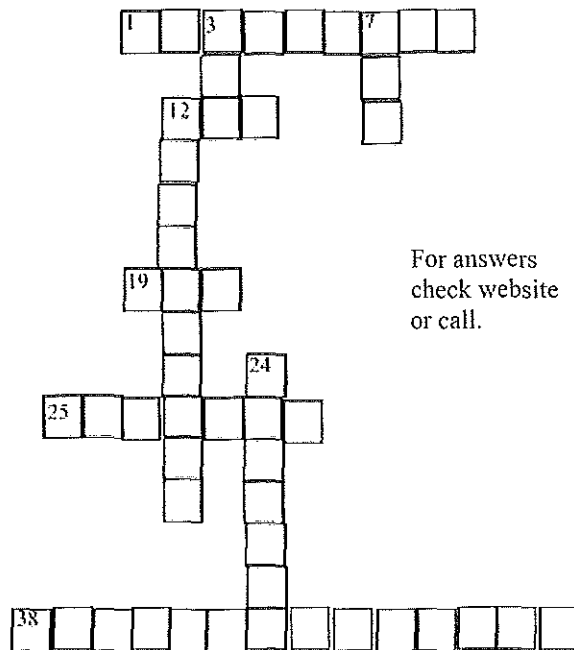
The Telecommunications Act of 1996 is, by all accounts, broken and a major rewrite of communications law is expected in the new Congress. Given the current influence of the Bell companies, we are not optimistic, but we will continue to fight for more competition and lower prices for consumers.



SEE US ON THE WEB

The Public Advocate website has been greatly improved. It is much more clearly organized and contains a wealth of updated information. Come visit us at www.maine.gov/meopa

NAME THAT COMPANY



For answers
check website
or call.

Puzzle by Natalie

Across

1. Low long distance rates in all parts of Maine with no monthly fee
12. Association of Maine's small rural phone companies
19. Maine's largest independent dialup & DSL ISP
25. It's a Maine-based-long-distance company
38. Offers TV, Internet & Telephone in L/A area

Down

3. A Maine-based local and long-distance company
7. We wrote this for you (acronym) (not a company)
12. Offers TV, Internet and VOIP in southern Maine
24. Serves more than 40% of U.S. population

SOMETIMES, NO NEWS IS BAD NEWS – STILL NO DECISION FROM THE MAINE SUPREME COURT

On May 12, 2004, the Maine Supreme Court heard oral argument, for the second time, on the Public Advocate's appeal against the PUC and Verizon. In that case, we challenged the PUC's refusal to ensure that Verizon's local rates are not excessive under applicable state law. After the Court sent it back to the PUC, the PUC still refused to conduct a rate analysis, arguing that it amounted to an impossible task. Unfortunately, the substantial delays in this litigation will make it unlikely that Verizon's customers will get much relief, because the applicable 5-year rate plan may run its course by the time the Court issues a decision. Because excessive rates are not subject to refund, ratepayers may be deprived of a fair result in this case, even if we win.

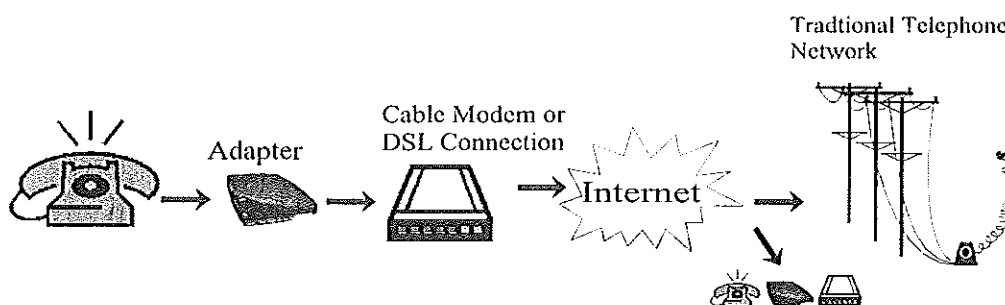
(VOIP continued from page 1)

WHAT'S FREE? If you have a broadband connection (e.g. DSL, cable-modem, broadband wireless, or broadband satellite), you can take advantage of VOIP now, and talk to anybody in the world, without paying a penny. Skype is a free service that provides good voice quality conversation from your computer (via microphone and speakers or headset) to any other Skype user with a computer. Skype also offers a low-cost service that will connect you to anyone with a telephone; rates to most countries are about two cents per minute (.017 Euros). Pulver's Free World Dialup is also free and you can use it without a computer, but you'll need to buy a special phone or download free software.

WHAT YOU GET AT THE HIGH END Time Warner's Digital Phone is a VOIP service available to many southern Maine and Presque Isle area customers. Unlike most VOIP services, Time Warner provides a 207 telephone number and allows you to transfer your current telephone number to the VOIP service. In addition, Time Warner says that its system is now fully compliant with Maine's E911 emergency response system while most other VOIP services cannot route emergency calls as reliably. But Digital Phone, priced between \$40 and \$50 per month, only makes sense for those who use over 400 minutes of long-distance calls or those for whom the added features are important.

SAMPLE OF VOIP RETAIL SERVICES

COMPANY	FEATURES	PRICE	NOTES
AT&T CALLVANTAGE att.com/callvantage	Unlimited to US & Canada (5,000 minute limitation)	\$30/month (\$30 activation fee) Europe - 5¢ to 7¢ Unlimited local - \$20/mo.	Promotion - 1 free month Early termination fee may apply if cancelled within 1 year Adapter included
TIME WARNER Digital Phone twmaine.com	Unlimited US and Canada	\$40/month (\$50 without Roadrunner) Europe - 8¢ to 22¢	207 # available Can keep your phone number E-911 compliant
VONAGE vonage.com	Unlimited US & Canada 500 Minutes	\$25/month \$15/mo. (3.9¢/min. after 500 included) Europe - 3¢ to 12¢	Plus USF fee Adapter included
VOICEPULSE voicepulse.com	Unlimited US 200 minutes interstate plus unlimited Maine	\$25/month \$15/month Europe - 5¢ to 9¢	207 # available Adapter included 1-year term
NET2PHONE net2phone.com	Unlimited US & Canada 500 minutes US & Canada 500 Western Europe	\$35/month Europe - 2¢ to 5¢ \$15/month \$20/month	Requires prepayment \$30 activation fee Requires \$100 adapter purchase
PACKET8 packet8.com	Unlimited US & Canada Unlimited Calls to Europe/Asia	\$20/month Europe - 2¢ to 3¢ \$30 per continent/month	Claims to be E-911 compliant \$30 Activation Fee Adapter included
SIPPHONE sipphone.com	Unlimited to other Sipphones May ring regular phone #s	Free to other Sipphones Reg. calls start at 1.9¢	Using telephone adapter (\$80) or computer software (free)
SKYPE skype.com	Unlimited PC to PC May ring regular phone #s	Free to other Skype users Reg. calls start at 2.2¢	Using computer mike/speakers
PULVER - Free World Dialup pulver.com	Unlimited to other members (May ring regular phone numbers with separate service)	FREE	Can work with a special telephone or free software



LOCAL COMPETITION

Business customers in Verizon territory have many options for local telephone service. Residential customers have a few options, but only those with high toll usage or a need for optional services, will find savings. Compare these rates to Verizon's standard rates: Res.— \$17.58 economy, \$19.08 premium, Bus.— \$35.17 economy, \$38.28 premium.

Name/Phone/Website	Business or Residential	Monthly Rates (Res./Bus.) (excluding surcharges & taxes)	Notes
ChoiceOne (800) 353-6000 (207) 432-1000 choiceonecom.com	B	Starting at \$23.30 per line \$27.70 w/8 features	Various exchanges in Maine including Ptlnd, Bangor & L/A area
Conversent (800) 275-2088 conversent.com	B	\$25 per line	Greater Portland area
CTC (800) 825-5282 ctnet.com	B	\$27 to \$38 per line	
Direct Line (888) 619-4535 downeastcomm.com	B	B \$28 to \$35 (\$28 w/ 2-yr contract)	20% less for 1st 4 months
Excel (800) 875-9235 excel.com	R	\$32.45 to \$38.90* with 3 features	*depending on location and long-distance plan. Includes 100 LD minutes
Homefield Telecom (800) 887-1087 homefieldusa.com	R	\$22 including unlimited local service and 200 instate minutes Other calls -5¢ per minute	2 free features Alt. Plan—Homefield Advantage (see p. 6)
Lightship (877) 548-7447 lightship.com	B	Rates range from \$26.36 to \$16.86 depending on volumes and types of selected services	
Mid-Maine (877) 643-6246 midmaine.com	B	B \$28 - \$32 R - \$49 - local/DSL bundle	Res. Service in Orono, Newport and other areas
MCI (877) 777-6271 theneighborhood.com	B & R	Unlimited local and long-distance Res. - \$50 Bus. - \$60	5 calling features includ 1st month free
Norcom (877) 484-7283, (877) 885-9844, (888) 262-7864, norcomld.com	B & R	B \$24 to \$29 per line* R 5% below Verizon rate	*Depending on customer location
Oxford (800) 520-9911 oxfordnetworks.com	B & R	R -16.63 - \$19.72 B- \$34.51- \$37.93 R - \$40 (with 5 features) B - \$22.50 - \$32 depending on number of lines	Norway/South Paris Parts of Lewiston/Auburn Bus. service avail. in many areas in southern and central Maine plus Bangor
PineTree (866) 746-3873 pinetreenetworks.com	B	\$29 - \$35 per line	Portland/Lewiston areas
Time Warner (800) 833-2253 twcdigitalphone.com (Voice over Internet)	R	\$40 with digital cable or Roadrunner \$45 with analog cable TV \$50 without the above	Southern Maine only Includes unlimited long- distance, Caller ID, etc.
USA Telephone (877) 872-2800 savewithusa.com	B & R	R - \$20-\$25 with 3 features (depending on location) B - \$29-\$32 per line with 3 features (depending on location)	Local services bundled with 2.9¢ instate and inter-state LD minutes (B and R)

VERIZON LIMITS COMPETITION BY LINKING ITS LOCAL AND DSL SERVICES

Want to get high-speed DSL service from Verizon and local phone service from another phone company? Unfortunately, you can't. Verizon sells DSL only as a bundle with its local service. Moreover, Verizon's commonly advertised DSL rate of \$29.95 only applies if you combine it with a more expensive bundle of optional local services. This type of product bundling suppresses competition and forces consumers to pay higher monthly bills. We believe consumers should have the right to pick and choose each service separately, and buy it from whomever they choose. For different reasons independent DSL providers, like GWI, do not provide you with DSL service unless you keep your local service with Verizon. GWI's best rate of \$29.95 for DSL is \$5 lower than Verizon's standard DSL rate.

TELEPHONE SHOPPING SHORTCUTS

WHAT TYPE OF CUSTOMER ARE YOU?



I make very few toll calls, (fewer than 800 minutes per month) and I live in Verizon territory. I'm not interested in any optional features...

Consider switching long-distance to Touchtone or Pioneer (pages 8-9).
Keep Verizon for local service only.

I live in Verizon territory and use fewer than 800 toll minutes per month. I am interested in Caller ID, Call Waiting or Call Forwarding...

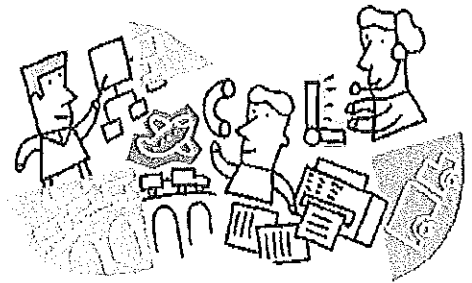
Consider switching local and long-distance service to USA Telephone (page 9) or Homefield (page 4, 6).



I live in Verizon territory and use more than 300 minutes per month of instate toll calls...

Consider Homefield Telecom (pages 4, 6).

I plan to use DSL service as my Internet connection in Verizon territory and want the most economical phone services. I use fewer than 800 minutes per month...



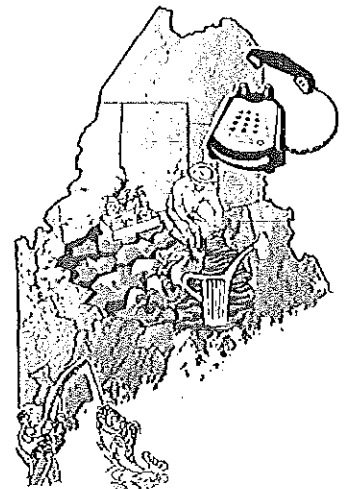
Keep Verizon for local service because, currently, most DSL providers will not provide DSL service if you switch your local service from Verizon. You should consider switching your long-distance services to Touchtone or Pioneer (page 8-9).

I live in Verizon territory and use more than 800 minutes per month...

Consider unlimited local and long-distance plans shown on page 7. IDT (p. 7) is the cheapest at \$40 per month (not including standard surcharges and taxes). If you use DSL and want an unlimited plan, you'll probably be limited to one of the Verizon Freedom packages.

I am served by a local independent rural phone company...

Switch instate and interstate long-distance services to Touchtone. You have no alternative choices for local service, other than wireless and voice over Internet (page 9).



WHAT HAPPENED TO ALL THOSE AT&T ADS?

Last July, AT&T surprised many by announcing that it will no longer market its local or its long-distance services to residential customers. Such news would have been hard to believe in 1983 when AT&T was the monopoly local and long-distance phone company that carried virtually every call in the U.S. Although AT&T has stopped marketing to residential customers, it will continue to serve its existing customers and any new customers who want its service. However, as the Ratewatcher has suggested for the last several years, most consumers have better options than AT&T.

DO YOU RELY ON PREPAID CALLING FROM HOME? KNOW THE DISADVANTAGES AS WELL AS THE ADVANTAGES



1. You pay before you use the service and the minutes can expire – many customers never use all of the minutes they've paid for.
2. Dialing is less convenient
3. Busy signals and failed calls are more frequent, though still unusual.
4. All calls are rounded up to the next full minute, so the rate isn't as low as you might think, in comparison to a full service, direct dial plan, with 6-second billing.
5. If you run out of minutes, your call will be interrupted.
6. You may have to listen to advertising when making a call.
7. Most services don't provide a detailed list of calls so it's hard to know if your minutes are accurately accounted for.



1. Prepaid calling is a great way to call when away from home.
2. The rates are generally the cheapest available, but not necessarily for short calls (see item 4).
3. You avoid several surcharges that apply to normal long-distance service.

PREPAID CALLING — UPDATE

	Sam's Club/AT&T	OneSuite.com
US Rate 48 (states)	2.96¢	2.9¢
Western Europe	9¢	3¢ - 10¢
Canada	5.92¢	3.2¢
Other Fees	5% sales tax on initial store purchase and phone refills	None
How to buy?	Sam's Club (similar offers at BJ's & Costco) or renew by phone	www.onesuite.com
Expiration	24 months from activation or last recharge	6 months from activation or last recharge
Record of call	No	Yes via Internet
Use from Canada? Rate?	Yes 15¢	Yes 3.5¢* (* 2.5¢ from Montreal, Toronto, & Vancouver)
Payphone Charge	44¢	55¢
Special Features	Enhanced features offered at extra charge. Can use in many countries.	Many free enhanced features.
Customer Service #	800-530-6744	866-417-8483



BYE BYE BIGZOO

Bigzoo is terminating its prepaid calling service as of January 31, 2005, so use up your minutes or apply for a refund before then. See bigzoo.com for details.

Homefield Offers New Calling Plans

Homefield Telecom (homefieldusa.com, 1-800 887-1087), a new affiliate of USA Telecom, recently introduced new local and long-distance options. "Homefield Advantage" offers local service and unlimited calls within Maine for \$30 per month, including various free features. Interstate calls are priced at 3 cents per minute. This plan is attractive for customers who regularly use over 300 minutes of instate calls beyond the local calling area and for customers who pay extra for optional calling features. Add \$2/month for paper bills or check payments. Verizon offers unlimited local and state-wide calling with 5 features, for \$40/month.

Homefield also offers another option called the "Free Agent" plan. For \$22/month you get local service plus 200 minutes of instate calling and 2 free calling features. All additional calls cost 5 cents per minute. In comparison, Verizon's local service combined with its instate Pine Tree Calling Plan would cost \$35.68 without the features that Homefield includes.

VARTEC GOES "BELLY UP"

Vartec Telecom has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in an attempt to restructure the company and its debts. Vartec claims that this will have no effect on its customers or operations, and that it will continue to provide service. However, as a result of increasing fees and the level of its rates, the Ratewatcher has not recommended most Vartec services for some time. Vartec provides subscribed calling plans, as well as pay per call services such as 10-10-811.

THINK BEFORE YOU CLICK TO AVOID INTERNET PHONE SCAMS

Don't remember calling Tuvalu, Guinea-Bissau or Lichtenstein lately? Many dial-up Internet customers have been surprised by strange and expensive phone bills for calls to exotic locations around the world. Frequently, the source of the problem is the careless click of a mouse on a pop-up ad. That simple click could cause your modem to dial very expensive phone numbers. It could also download a program to your computer that can hijack your modem repeatedly. Our advice: don't click on ads, invitations to contests, or games. If you get hit with a large bill for a call that you suspect to be part of a scam, make a complaint to the Public Utilities Commission (1800 452-4699) or call us for advice.

USF FEE IS RISING

As a result of unnecessary new accounting rules imposed upon the USF by the FCC and because of growing demand for program benefits, the USF surcharge, which appears on telephone and wireless bills, has increased as of January 1, 2005 (the precise amount was not known at the time of publication). In seeking to protect the USF programs and to minimize the USF rate, Senator Snowe has sponsored legislation to exempt the fund from unnecessary federal rules and Governor Baldacci has urged Congress to pass that legislation. The USF rate applies to interstate telephone usage, including the "line charge" on your local bill. The Public Advocate, as part of a national organization, is fighting to keep the USF affordable by advocating for a much more efficient USF. The USF is a \$7 billion fund that keeps phone rates affordable in rural areas, discounts phone service for low-income people, provides telecom and Internet services for schools and libraries, and subsidizes telemedicine.

PRIVACY ALERT

Customers may block Caller ID by dialing *67 before making a call or by ordering free per-line blocking. However another type of signal called ANI may still transmit your identity to certain businesses. That's why LL Bean may know who you are, even before you say a word. Caller ID Blocking may be ineffective in calls with large companies.

UNLIMITED LOCAL AND LONG-DISTANCE PLANS

NAMES	FEATURES	PRICE (excluding surcharges/taxes)	NOTES
AT&T One Rate USA 1-800-222-0300 att.com	Unlimited to U.S. 4 features*	\$55	*may choose 4 out of 11 features / Voicemail - add \$5
IDT Unlimited 1-800-254-1718 idt.net	Unlimited to U.S. 6 features	\$40	Voicemail available at extra charge
MCI Neighborhood 1-877-777-6271 mci.com	Unlimited to U.S. 5 features	\$50	Includes voicemail
Oxford Networks 1-800-520-9911 oxfordnetworks.com	Unlimited to U.S. & Canada 5 features	\$80	Lewiston/Auburn area only
Time Warner 1-800-833-2253 twmaine.com	Unlimited to US & Canada Advanced features	\$40*	VOIP Service *Up to \$50 w/o Roadrunner or Digital/Cable
Verizon Freedom 1-800-870-9999 verizon.com	Unlimited to U.S. & Canada 5 features	\$55	Includes voicemail Add \$30 for DSL

SAMPLING OF RESIDENTIAL & BUSINESS LONG-DISTANCE TELEPHONE PLANS AS OF JAN. 2005

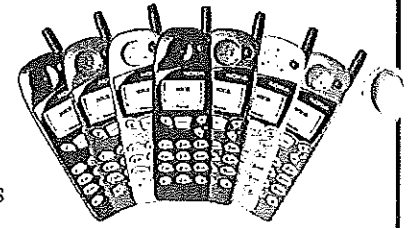
COMPANY	AT&T att.com		MCI mci.com		Pioneer pioneertelephone.com	
FEATURED PLAN	One Rate 7¢		Nationwide Instate		Talk Cents	
(RESIDENTIAL)	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate
RESIDENTIAL per minute rate (excluding surcharges & taxes)	10¢	10¢	5¢	5¢	3.9¢	3.25¢
Monthly Minimum	\$9.00		none		none	
Monthly Fee	99¢		\$5.95		99¢*	
RESIDENTIAL SAMPLE MONTHLY COSTS :	INCLUDES 50% INSTATE/50% INTERSTATE MINUTES & MONTHLY FEES, EXCLUDING SURCHARGES & TAXES.					
LOW @ 10 mins. per month	\$9.99		\$6.45		\$1.35	
MEDIUM @ 100 mins. per month	\$10.99		\$10.95		\$4.57	
HIGH @ 500 mins. per month	\$50.99		\$30.95		\$17.88	
HIGHEST @ 1,000 mins. per month	\$100.99		\$55.95		\$35.75	
Hawaii/Alaska	10¢		5¢		4.9¢	
RESIDENTIAL INTERNATIONAL RATES*						
Canada	6¢		4¢		7.5¢	
Germany	10¢		8¢		6¢	
Greece	10¢		8¢		8¢	
Israel	8¢		10¢		7¢	
Egypt	35¢		39¢		33¢	
Vietnam	55¢		55¢		61¢	
AVAILABLE IN RURAL INDEPENDENT AREAS?	yes		yes		no	
(BUSINESS)	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate
Business per minute rates (excluding surcharges and taxes)	15¢	6.9¢*	10¢	6¢	3.9¢	3.25¢
Monthly Minimum	\$25.00**		\$10.00		none	
Monthly Fee	none		none		99¢*	
PICC Charges (per line)	\$3.35		\$5.00		\$4.21	
In-bound 800 Rates	6.9¢***	6.9¢***	10¢*	6¢*	3.9¢**	3.25¢**
TO SUBSCRIBE, CALL:	1-800-222-0300		1-800-444-3333		1-888-492-6878	
NOTE: Surcharges are not included in the rates shown.	*Interstate business rate drops to 6.5¢ with online billing and \$1 international fee requires online billing.		*\$5/mo. fee and \$10 monthly minimum for 800 inbound service. Fee waived if usage is over \$50.		*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.		Note - MCI charges additional non-standard surcharges.		**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.				Alt. Plans - Rate Buster 3.5¢ instate/2.7¢ interstate with 1-minute billing.	
1-minute billing unless otherwise noted. An average customer will save about 10% as a result of 6-second billing.	Bus. - 2.98% regulatory surcharge.				6 second billing.	
*Beware that international calls to mobile phones may be priced higher.	Note - AT&T charges additional non-standard surcharges.				Pioneer is a Maine company.	
					1.9¢/min. to call other Pioneer customers.	
					Late payment causes rates to double.	

SAMPLING OF RESIDENTIAL & BUSINESS LONG-DISTANCE TELEPHONE PLANS AS OF JAN. 2005

COMPANY	Telrite telrite.com		Touchtone touchtone.net		USA savewithusa.com		Verizon verizon.com	
FEATURED PLAN	3.9¢ Plan		4.25¢ Plan		Straight Talk *		5¢ Plan	
(RESIDENTIAL)	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate
RESIDENTIAL per minute rate (excluding surcharges & taxes)	3.9¢	3.9¢	4.25¢	4.25¢	2.9¢*	2.9¢*	7¢	5¢
Monthly Minimum	none		none		none		none	
Monthly Fee	\$2.00*		none		None*		\$4.95	
RESIDENTIAL SAMPLE MONTHLY COSTS :	INCLUDES 50% INSTATE/50% INTERSTATE MINUTES & MONTHLY FEES, EXCLUDING SURCHARGES & TAXES.							
LOW @ 10 mins. per month	\$2.39		43¢		29¢		\$5.55	
MEDIUM @ 100 mins. per month	\$5.90		\$4.25		\$2.90		\$10.95	
HIGH @ 500 mins. per month	\$21.50		\$21.25		\$14.50		\$34.95	
HIGHEST @ 1,000 mins. per month	\$39.00		\$42.50		\$29.00		\$64.95	
Hawaii/Alaska	6.5¢		15¢		16¢/19¢		5¢	
RESIDENTIAL INTERNATIONAL RATES*								
Canada	5¢		5¢		7¢		5¢	
Germany	6¢		5¢		6¢		10¢	
Greece	14¢ + \$2/mo.		9¢		8¢		10¢ + \$4/mo.	
Israel	9¢		7¢		7¢		10¢	
Egypt	7¢		21¢		29¢		38¢	
Vietnam	64¢		51¢		58¢		55¢	
AVAILABLE IN RURAL INDEPENDENT AREAS?	no		yes		no		most areas	
(BUSINESS)	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate	Instate	Interstate
Business per minute rates (excluding surcharges and taxes)	3.9¢	3.9¢	4.25¢	4.25¢	2.9¢*	2.9¢*	7¢*	7¢
Monthly Minimum	none		none		none		none	
Monthly Fee	\$2.00*		none		none*		\$8.50	
PICC Charges (per line)	\$2.95		\$1.50		\$2.75		none	
In-bound 800 Rates	3.52¢	4.05¢	4.25¢	4.25¢	7.9¢**	7.9¢**	7¢**	7¢**
TO SUBSCRIBE, CALL:	1-888-619-4535		sold only by agents*		1-877-872-2800		1-800-585-4466	
NOTE: Surcharges are not included in the rates shown.	*No monthly fee when usage exceeds \$20.		*Touchtone Agents in Maine: 1 888 594-2500 1 800 619-2537 1 877 885-9844 1 877 484-7283 1 888 345-1488 1 866 764-8001 1 888 262-7864		*These rates apply to USA's local/long-distance bundle. See p. 4. for details.		*Lower Bus. rates avail. (e.g. 6¢ with \$24 minimum)	
\$5 fee to change carrier is often covered by new carrier upon request.	6-second billing for business customers and 1-minute billing for residential customers.		6-second billing.		**800 service fee - \$6.00 per line.		**\$5/mo. fee applies to 800 inbound service.	
PICC charges (a per-line access charge) apply to multi-line business customers only.	These rates available through Downeast Comm. as agent.		Lower rate may be available for high-volume customers.		USA is a Maine-based company.		Alternate Plans include - Bus. Simple Options, e.g. 5.2¢/min w/ \$250 minimum	
1-minute billing unless otherwise noted. An average customer will save about 10% as a result of 6-second billing.			Plan sold through independent agents only.				Res. Instate - Pine Tree plan \$5.40 monthly minimum (incl 60 min). 8¢ for each add'l min.	
*Beware that international calls to mobile phones may be priced higher.							6-second billing applies to business. plans.	
							International rates are much higher without advance sign-up and monthly fee	

WIRELESS DEPARTMENT

CHANGES IN MAINE'S WIRELESS MARKET



Merger of AT&T Wireless With Cingular - This merger will increase the former "Bell" Companies' control of the wireless market. Cingular is principally owned by Bell South and SBC (two of the 4 remaining Bell companies) while Verizon (another former Bell company) is a principal owner of Verizon Wireless. In addition, competitive choices will be diminished because of the merger of two large players in a market with relatively few participants. However, Maine's AT&T customers may benefit from the merger. Since November, Cingular has made mobile to mobile calling available between all 46 million Cingular and AT&T customers. In addition, Cingular has added its rollover minute plans as an available feature for AT&T customers. Overall, AT&T Wireless customers should expect to see stronger coverage in other parts of the U.S. However, these changes are not automatic – you may need to sign up for a new plan. Beware that by accepting new features, you may obligate yourself to a new contract term.

US Cellular and Unisel Are Expanding Coverage - US Cellular has recently moved aggressively into the Portland market and has been offering attractive promotions to win new customers there. In addition, both US Cellular and Unisel are planning to expand service to certain unserved high-cost rural areas in Maine, using federal subsidies. As a result of being designated as eligible to receive such subsidies, Unisel is now subject to certain billing rules of the Public Utilities Commission. The same will apply to US Cellular after it completes that eligibility process.

New Rights For Wireless Customers - As a result of a settlement with Attorneys General of many states, including Maine, major wireless carriers have agreed to new consumer protection standards. The settlement provides that consumers shall have access to more detailed coverage maps before signing up for service, consumers shall have at least 14 days to cancel new service contracts without penalty, and carriers must more clearly disclose important terms of wireless agreements in their ads and contracts. The settlement was made only with Verizon, Sprint and Cingular, but we hope that all wireless companies will comply.

WIRELESS COMPANIES ARE OFFERING MORE MINUTES BUT TRYING TO KEEP THEIR CUSTOMERS CAPTIVE LONGER


Free phones, lots of minutes, unlimited off-peak minutes, and fancy features are all nice things to have, but, of course, there's a darker side. There's a growing trend to require a two-year contract in order to get the latest promotions. All else being equal, it's always better to have a shorter, rather than a longer contract. That's because prices generally decline over time while plan features and benefits tend to increase over time. For example, although US Cellular recently entered the Portland market with attractive promotions, customers who are locked into a new two-year contract might be faced with an early termination penalty of as much as \$200 in order to take advantage of new options.

Before signing up for two years, carefully compare the incremental benefit to the terms of a one-year contract. Make sure those benefits are worth the risk of paying an early termination penalty should you later want to terminate service or switch plans. It's also a good idea to negotiate – try offering to sign a one-year contract with all the benefits of the two-year promotion -- or else you'll go to a competitor. Some wireless companies will waive the two-year requirement in order to keep you as a customer.

Remember, before signing up for any wireless plan, consider the following:

1. **How good is the signal quality where you use the service?** Get the cancellation policy in writing – you should be able to cancel within 14-30 days, with no further contract obligations.
2. **How many minutes will you use each month?** Too many minutes may mean your monthly rate is higher than necessary – too few means you'll pay for expensive extra minutes. If you use fewer than 100 minutes per month, a prepaid service (p. 12) might save you money.
3. **Where will you use the phone?** If you use the phone outside of your designated home area, you'll pay for expensive "roaming" minutes. If you choose a national plan because you travel all around the U.S., make sure the national plan covers your likely roaming. Some national plans offer very spotty "national" home areas.

SAMPLE OF MONTHLY FEE WIRELESS PLANS (see page 12 for Prepaid Services)

	Cingular (AT&T) cingular.com (800-331-0500)				US Cellular uscellular.com (888-944-9400)						Unicel unicel.com (800-336-4455) - local — (800-462-3558) - national						Verizon verizon.com (800-256-4646)					
	Nation		Family		Local		Regional		National (Span America)		Local Unlimited Round the Clock		Regional 10 Plus		True Nation- wide		Local Digital Choice		National America's Choice		Single Rate	
Monthly Fee	\$30	\$40	\$50	\$60	\$25	\$40	\$35	\$40	\$35	\$50	\$40*	\$50	\$40	\$40	\$50	\$40	\$60	\$40	\$60	\$55		
Anytime Minutes	250	450	600	850	125	1000	500	650	200	400	unlimited		500	450	600	400	700	400	800	400		
Offpeak Minutes	1000	5000	Unlimited		0	Unlimited - \$4.95 extra					Unlimited					Unlimited				0		
Cost per extra minute	45¢		40¢	35¢	40¢						0		49¢	40¢	45¢	40¢	45¢	40¢	35¢			
Cost of extra lines	N/A	\$20		\$10	NA	\$15	\$20		N/A		N/A		\$20		\$20				N/A			
Toll Rate (Per Minute)	0				0						0						20¢		0			
Roaming Rate (Per Minute)	0				30¢ - 69¢		69¢		0		15¢ - 69¢ by location	20¢ - 69¢ by location	49¢ - 69¢	0		69¢				0		
Toll Free/ Roaming Free (Home) Area	Much of US				ME, NH, VT (Excludes Portsmouth Area)		ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA		Most of US		Choice of Southern ME or Northern ME Zone	Parts of ME, MA, NH, VT, NY	ME, NH, VT, MA, CT, RI, NY, PA, NJ, DE, MD	Most of US		Most of ME, NH, VT		Most of US		All of US		
Notes	Rollover and unlimited mobile to mobile minutes start at \$40. Extra \$1.25 "regulatory fee" applies to all plans. AT&T wireless has been				*Digital plans of \$35 and higher can add: -Unlimited Local night and weekend minutes for \$4.95/month. -3,000 Regional night and weekend minutes for \$6.95/month. 96¢/month "regulatory fee".						**"Family Time" offers 1000/4500 minutes in all 4 zones for \$40. Unicel is now subject to the PUC's billing and collection rules as a result of a recent order making it eligible for federal subsidies.						Verizon markets plans in Cumberland, Androscoggin, Sagadahoc & York Counties.					

Roaming charge - applies when calling from outside home area.

Toll rate - applies only in some local plans when call destination is outside home area (applicable to some local plans only).

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.

Cancellation fees - (\$150 to \$200) generally apply if you cancel service before expiration of contract term.

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 their licensed area.

Features - Most plans include Caller ID, Call Forwarding, Call Waiting, 3-Way Calling, Voicemail, and other advanced features.


NOTE - For minimal or emergency usage, see prepaid plans (see page 12).

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.

Dial 611 from cellular phones for customer service. 911 emergency calls (not E-911) may work from cell phones even without activation.


Each carrier offers many other plans.

SAMPLE OF PREPAID WIRELESS PLANS (see page 11 for Monthly Fee Plans)

	Tracfone (tracfone.com) sold at local retailers (800) 867-7183	US Cellular TalkTracker Flex (uscc.com) (888) 944-9400	AT&T Free2Go (attwireless.com) (800) 888-7600	Verizon Pay As You Go (verizonwireless.com) (800) 256-4646	Unicel SmartPay/SmartMinute (unicel.com) (800) 244-9979
Initial Cost - Including phone & starting minutes	\$60 to \$100 (includes 10 minutes)	\$100 (includes \$20 air time)	\$60 to \$100 (includes 40 minutes)	\$130 - \$150 (includes \$15 airtime)	\$60 to \$100 (no minutes included)
Home Area	Much of Maine	ME, Southern VT, NH (except Portsmouth area)	Most of US	Cumberland, Androscoggin, Sagadahoc Counties and much of US	Most of Central and Northern Maine—Parts of NH, VT, MA and NY (see map)
Airtime Rate Per Minute	20¢ to 63¢*	35¢ day 10¢ night/weekend	25¢*	10¢ (plus 25¢ per call connection fee)	49¢
Roaming Charge Per Minute	Double the airtime rate	99¢	69¢**	99¢*	\$1.25
Toll Charge - Per Minute	0	0	0	0	20¢
Minimum Recharge Dollars	\$20	\$15	\$10	\$15 on line \$30 in store	*\$10
Expiration of Minutes (days)	60 - 365 (depending on card chosen)	60	90 - 365* (depending on card chosen)	30 - 120 (depending on card chosen)	**None
Minimum Annual Cost (Does Not Include Cost of Initial Package or Roaming Calls)					
10 minutes/month	\$95 (1 - \$95 365-day refill)	\$90 (6 - \$15 refills)	*\$30 (3 - \$10 90-day refills)	\$165 (11 - \$15 30-day refills)	\$60
50 minutes/month	\$180 (6 - \$30 60-day refills)	*\$156 (6 - \$26 refills)	*\$100 (1 - \$100 one-year refill)	\$165 (11 - \$15 30-day refills)	\$300
100 minutes/month	\$300 (6 - \$50 60-day refills)	*\$210 (6 - \$35 refills)	*\$200 (2 - \$100 one-year refills)	\$165 (11 - \$15 30-day refills)	\$600
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. ----- Roaming coverage in most of US. ----- Minutes rollover.	Minimum annual cost of minutes calculated at day time rate. ----- *Bonus minutes with refills of \$25 or more. ----- Talk Tracker to Talk Tracker 10¢ min. ----- Minutes rollover when you buy additional minutes.	*Price drops to 15¢ per minute with \$100 refill. \$100 refill minutes expire in 365 days. ----- **85¢ per minute in Canada. ----- Minutes rollover.	*Roaming charges (not included in annual cost shown) would apply outside of Southern Maine and Lewiston areas and when off-network anywhere in US. ----- Minutes rollover when you buy additional minutes..	Roaming charges apply in Cumberland, Androscoggin, Sagadahoc, Hancock and Washington Counties. ----- *Minimum of \$20 start-up minutes. ----- **Requires one call per 60 days.

INTERNET DEPARTMENT

INTERNET SERVICE SHOPPING TIPS



 Broadband is best if it's available in your area and if you can afford it. DSL and cable-modem services offer comparable speeds but DSL, where available, is generally less expensive. DSL speeds are fixed while cable speeds can vary based on usage in your neighborhood. Neither service ties up your phone line.

If you choose dial-up, you may select a low-priced (even free) national service (often with limited customer service quality) – or you may choose a Maine-based company (often with excellent customer service) providing local or toll-free access, and pay a bit more.

TRUE OR FALSE? – YOU CAN PAY MORE FOR FASTER DIAL-UP

Many dial-up Internet services advertise a faster or premium dial-up connection for an additional \$4 or \$5 per month. Such ISP's increase your speed by compressing the data that forms web pages and email before it is transmitted by your ISP. You are provided with software that decompresses the data when it hits your computer. In essence, less data is sent over telephone wires, allowing the information that forms your web pages and email to flow more quickly. If you find your connection to be too slow and you can't get a broadband connection, this is worth a try.

SAMPLE OF RESIDENTIAL INTERNET SERVICES IN MAINE

COMPANY	FEATURES	PRICES
STATEWIDE TOLL FREE DIAL-UP		
 Net — 207-443-2211 — clinic.net	3 email addresses with 5 MB space	\$17.50 to \$20/mo. No setup fee
Dial Maine — 800-624-6380 — dialmaine.com	5 email addresses with 100 MB space	\$16 to \$20/mo. No setup fee
GWl — 866-494-2020 — gwi.net	2 email addresses with 40 MB space	\$9@10 hrs. / \$16@40 hrs. \$20 to \$23/mo. unlimited \$15 setup fee
MFX Internet — 877-432-7637 — mfx.net	1 email address with 5 MB space	\$20/mo. \$20 setup fee
Midcoast Internet — 207-594-8277 — midcoast.com	3 email addresses with 20 MB space	\$18 to \$20/mo. @ 300/hrs. \$10 setup fee
Mid-Maine — 877-643-6246 — midmaine.com	5 email addresses with 20 MB space	\$15 to \$18/mo. No setup fee
MPDU — 800-721-1063 — mpdu.com	4 email addresses with 5 MB space	\$15/mo. No setup fee
NNEI — 866-500-6634 — nnei.net	1 email address with 5 MB space	\$19 to \$22/mo. No setup fee
Panax — 888-452-5100 — panax.com	3 email addresses with 5 MB space	\$14.92 to \$19/mo. No setup fee
Points South — 866-490-0100 — psouth.com	1 email address with 10 MB space	\$15.83 to \$19.50/mo. No setup fee
Prexar — 800-288-5072 — prexar.com	2 email address with 6 MB space	\$20/mo. @ 250 hours
Verizon — 877-483-5898 — verizon.com	1 email address with 10 MB	\$20/mo. @ 150 hours \$23/mo. - unlimited \$10 fee or signup online
 PressAmerica Internet Service — 888-504-6200 — xpressamerica.net	5 email addresses with free personal web space	\$13 to \$15/mo. No setup fee

COMPANY	FEATURES	PRICES
NATIONAL ISP'S (Dial-up)		
550access.com — signup online — 550access.com	1 email address with 5 MB space	\$5.50/mo. @ 150 hrs. \$9/mo. @ 300 hrs. with accelerator \$7 setup fee
650dialup.com — 866-255-2164 — 650dialup.com	5 email addresses with 10 MB space	\$6.50/mo. \$8 setup fee
AOL — signup online — aol.com	Multiple email addresses	\$23.90/mo.
AT&T Worldnet — 800-400-1447 — att.com	6 email addresses with 60 MB space	\$12/mo. No setup fee
Earthlink — 800-327-8454 — earthlink.com	8 email addresses with 10 MB space per email address	\$22/mo. \$25 setup fee
Juno/Netzero — 888-349-0029 — netzero.com juno.com	Email on the web with 10 MB space	\$10/mo. \$15/mo. with accelerator
Localnet — 888-488-7265 — localnet.com	5 email addresses with 5 MB space	\$10/mo. \$13/mo. with accelerator
Peoplepc — 877-947-3327 — peoplepc.com	Webmail with 10 MB space	\$11/mo. \$16/mo. with accelerator
USAdatanet — 800-290-2655 — usadatanet.com	Unlimited email addresses	\$10/mo. \$15/mo. with accelerator

COMPANY	AREA SERVED	FEATURES	PRICES
WIRELESS HIGH SPEED INTERNET			
Clinic.net 207-443-2211 clinic.net	Available in parts of Cumberland, Androscoggin, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, and Aroostook counties	3 email addresses with 5 MB space	Res. \$40/mo. Bus. \$60/mo. \$100 setup fee + \$10/mo. equipment lease
Downeast Wireless 207-667-7414 downeastwireless.net	Available in Ellsworth area	3 email addresses with 5 MB space	\$50/mo. \$450 to \$700 setup fee
MFX Internet 877-432-7637 mfx.net	Presque Isle, Caribou, Mars Hill, Houlton, and Sleepy Hollow	10 email addresses with 5 MB space	\$50/mo. Plus \$8 each additional PC \$200 setup fee
Midcoast Internet 207-594-8277 midcoast.com	Various locations in the mid-coast area	4 email addresses with 20 MB space	\$50/mo. \$295 setup fee
Pioneer Wireless 866-335-1254 pioneerwireless.net	Northern Maine - Medway to Fort Kent	3 email addresses	Res. \$35/mo. Bus. \$45/mo. Setup fee \$99 - \$199

DSL HIGH SPEED INTERNET			
LOCAL PHONE COMPANIES	Usually within 3 miles of phone company central office	Call local phone company for details	Res. (\$30/mo. - \$60/mo.) Call company for rates
Acadia Net 800-994-6375 acadia.net	Augusta, Bangor, Bar Harbor, Biddeford, Brewer, Brunswick, Ellsworth, Lewiston, Orono, Portland, Waterville, Winslow	5 email/residential - 10 email/ business - with 50 MB space	Res. \$30-\$55/mo. Bus. \$80-\$120/mo. Bus. \$250 setup fee
GWI 866-494-2020 gwi.net	Available in 40 exchanges within Verizon's territory	5 email addresses with 40 MB space	Res. \$30/mo. Bus. \$50/mo. No setup fee
MXF Internet 877-432-7637 mfx.net	Presque Isle, Caribou and Houlton areas	10 email addresses with 5 MB space	Res. \$35/mo. Bus. \$60/mo.
Midcoast Internet 207-594-8277 midcoast.com	Available throughout Maine in selected exchanges	4 email addresses with 20 MB space	\$35/mo. Verizon customers \$60/mo. Non-Vz custom \$75 setup fee
Midmaine 877-643-6246 midmaine.com	West Enfield, Levant, Plymouth - Later this year in Alton and Passadumkeag	5 email addresses with 20 MB space	Res. \$30/mo. Bus. \$60/mo. \$75 installation fee & \$150 equipment fee

COMPANY	AREA SERVED	FEATURES	PRICES
Oxford Networks 800-520-9911 oxfordnetworks.com	Lewiston/Auburn (not all areas yet) and Norway/South Paris	5 email addresses with 10 MB space	Res. \$38/mo. Bus. \$60-\$80/mo.
Verizon 877-483-5898 verizon.com	Available in much of Verizon territory	9 email addresses with 10 MB space	Res. \$35/mo. Bus. \$60/mo.
CABLE MODEM HIGH SPEED INTERNET			
Adelphia 888-683-1000 adelphia.net	Central Maine area.	Multiple email addresses with 10 MB space	Res. \$43/mo. Bus. \$70/mo. Install. fee varies +\$5/mo. modem rental
Comcast 888-633-4266 comcast.com	Berwick, So. Berwick, Eliot & Kittery	7 email addresses with 10 MB space	\$43/mo. cable TV customer \$58/mo. non-cable TV customer
Metrocast Online 800-695-2545 metrocastcablevision.com	Acton, Lebanon, Sanford, Shapleigh, Springvale	2 email addresses with 40 MB space	\$35/mo. +\$5/mo. modem rental \$100 installation fee
Pine Tree Cablevision 800-220-3320 pte-me.net	Machias area	3 email addresses with 10 MB space	\$29/mo. +\$5/mo. modem rental \$50 installation fee
Susquehanna 207-729-6663 suscom-maine.net	Brunswick and Freeport areas	1 email addresses with 10 MB space	Res. \$30/mo. Bus. \$52/mo. \$29.95 installation fee
Time Warner 800-833-2253 twmaine.com	York, Cumberland and Aroostook Counties	8 email addresses with 10 MB space	\$45/mo. No installation fee

ANOTHER VIEW

To The Editor:

The Telephone Association of Maine (TAM) read with great interest the article in the most recent *Ratewatcher* entitled "Customers of Rural Independent Companies Get Higher Rates and Lag in New Services." As the "Independent Companies" referred to in the article, we must admit to being perplexed by the headline and some of the content of the piece.

TAM has great respect for the Office of the Public Advocate (OPA) and the work it does. The *Ratewatcher* is wonderful resource for the consumers of telephone services in Maine. However, to the extent that the OPA provides information (even though unintentionally), it falls short of its mission of helping those consumers make information decisions. The disadvantages listed are not caused by our members or any other single cause. Nor are they limited to rural areas served by Independent Companies. All rural areas have higher costs for providing service. Rural areas are less attractive to new competitors. Regulatory and legislative requirements have caused local rates to rise. New technologies have limitations that make deployment of broadband services more difficult in rural areas. Even with all these hurdles, the independent telephone companies of Maine equal or exceed the variety, availability and quality level of services offered by others in the industry.

While TAM applauds the OPA for considering ways to bring more options to consumers in rural Maine, it is not necessary to assign blame to work toward this goal. Independent Telephone Companies in this state have a long and distinguished history of serving their communities and offering those consumers up-to-date and technologically advanced services including broadband. But there are things that we cannot do. We cannot force competitors to serve rural areas. We cannot disobey the law or regulatory imperatives. We cannot change the rural nature of the areas we serve.

We can work hard to make sure that our customers have available to them all the state-of-the-art services that they deserve, and that our communities have the resources to attract new economic opportunities, even including competitive ones. We are proud of our efforts to do so. We look forward to working with all those who have the same goal, including the Office of the Public Advocate.

Robert Souza, President
The Telephone Association of Maine

Editor's Note - The article referred to by the Telephone Association of Maine (TAM) did not state, nor did it imply, that TAM members were to blame for rate increases or the unavailability of certain competitive services in their territories. There was nothing misleading or factually incorrect in that article. Interested readers may see the piece from our July issue at www.maine.gov/meopa. The Public Advocate will consider publishing letters from any interested readers.

**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:



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

**STILL CONFUSED?
GET FREE ADVICE FROM
THE PUBLIC ADVOCATE'S
TELECOM TEAM ON
MARCH 9, 2005
IN AUBURN, MAINE**

Come see us at the Auburn Mall on March 9, 2005 from 10:00 to 5:00. Our staff will be happy to provide advice about the most economical telephone, wireless and Internet services for your needs. If you can't be there but would like to arrange for us to meet with a group of people in your area, please give us a call. Check our website for future events in other locations.