

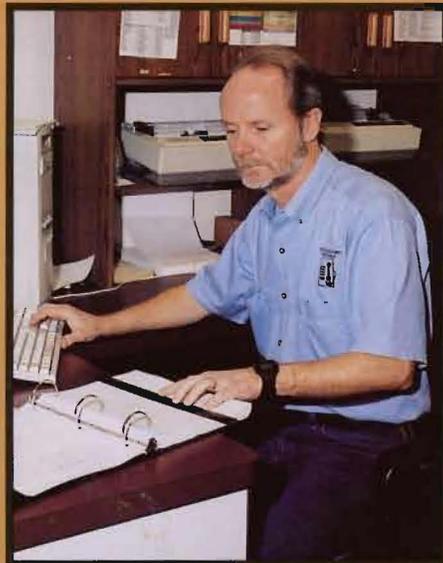
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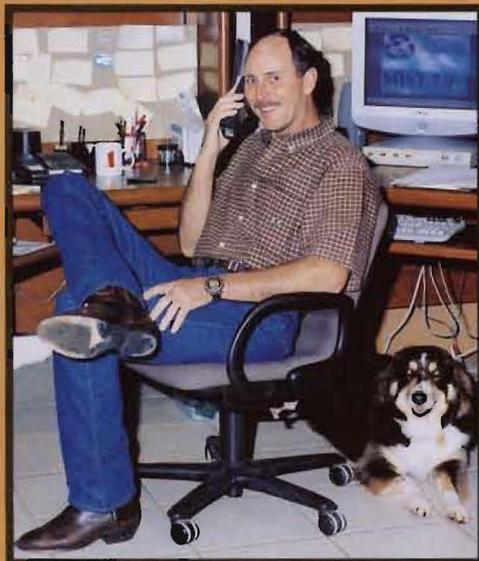
April 2003

Volume 11

Number 4



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Cover design by Ellen Custer, 2d - A design collaborative

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For subscriptions and address changes:
www.apcc.net

Perspectives magazine
11922 Westheimer Rd., PMB 369
Houston, TX 77077
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Official magazine of the American
Public Communications Council Inc.

editorial

Showing you the money

Every so often, I have to challenge those in the industry who say that the national and state payphone associations haven't done enough for them.

In making the case that these associations have in fact made a huge difference in PSPs' lives, I'd like to take a look at three issues — dial-around compensation, the new services test, and the deregulation of the local coin rate. Let's run some numbers to see how these issues have affected the bottom line of, say, a payphone provider in Texas with 100 phones. We'll do our calculations based on the calendar year for 2002.

Those of you who are nitpickers will say that it's impossible to do these calculations because there's no such thing as an average route. I agree that all routes are different, but I think we can come up with a reasonably accurate example for purposes of this discussion.

Let's start with everyone's favorite: dial-around compensation. I spoke with several 100-phone PSPs in strict confidence, and they gave me their total dial-around compensation amounts for 2002. The average? \$20,000. How much would they have received had APCC not been diligently working on this issue for more than a decade? No one can say for sure, but I'd be willing to bet it wouldn't be much. And yes, dial-around compensation is not a perfect process, but APCC has done an exceptional job with limited resources against much bigger foes in an extremely slow-moving democratic system.

Next on our list is the new services test. The APCC and many state payphone associations have done a lot of hard work to reduce line rates in accordance with the NST. Typically, the state association takes the NST to its PUC to present a case for the reduction of Bell line rates. However, the Texas Payphone Association used a different approach. The TPA used the NST as a bargaining tool in obtaining agreements with all 51 LECs in the state to reduce their rates. To use SBC as an example, we'll say that our PSP was able to save \$10 per month per line. Multiply that by 100 phones, and multiply it again by 12 months, and the annual savings is \$12,000.

Finally, let's look at the deregulation of the local coin rate. The providers I spoke with actually increased their revenue by leaving their rates at 25 cents and 35 cents; their call volumes



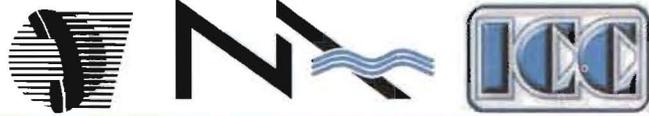
increased by an average of 20 percent. It seems their customers are budget-conscious and seek out lower-priced phones that they'll use regularly. The average revenue was \$100 per payphone, so a 20 percent increase would add \$20 per month. 100 phones x \$20 is an additional \$2,000 a month, and \$24,000 for the year. Without association involvement? Zero.

To finish our calculations, we naturally have to factor in the cost of association membership. In Texas, it's \$1 per phone, per month. That's \$1,200 a year for a route of 100 phones, with a return of at least \$44,000 and savings of \$12,000. Seems like a small price to pay given the benefits outlined above, and other values such as EUCL refunds and non-tangibles like education and information.

Despite the gains I've mentioned, I know it's very challenging to keep payphones out there today, and I'm not trying to say that payphone associations can solve all your problems. I just wanted to remind the naysayers that these associations have logged some pretty significant accomplishments over the last decade. You may not agree with everything they do, and that's OK; healthy debate has been a part of this process all along. However, complaining just to complain isn't very constructive. We all know we have a lot more to do, but the gains we've made have proved that we can achieve a great deal if we work together. At risk of sounding like Dr. Phil, I'll close by saying let's focus on the positive and pull together to see what we can accomplish in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracey Guhl".

Tracey Guhl
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Working it out

Whether from their base at home or rented office space, PSPs get the job done



Editor's note: Even though we did not interview Extra Effort Payphones for this article, we did take pictures of its staff, as we wanted to show PSPs who work in an office. Extra Effort is based in Houston, as is *Perspectives*, and we are very grateful for all of the support the company provides the magazine.

Today more than ever, Americans are concerned with achieving a balance between work and play, which is why nearly 25 million people are self-employed. Owning your own business provides more flexibility — from the number of hours you work to what you work on and where you set up shop. Increasingly, entrepreneurs are opting to work from their homes, although some larger companies rent office space because it better meets their needs.

Home sweet...office?

There are many advantages to setting up a home office, not the least of which is that the dreaded morning commute will be a thing of the past.

"One of the best parts of working from home is the convenience of not having to travel, especially in bad weather," says Laraine Pedrero, president and owner of Apollo Communications in Plainfield, N.H. "We get blizzards, and commercial space is 30 minutes away. Since my office is at home, I can avoid both the anxiety of driving on icy roads and an hour-long, daily commute."

Pedrero moved to northern New Hampshire eight years ago. At the time, her son owned Apollo Communications and was renting office space. Pedrero decided it made more sense to move the business into a residential setting.

"I figured I'd be able to monitor the business better since I'd be here all the time," Pedrero explains. "I also thought, 'Why pay all this rent to someone else when I could have the company pay me rent?' The financials helped with the size of the home that I built. The company helps pay the mortgage and taxes — there are good tax advantages."

Nor did it make sense to Pedrero to pay for commercial space when clients wouldn't be seeing it anyway. "There's never been a reason to meet anyone here," Pedrero says. "I go visit my clients because I want to look at the site and see where phones should be placed or see the condition of the phones. No one has ever asked to come here, but it wouldn't be a problem if they did because it's definitely a business atmosphere."

The business space encompasses three rooms in the house. One room — the workspace — has three desks with computers and file cabinets, while a second room houses the computer that calls all the payphones, and a third room holds more file cabinets, the coin counter and a safe. Apollo Communications' five employees enter the office by a separate entrance in the back of the building where there are several parking spaces and a two-car garage that accommodate the company's four vehicles. The company also rents a storage unit across the street for less than \$100 per month to store inventory.

Pedrero had no trouble with zoning ordinances. Home businesses are allowed in her neighborhood, and her office has no visible signage nor does it draw lots of traffic. Payphone service providers (PSPs) who live in deed-restricted communities will need to check with their local zoning boards as well as with their homeowners' associations about special restrictions. For example, a vehicle with the company's name on it may not be allowed to park in a visible area.

Working from home isn't for the easily distracted, Pedrero notes. "I'm extremely disciplined. I'm in my office by 7:30 most mornings, I go upstairs for 15 to 20 minutes for lunch, and I stay until 6 p.m. I do my day's work."

She typically logs 50 to 60 hours of work each week; winters are a little slower, requiring about 40 hours a

week. Sometimes those hours are put in late at night. "One of the best parts of working from home is that I'm able to handle problems during 'off' hours, which may prevent someone from getting upset and smashing a handset," Pedrero says. "But phone calls at 10 at night or in the middle of the night, or during the weekend when I have company visiting, can be very inconvenient. Of course, I could just let the phone ring, but ..."

A different world

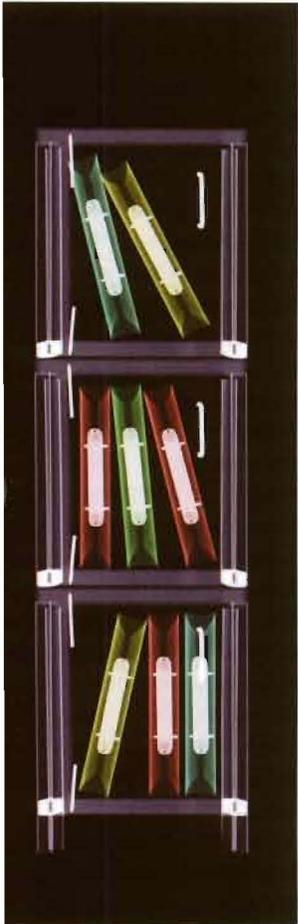
Discipline is the key to successfully operating a business from home, agrees David Grudzinski, president of Coin Telecom Systems in Friendswood, Texas, which owns several hundred payphones. "There's a tendency to watch TV because it's so available or take a nap, but I'm really disciplined," Grudzinski says. "If I get stressed and need to step away for a while, it's nice to be able to take my wife out to lunch or spend some time with my horses out in back. I practically have a zoo at my house, which makes my home office even more enjoyable. If I'm having a rough afternoon, I can walk to my stocked pond and feed the catfish, bass and perch that I'm raising."

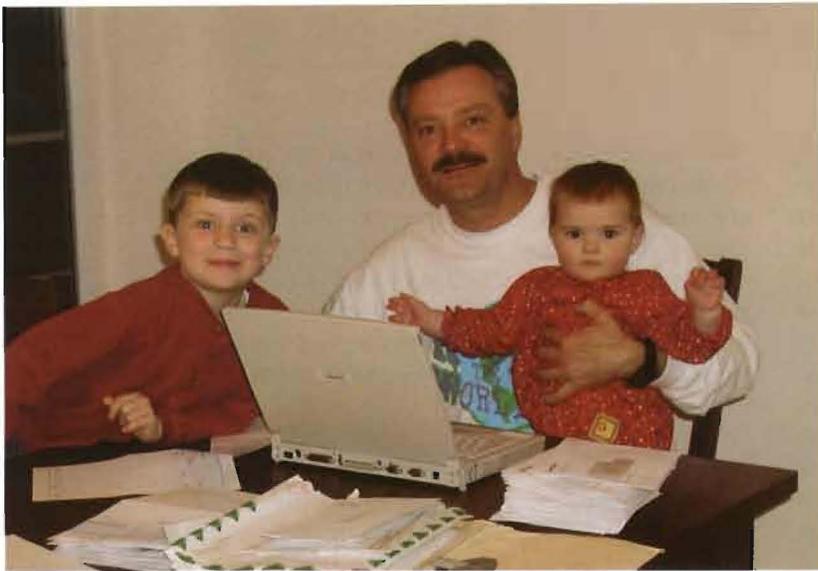
Grudzinski has been in business for seven years, and he moved his office from one home to another during that time. When he first started Coin Telecom Systems, a spare bedroom housed the company. As the business grew and he decided he wanted to hire a tech, Grudzinski looked for a house with a detached office so he could maintain his family's privacy and so that he wouldn't have to give someone else a key to his home.

Today, he owns five acres of land, and two bays in his five-car garage have been transformed into the headquarters of his company. A 40-foot by 40-foot warehouse on the property is used for storage and as a place to repair phones. His tech comes into the office every three days or so, but most mornings he receives his day's assignments via fax.

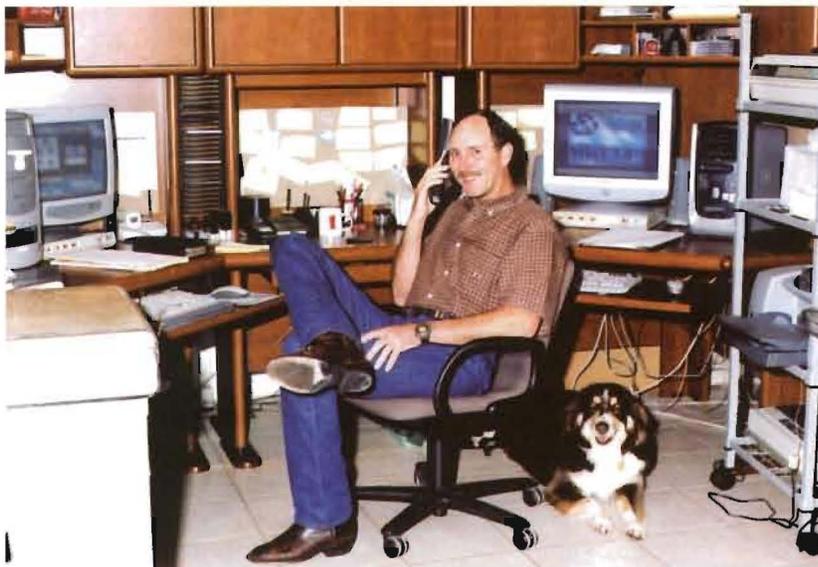
"One of the worst things about working from home is worrying that since we deal with a lot of coin, people might think I have a lot of money stored here," Grudzinski says. "My worst fear is someone breaking in, thinking they'll get a lot of money."

But the benefits of working from home significantly outweigh the drawbacks, he notes. For one thing, "the buildings are paying themselves off. Instead of spending money to lease an office, my corporation writes a check to me each month for leasing the facilities," Grudzinski says. "Plus, I don't have to drive to and from an office. I just walk 100 feet, and I'm in a different world. It's definitely a work atmosphere, and I have strict rules and follow them. The time I save commuting I can devote to working. I work eight hours a day: three hours a day on my payphone business since we're not in a growing mode and five hours on another business venture. And





Enjoying the benefits of working from home are (from top) Roland Lapointe (with Luke and Clare), David Grudzinski (with Aussie) and Laraine Pedrero.



I'm also disciplined about spending time with my kids when they get home from school. When my workday is done, it's done. My work time and my family time are both important."

To ensure that he gets the most value from the time he's invest-

ing in his payphone business each day, Grudzinski has automated as much as he can. "You'll save a lot of time if you invest in good software and equipment," he says. "I don't do any keypunching at all. I get my phone bills and OSP [operator service provider] data through the Internet. I have a program that automatically prints my commission checks, and then I zip them through my mail meter machine. Having a photocopier on-site makes life easier, too."

The heart of the matter

Working from home makes life easier for Roland Lapointe, who owns Lighthouse Communications in Havre de Grace, Md., with his wife, Andrea Terry.

"Initially, when we started this business in 1995, I was working at MCI, and my wife was an attorney with the county government," Lapointe recalls. "We thought this would become my wife's business so that when we had children, she'd be able to stay home with them. We thought we'd grow the business and have a storefront in the downtown business district."

That's not quite how things worked out. Today Lighthouse Communications operates nearly 100 payphones, and Lapointe is running the company from their home while taking care of 5-year-old Luke and 9-month-old Claire.

"As it happened, I developed more of an interest in the business," Lapointe says. "The payphone business is fantastic for our purposes. It's a mainstay of our economic livelihood, and it allows us great flexibility in my being able to be with our kids."

Lapointe estimates that he devotes about 10 hours a week to Lighthouse Communications. "The best part about working from home is that it is so convenient," Lapointe says. "You don't have to put in a solid eight hours. I can run downstairs and put in a half hour on accounting while Claire is napping. Or I can repair phones in the evening or weekend once my wife is home."

Lapointe has purposely kept the business small so that he can spend more time with his family. All of the couple's payphones are located within a tight geographic area to minimize travel time.

Sometimes emergencies spring up, and Lapointe has to find a spur-of-the-moment babysitter so that he can repair a phone immediately. He's established a network of neighbors and family who can step in and assist. Other times, if he's just changing out a handset, he may bundle the kids into the car and take them along.

"The discipline can be tough," Lapointe says. "On weekends, since I've been home all week, all I want to do is go visit friends, go for a drive, anything to get away because it feels like I'm always at work. [Lapointe's office is set up in his basement, and

Happy to be in an office with colleagues are (from top) Ross McEathron and Mike Hubacek of Extra Effort Payphones and Ann Davis of Commonwealth Telephone.

his garage is used to store tools and spare parts.] But instead I may have to empty phones, cut commission checks, do whatever I wasn't able to accomplish during the week.

"And I do miss adult interaction and the excitement of being professionally engaged and professionally challenged, but I can't complain because I have the better deal in my family. There's nothing better than this!" Lapointe concludes.

Going out of house

Larger companies often find that the smaller space that residences provide just isn't adequate for their purposes. IMR Telecom in Marlboro, Mass., which operates several thousand payphones, has rented office space since its beginning.

"In 1986, I started a company with three other fellows who weren't in the payphone business," recalls George Niden, vice president of IMR Telecom. "In December 1986, Massachusetts allowed for the installation of payphones, and we installed our first phones in spring 1987. The payphone business shared office space with our other company."

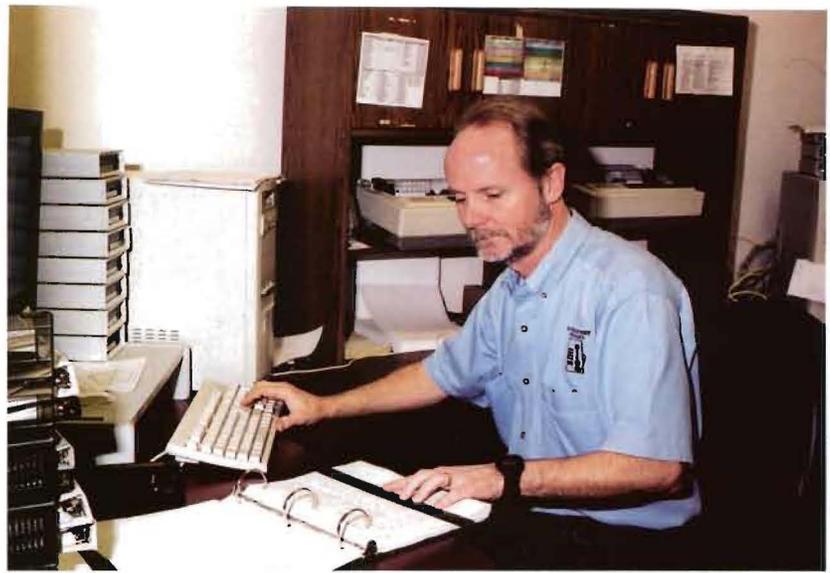
Over the years, the company has moved four times. "It sounds like we jump around like a Mexican jumping bean," Niden says with a laugh, "but that's not really the case. We've been in our current location for five years; we spent eight years at the prior location."

Each time the company has changed locations, officers have searched for certain qualities:

- A good combination of office and warehouse space for storing and setting up phones. "In the metropolitan Boston area, it's sometimes difficult to find that combination," Niden notes. "In every case, we relied on a realtor."
- A central location that is close to major roadways to ease the commute for employees and so it's easier to travel to clients' locations. IMR Telecom's current office space is close to I-495 and the Massachusetts Turnpike so employees can go anywhere in New England quickly, Niden says.
- A low-key appearance is paramount. "We have a lot of expensive equipment, and there's money going through here. Two or so times a week an armored car pulls up. We want to maintain a low profile for those reasons," Niden explains.

The current location is 3,000 square feet, and seven employees are in the office every day. The remainder of the firm's 21 employees telecommute, but everyone meets on-site once a quarter for face time.

In addition to offering a central place where all employees can gather, the rented office space has provided another benefit. In each move, the office layout has been built to IMR's specifications, down to where walls and wires will be, what carpet is installed, and when the company was feeling bullish, how large



the on-site gym and accompanying restroom with shower would be. Companies can negotiate any number of perks.

In the past, Niden has considered other options for the business. "The business has been such a roller coaster ride over the

For rent

Property and Portfolio Research Inc. in Boston keeps a running tab on how much businesses across the nation are paying per square foot of rented office space. Their latest numbers show that New York City still reigns supreme in pricey rental real estate.

City	Office rent per square foot	City	Office rent per square foot
Atlanta	\$21.06	Memphis	\$17.12
Baltimore	\$22.50	Milwaukee	\$19.51
Boston	\$38.93	Nashville	\$18.81
Charlotte	\$19.91	New Orleans	\$17.07
Chicago	\$28.14	New York	\$53.00
Cleveland	\$20.66	Norfolk	\$18.98
Denver	\$20.42	Philadelphia	\$25.07
Detroit	\$21.65	Phoenix	\$21.69
Fort Lauderdale	\$23.65	Richmond	\$16.40
Honolulu	\$24.20	San Antonio	\$19.02
Houston	\$21.53	San Francisco	\$32.07
Indianapolis	\$17.81	Seattle	\$28.41
Kansas City	\$22.40	St. Louis	\$21.82
Los Angeles	\$27.74	Tampa	\$19.98

years that we never felt comfortable enough to buy space," he says. "If we could, I would like to be so automated that we would have no central office. Everyone would work from home. I'm

much more productive when I'm at home without a phone ringing and people coming into my office to ask questions. Of course, at least now I can answer questions on the spot."

From owning to leasing

For nearly 40 years, companies that Ann Davis worked with owned the 20,000 square-foot building that Commonwealth Telephone Inc. in Malden, Mass. now calls home.

"Originally, a coin-operated vending company purchased the building, and we segued into the payphone business in 1987," Davis says. "We sold the vending company but kept the building. Five years ago, we decided we really didn't need all that space, and the building needed updating. The real estate market was good, so we sold the building and now rent back from the owner."

Commonwealth Telephone rents 4,000 square feet, which includes five beautifully decorated offices and 1,500 square feet of warehouse space. The six full-time and six part-time employees also enjoy a workout area with an exercise bike and some free weights, a shower and a mini-kitchen. Another company rents the rest of the space next door.

Renting makes sense for the company because "it's one less thing we have to worry about as far as building maintenance is concerned," Davis explains. "I have to maintain the area inside the walls of the building except for major appliances like the furnace or air conditioning unit. I'm responsible for only general maintenance. If something breaks down, someone else takes care of it."

"We've considered moving a lot of times. Our thought was to purchase a residential home zoned for light commercial use. Such a property would be a nice company asset," Davis continues. "Plus, we would have all the comforts of home. But it would be quite a job to move this operation. The computers can't be down for a long period of time, and moving the 5-foot by 7-foot safe would be an issue. We've done it up right here. We have a tropical fish tank, we're close to most of our phones and employees, we have both on-street and off-street parking, and it costs us less to rent than it would to own a building. We're comfortable where we are for the time being; it suits our needs." ■

Stacey L. Bell is a freelance writer who specializes in business and marketing issues. She works from her home, and occasionally from the beach, in Tampa.

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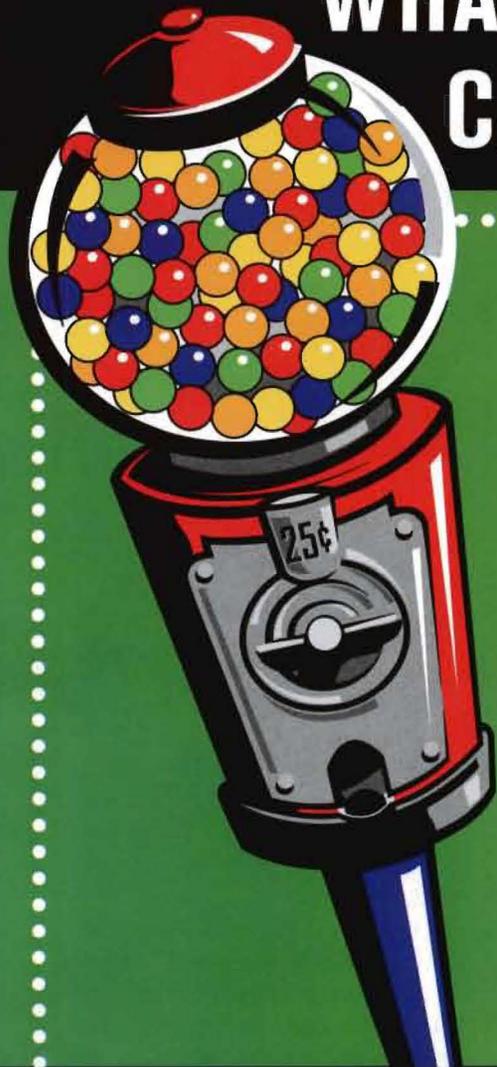
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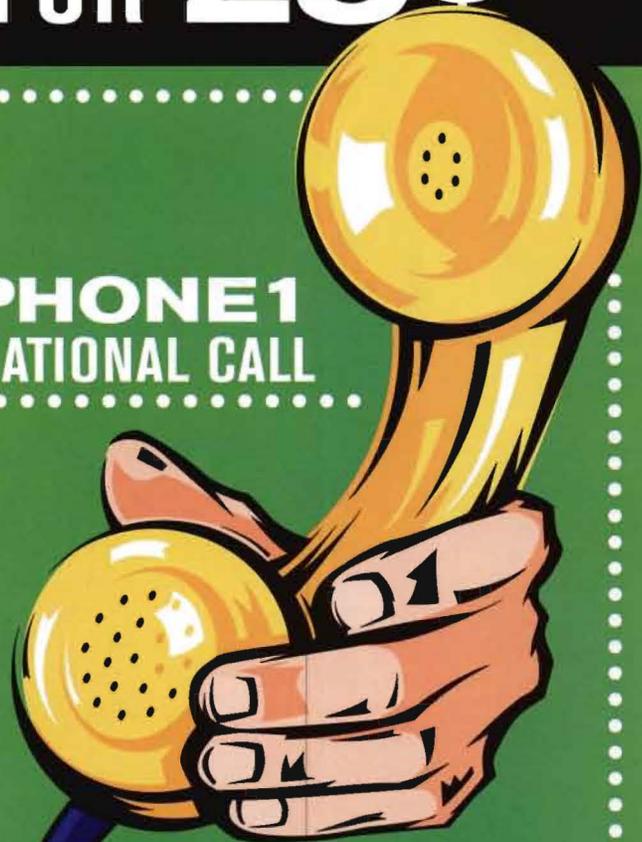
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In the bag

Some PSPs are incurring an added business expense: plastic coin bags

David Grudzinski, president of Coin Telecom Systems in Friendswood, Texas, got a surprise when he recently delivered coin to his bank. "The bank told us that the armored car wasn't returning the cloth bags that we package our coins in anymore," Grudzinski says. "I asked, 'What should I do? Bring my money in a wheelbarrow?'"

Grudzinski, like some other payphone service providers (PSPs), now must purchase plastic bags so that he can deposit his phones' revenues. Grudzinski estimates his company will use about 300 to 400 bags and accompanying stickers a year at a cost of more than \$250 for his several hundred phone route.

Why the change? In early 2001, the U.S. Mint stopped using smaller canvas bags to package coins,

turning instead to larger bags to save money, explains Susan Stawick, a Federal Reserve spokesman. The Mint makes coins, which it ships to the Federal Reserve. The Federal Reserve, which is the central bank for the United States, in turn sends the coins to banks and credit unions in the smaller canvas bags, which the banks recycle.

Banks that reused the small canvas coin bags to ship their customers' coin back to the Federal Reserve now find this supply of bags diminished, Stawick says. (The Federal Reserve will accept the larger bags only from the U.S. Mint, not from other sources.) Therefore, the Federal Reserve now allows banks to package coins in either canvas or plastic bags that meet the Federal

Plastic please

The Federal Reserve now accepts coin deposits packaged in standard canvas bags or in plastic bags that meet the following minimum requirements:

Security:

- Bag must be self-sealing.
- Seal must be tamper evident.

Durability:

- Must have a reinforced handle able to withstand a hang test with a 100+ lbs. load.
- Constructed of minimum 6.5-mil gauge material.
- Able to withstand 8 to 10 6-foot drops while full of coin.

Stackability:

- The exterior coefficient of friction (COF) must prevent bags from slipping while stacked with other plastic and/or canvas bags. (A COF of .95 or higher should be sufficient.)

Size and features:

- The size should approximate that of a standard canvas coin bag.
- Fillable space should not exceed 13 inches by 19 inches.
- The bag handle should be 3 inches or smaller. Total bag dimensions shouldn't exceed 13 inches by 22 inches.
- Bags may be clear or tinted. Colored bags should not be opaque. Contents must be clearly distinguishable.

Deposit standards:

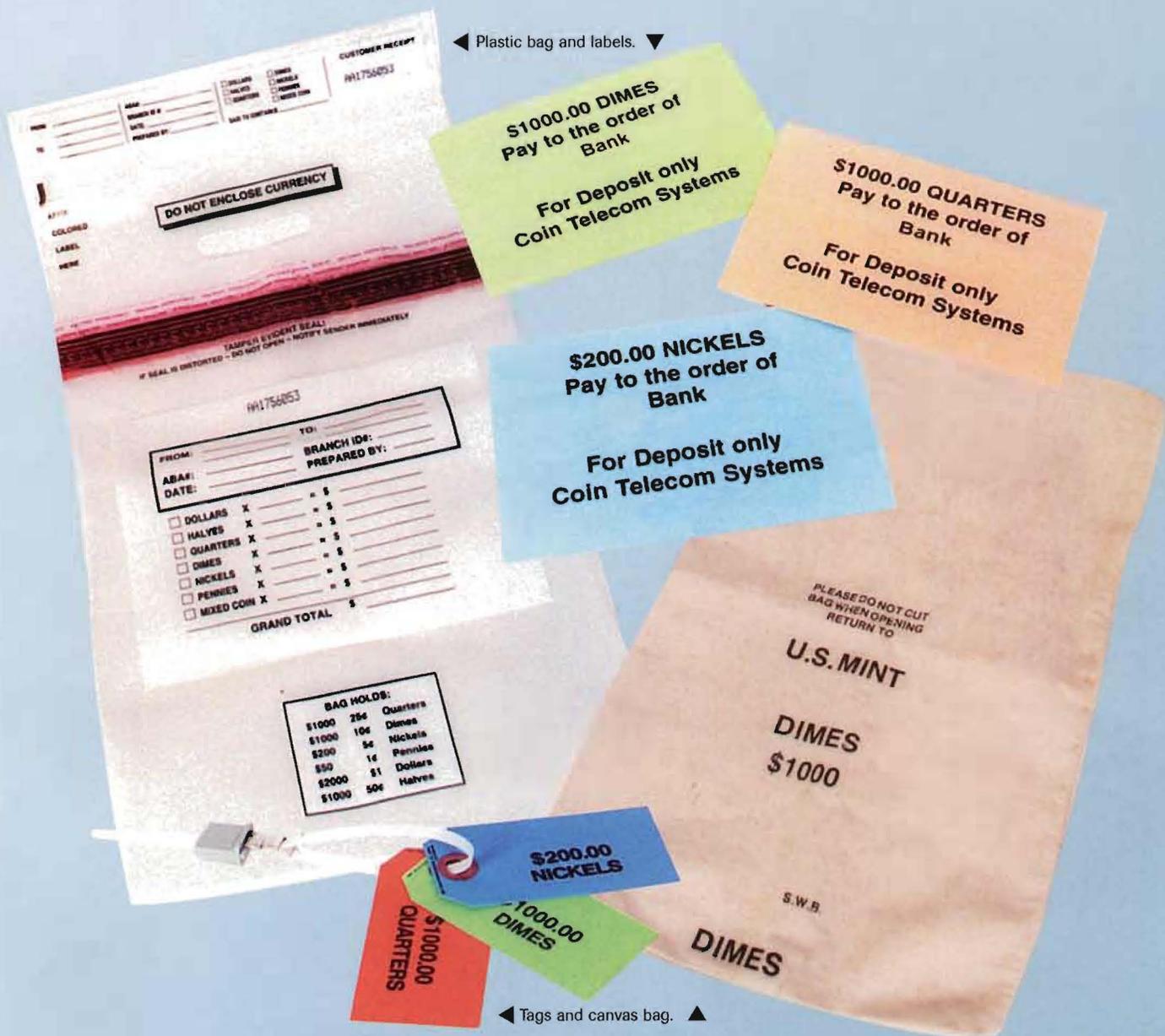
- Plastic bags of coin should contain the standard quantities of coin outlined in Operating Circular 2 (\$50 for pennies; \$200 for nickels; \$1,000 for dimes, quarters, half-dollars and Eisenhower dollars; \$2,000 for dollar coins).
- Each bag should be labeled on the end opposite the handle with a label, color-coded according to American Bankers Association (ABA) standards, showing denomination, dollar amount, depositor's name, ABA routing number and the four-digit branch ID of the depositing office.

Reserve Cash Product Office's standards (see sidebar). Those standards went into effect April 1, 2002.

Many banks continue to receive ample supplies of canvas bags, but some banks send out more coins than they order, and thus may experience a shortfall. So some businesses, like Grudzinski's, are finding that they will need to provide their own bags, and they're choosing to use plastic bags, since bags aren't returned to them and canvas bags are more expensive. Grudzinski has found a plastic bag supplier (Block & Co., 800-323-7556), and his signage company is making the accompanying stickers.

While the coin bag change shouldn't bust pay-phone providers' wallets, it will add another line item to already-stressed budgets. Some PSPs might wish to join forces with neighboring colleagues to order a large supply of bags, since prices fall dramatically as quantities increase. Fortunately, that's one fact you can bank on. **P**

Stacey L. Bell is a freelance writer who specializes in business and marketing issues.



◀ Plastic bag and labels. ▼

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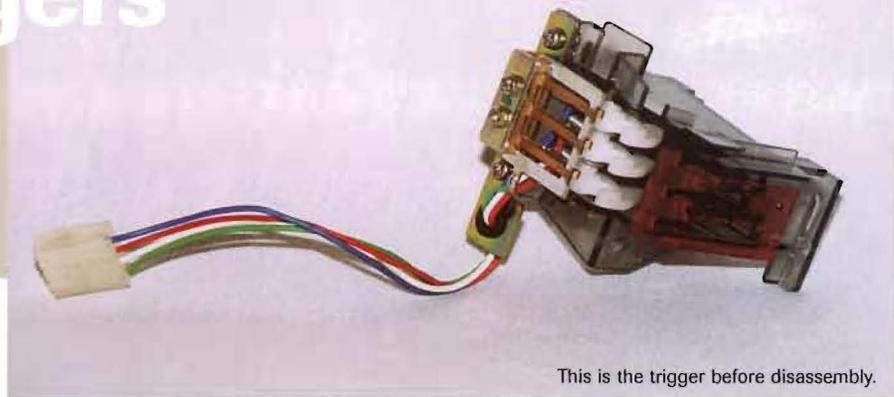
◀ Tags and canvas bag. ▲

• What's **Myrmidon** going to do next? Find out next month ...

Spending time with your triggers

tech talk

by Steve Kinn



This is the trigger before disassembly.

Here's a step by step guide on how to rebuild a trigger switch

The trigger switch is probably one of the least expensive parts in your payphone. This item is a small collection of springs, contacts, wires, little plastic parts, screws, and a plastic housing to mount everything into or onto. Often it is easy to simply swap the trigger assembly and not worry about the old unit. After all, it is so cheap, right? Well that may be true, but we all know recycling is our goal to help keep the environment clean and lower our costs of running a payphone route. After a few years of trigger swapping, you should have enough spare parts to rebuild over half of them, if not more.

There are several factors to consider when rebuilding or refurbing a trigger. They are:

- fine tolerances;
- alignment of the parts for maximum operation;
- sufficient contact metal; and
- loss of spring action.

When rebuilding a trigger, use a good clean work area similar to the one we recommended using for rebuilding coin mechs. We don't want little parts disappearing down cracks, etc. Using small plastic bins to store parts as they come off the assembly will go a long way when it's time to reassemble.

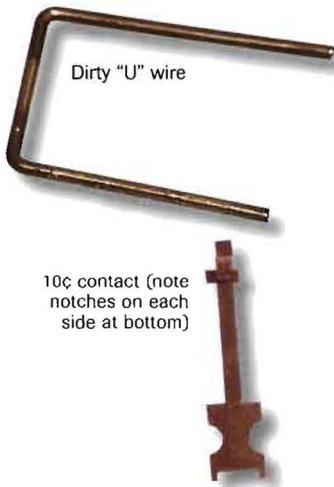
Dirt: The main culprit

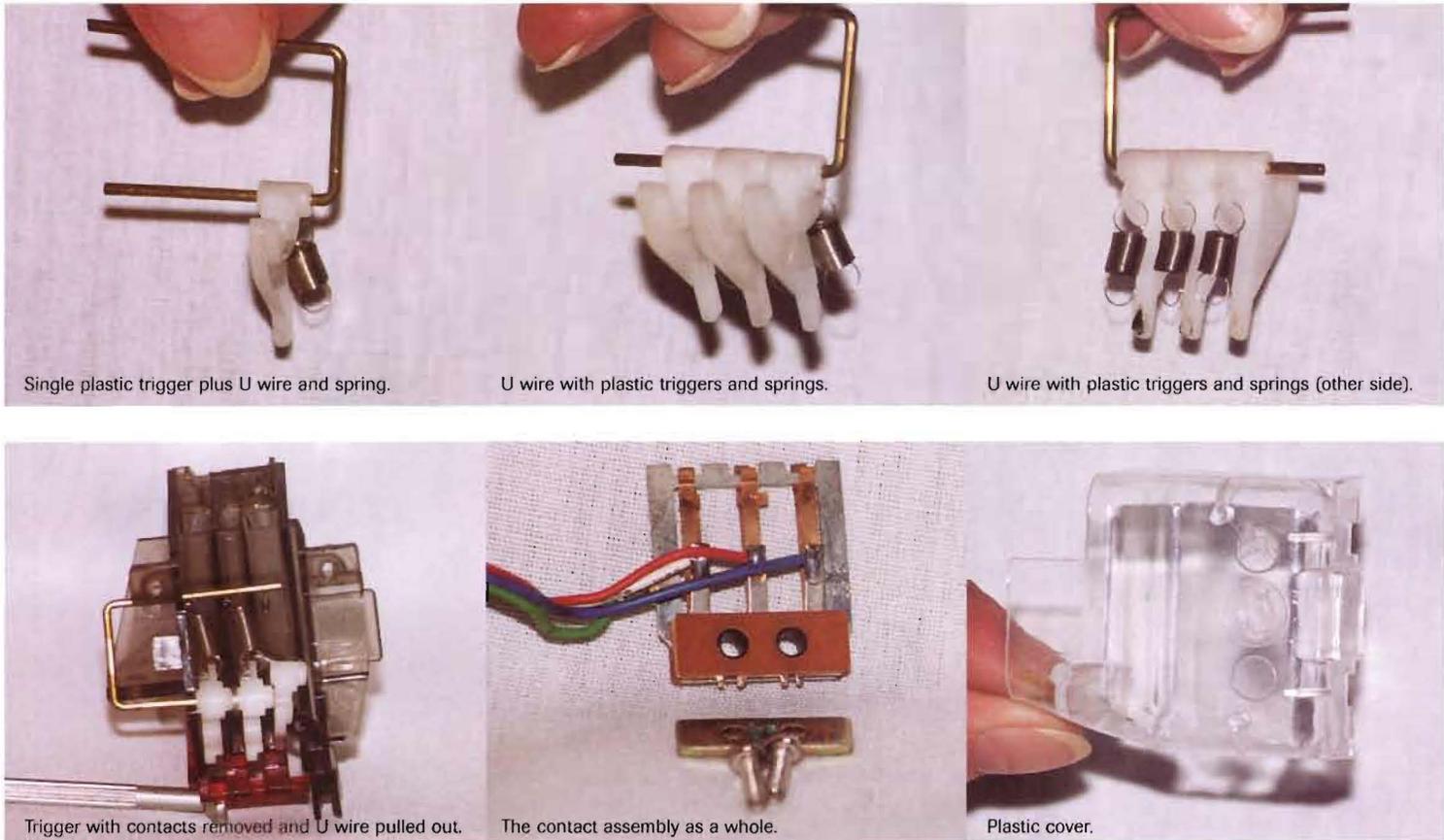
What is the number one problem in a trigger? Most likely some type of blockage on the con-

tacts. By blockage I mean corrosion, dirt, oil, lint, or dust (so that's what the little plastic cover is for?). The trigger works by what is called a dry contact closure. Dry is an electrical term for power not supplied by the device itself. The trigger has no current source or power hookup; it simply takes power fed to it from one wire and transfers it to another wire. The wire supplying the power is called the common and the wires getting the power transferred to them represent each denomination of coin (nickels, dimes, quarters).

When a coin passes through the trigger assembly, the weight of the coin actuates a lever that pushes against the contact. The contact touches the common and creates an electrical connection. It doesn't take much to complete an electrical circuit, but by the same token it is very easy to break the connection. A small bit of corrosion, dirt or dust will cause the contact to not pass the electrical signal. Because of this, the contacts are normally plated with some corrosion-resistant material. Gold is nice, but a tad bit pricey. If there is gold on the contacts, it is going to be plating (no, you are not going to get rich recycling contacts at the scrap metal dealer, although there are companies that buy up large quantities of electronic scrap to get the gold).

The main key here is whatever you do to the contacts, you don't want to damage the plating. A vigorous cleaning with a file will strip the plating off the contacts. The contacts will work





Single plastic trigger plus U wire and spring.

U wire with plastic triggers and springs.

U wire with plastic triggers and springs (other side).

Trigger with contacts removed and U wire pulled out.

The contact assembly as a whole.

Plastic cover.

pretty well for a few days, but then they'll corrode faster than they ever did due to a lack of plating. As we have detailed in previous articles, using a crocus cloth or a burnishing tool is the ideal way to clean contacts. If we are going to be disassembling the entire unit, our cleaning methods will change.

The first step is to disassemble the unit. Looking at the unit from the front, there are two screws that are holding the contact arms to the body. Remove these screws and notice the order of the pieces. The typical order is:

1. The cover plate;
2. An insulator;
3. The common contact backing plate;
4. The common contact assembly;
5. Another insulator;
6. The individual denomination contacts; and
7. Another insulator.

Note that the screws connecting these pieces have their own insulation in the form of two round plastic cylinders that the screws pass through. The next two screws hold the mounting plate to the

body assembly. Remove these two screws. Looking at the unit from the front, you will notice a "U" shaped rod arm that holds the lever and spring assemblies in the body. Make a mental or written note of the order of the various washers and spacers between the pieces. While holding the entire unit over a bowl, remove the arm and all the parts should fall into the bowl. I hope you made that note, because now you have a small pile of parts.

Mr. Clean

Now let's clean everything. The rod arm will polish up with steel wool. The rod should feel silky smooth to the touch when you are finished. Next, clean the triggers. A cleaning solution such as dish soap and water will suffice. After getting all the dirt off, dry carefully, paying close attention to the little holes. A twist of tissue paper will get into these holes just fine. Try not to stretch out the springs hanging on the trigger. If the springs are stretched out, replace them with spares. These springs are calibrated, so any old spring won't work. Use only coin trigger

springs, not ball point pen springs or other such junk.

Let's put the triggers back into the body before we go any further. Holding the body in front of you, oriented as it is sitting in the phone, tilt the body counterclockwise 90 degrees. Insert the "U" rod into the body just enough to give you a post to place the first trigger on. Ensure that the spacers are in the proper order. Hook the spring onto the top section of the U rod as it was before disassembly. When you get the first trigger in place, advance the rod further in the body to leave enough post to place the second trigger. Add the washer/spacers and repeat the same procedure for the third trigger. When you have all three triggers in place, push the rod all the way into the body where it will seat. Flick each trigger to ensure there are no mechanical hindrances to their operation before continuing. If something is hanging up, disassemble and reassemble and double-check the spacers' positions.

Now we take care of the trigger contact assemblies. The trigger contacts are easily



Contacts disassembled.



Plastic triggers, springs and U wire.



The bow of the contacts.

upon. Make sure that when a trigger is toggled, the contacts touch and the common side lifts slightly off the resting plate. The contact faces should squarely line up.

Lastly, look at the pins on the plug that mates to the motherboard. It is possible for these pins to get dirty or corrode also. To clean them, start by using a small screwdriver to release the latch that holds them in the connector body. While

pushing down with the small screwdriver, gently pull the pin from the body. Use a crocus cloth or a burnishing tool on this contact. It is also plated, just not with gold and you don't want to damage the plating. ▣

Steve Klein, a payphone advisor in Virginia, is vice president of technology for Jacqui Electric Co. in Virginia. To send a question, please e-mail steve@payphoneadvisor.com, or mail it to 619 Homestead Ave., Hampton, VA 23661-1430.

accessible now that everything is apart. We can lay out the contacts and clearly see the contact faces. They should be a shiny gold color. Your trusty magnifying glass will help you see the contacts. Remember — it does not take much dirt or corrosion to cause a failure here. If the contacts are in poor shape or the plating is gone or severely damaged, replace them. There is no sense in putting junk back together. Also, ensure that the contact assemblies don't get twisted or bent out of shape. They should lie flat on a flat surface such as a tabletop on either the contact face side or the reverse side. The common contacts have a slight bow to them and won't lie completely flat (see photo).

After the faces are clean, reassemble the contacts in the reverse order of disassembly. Ensure the insulator plates are in the proper order and the screw insulator sleeves are on the screws. With the unit assembled completely, take a look at the side view of the contacts as they sit in the body. There should be a gap of approximately the width of the plastic trigger cover between the contacts. This gap can be adjusted by slightly bending the arm of the plate that the common contacts rest

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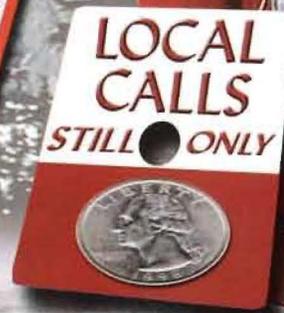
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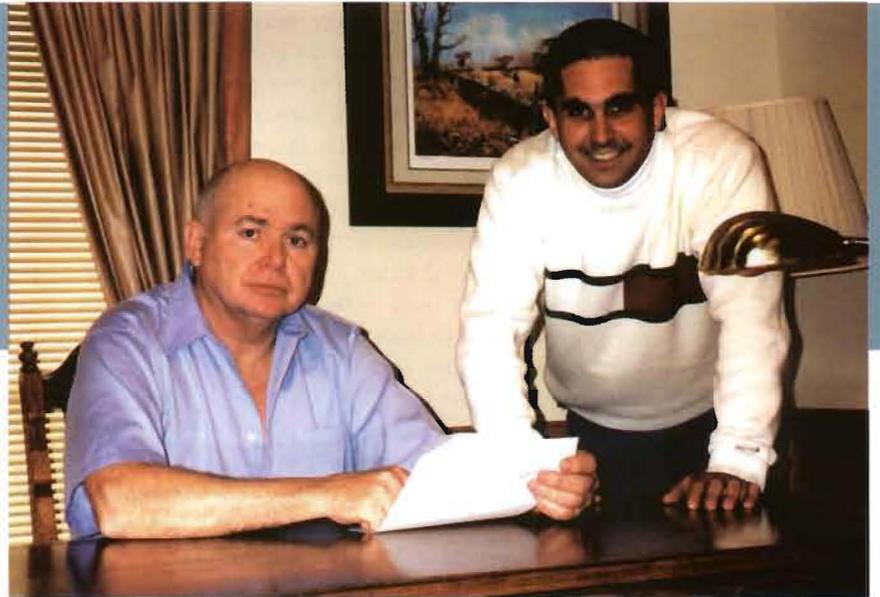
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Rolling the dice in Louisiana

psp spotlight

by James R. Dukart



Jerry Juneau Sr. (left) is happy to have his son, Jerry Juneau Jr., involved in the business.

Jerry Juneau juggles multiple businesses — payphones and inmate phones included

You almost get the feeling Jerry Juneau has never met a business he didn't like.

Juneau is the founder and president of City Tele-Coin Company, a 450-phone payphone service provider (PSP) located in Bossier City, La., a small town just outside of Shreveport in the Bayou State's northwest corner. He got his start in payphones in 1985, as the owner of a couple of convenience stores who bought phones for his own stores. At the time, Juneau also owned and operated an ice delivery company, and he started asking his ice route customers — primarily convenience stores, grocery stores and gas stations — if they would like him to install a payphone on their property. Before long, Juneau's payphone business was off and running. "I ventured off and bought six phones and put them in at stores on the ice route," Juneau recalls. "I started making money on the old Series 1 ElcoteIs. I knew where the customers were, and before long I had another 50 phones. It just grew from there."

The business has also expanded and changed over the years. On the continuity side, City Tele-Coin phones remain in a mix of indoor and outdoor locations, from the convenience stores Juneau started with to convention centers, liquor stores, office complexes and schools. All phones continue to be within easy driving distance of Bossier City — "we don't like to venture out too far," Juneau says — and the company's best locations continue to be those with heavy foot or vehicle traffic near busy highways or in retail outlets.

On the "change" side of the equation, in 1994 a personal friend of Juneau's, a local sheriff in Bossier City, changed Juneau's business life by taking him to prison — literally. His friend introduced him to the business of supplying phones and telecommunications services to Louisiana jails, prisons and other correctional facilities. Juneau got into the inmate phone system business that year, and today estimates it constitutes well over half of his overall payphone business.

Similar but different

City Tele-Coin's Inmate Telephone Systems offering is similar to the company's regular payphone offering, though different in a few key ways. As with any other payphone service, the company installs, operates and maintains the phones inside the facility — wired and placed according to the specifications of the location owner — in this case a correctional facility. Inmate phones, though, do not accept coins, but rather are programmed to only allow automated operator-assisted outbound collect calls. When a call is made, the system announces to the intended receiving party that a collect call is being made from a correctional facility or inmate and provides a means for accepting or rejecting such a call. If the call is accepted, the system creates a billing record and bills the recipient through a third party billing agent, at rates set according to time-of-day and distance tariffs that are close to — and in some cases slightly lower than — 0+ or 0- payphone rates. The system is able to limit the length of the calls, the hours of availability, and lets correctional facilities block calls to certain numbers.

City Tele-Coin operates inmate phone systems at 16 correctional facilities across northern Louisiana. Though inmate phones offer a captive audience, Juneau warns those who want to enter the business that competition is fierce and margins can be razor-thin.

"You have to do a lot of blocking and there are a lot of non-billables," Juneau says. "There are some CLECs [competitive local exchange carriers] that you cannot bill to, and until you learn that, it is very difficult to stay in this business. You better watch your Ps and Qs or you will lose your shirt. In the first year, I lost \$85,000 in the inmate business."

Traditional PSPs who want to take a run at the prison business will also encounter a number of companies that specialize in inmate phone systems, and as such already have hardware, software and billing systems designed with the correctional facilities market in mind. Many correctional facilities, Juneau adds, are requesting special outbound rates or commission-sharing opportunities as a requirement to secure their phone system business.

That said, once inmate phones are installed, usage tends to be strong. "They can't go anywhere, so usage is pretty high," Juneau observes of his inmate customers. "That said, you have good prisons and bad prisons, just like you have good phones and bad phones on the outside." One popular Hollywood image that Juneau punctures is that of inmates fishing around in the pockets of their prison jumpsuits for coins to make phone calls from inside the prison. "We have maybe one [coin-operated] payphone outside in a booking room," Juneau says. "That phone usually doesn't get enough usage to even pay the line charges."



Rosalyn Juneau takes care of the finances and no doubt keeps her boys in line.



Bill Bell of the City of Bossier (left) inspects a few phones with Jerry Juneau Jr.



Jerry Juneau Jr. checks in on one of the company's prison phones.

Judie Volentine does a great job with office assistance and customer service.



Another benefit to operating phones within prison walls: little if any concern over vandalism. First, there are no coins to be stolen from the phones. Just as importantly, prisoners want and need to use the phones to call outside, and will likely turn on anyone who interferes with their ability to do so. "If one of them gets to a phone and messes it up, I'd imagine some of the others will let him know of their displeasure," Juneau says. "So we don't really have to worry too much about that."

Semi-private phones

Back outside prison walls, City Tele-Coin staff consists of Juneau, two full-time employees in the office, two service people and two part-timers. Among the staff are Juneau's wife, Rosalyn and their son, Jerry Juneau Jr. "She takes care of the money part," Juneau says, adding that the business has always been and will remain in the family. "We'll probably bring our grandson along if we keep it long enough."

If Juneau's grandson does enter the business, he may find an increasing number of his phones are what Juneau calls "semi-private," in that location owners are paying at least some of the cost of maintaining a phone at their site. "We try to keep at least a \$50 per month profit margin on each phone," Juneau explains. "If a phone cannot make that much, we send a notice to the location owner, asking if they are willing to pay us something every month to keep the phone there. Some just have to have a payphone, and they don't want to run it, so they pay us to keep it there." He estimates that City Tele-Coin currently operates about 40 or 50 such phones.

The company is also looking at picking up some new phones as BellSouth continues its exodus from the payphone business. "We have a meeting with them in a few days where they are supposed to tell us how to get their phones," Juneau says. "We could pick up maybe 50 or 100 phones from them." If so, those new locations would serve to offset an estimated 100 phones Juneau has pulled over the past three years, due mostly to increasingly challenging industry economics.

"The biggest challenge is finding a way to keep these phones on the street," Juneau says. "Not everyone can afford a cell phone, so we have to find enough locations to maintain them so people still have phones. I figure we are going to weed out a bunch more companies before this is all over. The good thing about our company is we've been in business so long that everything is paid for and we have no debt."

Branching out

Another good thing for Juneau is that he has never relied solely on coin-operated payphone revenue to keep the company afloat. Dating from his days in the convenience store and ice delivery business, Juneau has repeatedly branched into new enterprises. Current ventures include air and vacuum machines as well as expansion into the long distance and local exchange carrier business. He has looked at selling prepaid phone cards through his long distance company, and is investigating buying a switch to co-locate in the central office of a local telecom provider in order to offer local dial tone service in northwest Louisiana.

Outside of payphones, Juneau runs a small construction business that builds houses, and for a time



Jerry Juneau Jr. visits with customer Charles Klepper of Red River Exxon.

was involved in the bingo business. One of his guiding business principles is to always be open to new ideas and opportunities. "We do a lot of other things," he says. "If the payphone side of things falls down, we have to have something to fall back on. We have been pretty lucky in that regard."

In addition to running his businesses, Juneau is active in regional and national payphone associations. He was one of the original members of the Louisiana Payphone Association, and is a board member of the Southern Public Communication Association, which represents payphone owners in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi.

"Having numbers helps," Juneau says, commenting on the importance of industry groups. "You always get more done with a bunch of people than you do by yourself." The organization is currently petitioning to use universal service funds in Louisiana to support payphones at not-for-profit locations, and is also working to lower line charges in Alabama and Mississippi. A recent reduction of line rates in accordance with the new services test has made a significant difference in Louisiana, Juneau says. "It has knocked a good \$15 per month off the phone bill, and will allow us to keep a lot more phones on the street," he says.

Summarizing his interest and experiences in the payphone business, Juneau offers his business philosophy couched in a bit of classic home-spun Louisiana logic.

"We have a few different agendas coming up," Juneau says. "We are eventually going to get into local [dial tone] service in northern Louisiana. I am gonna drag my feet into that area. You can go in a lot of different directions, and you might have to, because if you depend strictly on one thing, and that one thing goes bad, you are in a whole heap of trouble. You always better be willing to expand."

Summing up, Juneau offers a self-assessment that fits someone who has tried his hand at the convenience store, payphone, inmate phone, ice delivery, home construction and bingo businesses.

"That's just me," he says. "I will roll the dice on anything once or twice." ■

James R. Dukart is a telecom industry analyst and writer based in Minneapolis, Minn., and president of the writing and editorial services firm The Write Planet. He can be reached at jdukart@thewriteplanet.com, or via his Web site at www.thewriteplanet.com. When he rolls the dice, he rarely gets the number he's looking for.

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state news



California

The Public Utility Commission (PUC) has announced nominees for a revamped advisory Payphone Service Provider (PSP) Committee.

The PUC's executive director nominated Darla Jorgenson, executive director of the California Payphone Association (CPA), and Steve Fetzer of CCT Telecommunications for the two payphone industry association seats on the committee.

Marty Mattes, CPA's counsel, and Martin Garrick of the San Diego Payphone Owners Association were nominated as alternates.

The PUC started working with a PSP committee 12 years ago. The committee helped enforce laws and policies relevant to PSPs. Later, the semi-independent committee took responsibility for proposing and managing annual budgets for PSP enforcement.

Two years ago, a state law transferred most of the committee's responsibilities to the PUC staff and other entities.

In April 2002, the PUC revised the membership of the PSP Committee, reducing the membership to seven positions: one representing a local exchange carrier (LEC), two representing payphone associations, one representing a consumer organization or similar interests, two representing segments of the deaf or disabled communities and one representing the Office of Ratepayer Advocates. The committee will serve in an advisory capacity.

• • •

Mpower, a competitive local exchange carrier (CLEC) that actively markets its services to PSPs,

has filed a complaint against Pacific Bell.

The company claims that Pacific Bell violated a section of the California Public Utilities Code by engaging in an unlawful rebating scheme.

Mpower also accuses Pacific Bell of violating another section of the code by setting its rates below cost in a predatory scheme to harm competition.

Mpower sought injunctive relief against Pacific Bell. According to Mpower, Pacific Bell was offering rebates through arrangements with payphone service aggregators, contingent on the migration of payphone lines to Pacific Bell. Mpower complained that it had lost, or was on the verge of losing, its ability to compete effectively in the California PSP market, which could result in the stranding of significant investments and facilities dedicated to providing payphone line service.

Mpower asked the PUC to order Pacific Bell to terminate its rebate arrangements, to rebill all customer-owned pay telephone (COPT) line service customers for the full amounts of any rebates and to pay a substantial fine. Mpower also filed a motion for interim injunctive relief that would order Pacific Bell to take all steps necessary to prevent aggregators from passing on any Pacific Bell payments to COPT service providers.

CPA representatives say Mpower will need to show that Pacific Bell is orchestrating the terms of aggregators' commission payments, then the complaints may "have legs." Otherwise, the

CPA says, the PUC is likely to conclude the relationships among Pacific Bell, aggregators and the aggregators' affiliates are appropriate and lawful.

•••

On Dec. 6, 2002, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) launched the Bay Area's 511 service. The launch kicked off not only the abbreviated dialing number but also a new serv-

ice using a system that recognizes callers' spoken requests. The service provides up-to-the-minute transportation information for transit riders, drivers, carpoolers, vanpoolers and bicyclists throughout the Bay area.

•••

The CPA has named Janie Hughes-Meyers of Q3 Telecom Inc. as its newest board member.

Returning board members are President Tom Keane, Pacific Telemanagement Services; Vice President Tom Bade, Pacific Communications Inc.; Chairman Robert Joyce, Joyce Communications; Treasurer Richard Scherer, Pelican Communications; Jay Cassidy, CVC Inc.; Bill Flaherty, The Phone People Inc.; Tay Hampton, Evergreen Communications; Mark Harlan, MAH Communications Inc.; Danny Manzella, Desert Payphones LLC; and Marty Mattes, legal counsel.



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Michigan

The Michigan Pay Telephone Association (MPTA) will hold its 2003 meetings on the following Mondays: May 12, Aug. 11 and Nov. 10 at the Double Tree Hotel in Novi, 27000 Sheraton Drive. The meetings will start at 6 p.m.

New York

The Independent Payphone Association of New York (IPANY) has announced the primary regulatory and legislative activities the organization expects to tackle during 2003.

One of the association's priorities will be its challenge to Verizon's underlying public access line (PAL) and usage rates before the Public Service Commission (PSC) in the remand proceeding ordered by the New York Supreme Court last year.

The proceeding will examine Verizon's costs in light of the standards specified by the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) new services test (NST).

•••

Meanwhile, petitions for reconsideration of the state Supreme Court's decision in IPANY's NST Article 78 proceeding remain pending.

If a favorable decision on reconsideration is issued, IPANY or Verizon could prosecute an appeal to the appellate division. IPANY's appeal would seek confirmation that, in a remand before the PSC, the PSC must apply the NST methodology as specified in the FCC's Wisconsin Order and January Order.

•••

IPANY is exploring the need to con-

tinue its self-enforcement program to ensure that payphones meet local and state regulations. PSPs already are charged 25 cents per line, per month, to support the PSC's payphone inspection and enforcement program.

IPANY's self-enforcement program is voluntary and could be discontinued by IPANY at any time, association representatives say. However, the association is concerned that the PSC would step up its inspection of payphones if IPANY stops its self-enforcement program. The association is considering approaching the PSC regarding a restructuring of the entire inspection program, and the possibility of eliminating the monthly fee.

• • •

In March 2002, Verizon entered into the Verizon Incentive Plan (VIP) with the PSC, which superceded the Regulatory Incentive Plan (RIP) that had been in place between 1995 and 2002. Under the VIP, Verizon is required to continue offering an unbundled network elements platform (UNE-P) to residential and small business customers regardless of whether the FCC phases out the UNE-P.

The existing VIP will expire in March of 2004. A proceeding probably will begin this year to determine what will happen upon the expiration of the existing VIP. Options could involve ending all performance/incentive plans, which would result in the reinstatement of rate return regulation; extending the existing VIP for some period of time; or developing a replacement to take effect upon the expiration of VIP.

The availability of UNE-P will be a critical element in the event of any extension, modification or replacement of the existing VIP. IPANY says it will participate in any proceedings that occur in an effort to maintain the availability of the UNE-P for PSPs and their CLEC providers.

IPANY also is preparing for the possibility that the UNE-P may not be available for payphone lines after March of 2004. Alternatives may be made available, including services provided by CLECs utilizing Verizon's unbundled links connected to CLECs' own switching platforms. A number of issues related to such options

will be scrutinized by the PSC in the upcoming year. IPANY will monitor and participate in those proceedings in an effort to obtain much-needed rate relief for PSPs, the association says.

• • •

As in the past, IPANY will work this year to reduce the state taxes assessed on PSPs, particularly gross revenue taxes. While relief from those taxes may be difficult to obtain in the face of huge state deficits, the state may consider an economic stimulus package of selected tax reductions. IPANY will present its case that economic development, public welfare and public safety considerations justify tax relief for PSPs.

Verizon also can be expected to seek legislative relief from obligations imposed by the PSC, including obligations with respect to payphone services. IPANY will monitor any such efforts.

Ohio

Jan Allis is now serving as executive director of the Payphone Association of Ohio (PAO). Allis can be reached at (859) 901-1479, and his fax number is (859) 901-1441.

• • •

PAO's 2003 meetings will be held at 1 p.m. on the following Thursdays: June 5, Sept. 4 and Dec. 4 at the Radisson Airport Hotel & Conference Center in Columbus, 1375 N. Cassidy Ave.

Southern Public Communication Association

The Southern Public Communication Association (SPCA) currently is involved in three NST cases. In Louisiana, the association is in negotiations with independent LECs to lower payphone line rates on a going forward basis. The association has had several meetings with the PSC and the attorneys for the independent LECs on this issue.

"We hope to have this case resolved in the next few months," said SPCA President David Cotton.

Meanwhile, BellSouth and SPCA have begun negotiations in Alabama and

Mississippi in relation to the NST. The cases are in the primary stages in these states, Cotton said.

• • •

During the association's March meeting in Alabama, board members focused on the association's budget and identified legal and regulatory issues to address during 2003. ■

Attention state association leaders:

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industry news

PRODUCT NEWS

Telco Intercontinental

Telco Intercontinental Corp. has released the CX-510, an indoor payphone also known as the KISS (Keep It Small & Smart). The phone, which is suitable for tabletop use or wall mounting, is intended for usage in supervised areas.

Phone features include IDD/STD/local calling, new call, redial, volume control, on-site programmability through the keypad, visual prompts through LCD, multi-language programmability, PABX connecting, incoming call receiving, metering pulse 12/16 KHz, tariff table programming, polarity reversal, electronic validator, coin acceptor and the ability to manage by remote.

Optional features include a metal keypad, armored cord handset, metal external coin box and wall mounting.

For more information, call (800) 683-COIN, ext. 118, or visit www.telcointercon.com.



PEOPLE & PLACES

inCode

Wireless technology consulting firm inCode Telecom, in partnership with Bell Canada, has launched a pilot service that enables North American wireline carriers to transform payphones into Wi Fi hot spots.

Bell Canada is the first wireline carrier to implement the new strategy through AccessZone, a Wi Fi hot spot pilot service that will enable mobile users to automatically connect 802.11b-enabled wireless devices, such as laptops and PDAs, to payphone access points in high traffic public locations.

"This new service offering, a comprehensive strategic business and technical plan, can help wireline carriers grab wireless market share, leverage their existing payphone infrastructure in an innovative and resourceful way and provide enterprise workers easy access to wireless data," said inCode Telecom CEO John Donovan. "We expect U.S. carriers to follow in Bell Canada's footsteps very soon."

inCode's methodology calls for the use of existing wireline infrastructure to create an area of up to 300 feet around payphone locations where business travelers can access the Internet to down-



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load data. Typical locations include airports, train stations, hotels, convention centers and corporate campuses.

For more information about inCode, visit www.incodetel.com.

For more information about Bell Canada, visit www.bell.ca.

Worldwide Telecommunications

Worldwide Telecommunications has named Charles "Chuck" Phillips to the position of vice president of sales and marketing.

For the past year, Phillips has been an



Charles Phillips

national segments.

Previously, Phillips was CEO of the independent long distance carrier Call

independent consultant to the operator services industry. Prior to that, he spent five years with the Qwest Operator Services division in both the domestic and inter-

Savers Inc.

Phillips will be actively looking for new agents to represent the Worldwide portfolio of products.

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Phone1

Phone1 Inc., a provider of international commercial and wholesale phone services, has announced an alliance wherein Phone1 will offer its services from SBC payphones in Arkansas, California,

University of Utah

Motorists are more accident prone and slower to react when they talk on cellular phones — even hands-free models — because "inattention blindness" makes the drivers less able to process visual information, University of Utah researchers have found.

"Even when participants (drivers) are directing their gaze at objects in the driving environment, they may fail to 'see' them because attention is directed elsewhere," says the new study by psychologists David Strayer, Frank Drews and William A. Johnston.

"Phone conversations impair driving performance by withdrawing attention from the visual scene, yielding a form of inattention blindness."

The study concludes that the inattention blindness explains the researchers' 2001 findings that users of hands-free and hand-held cell phones are equally impaired, missing more traffic signals and reacting to signals more slowly than motorists who do not use cell phones.

The new study was to be published in the March 2003 issue of the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*. A portion of the study also is featured in the February-March 2003 issue of *Injury Insights*, published by the National Safety Council.

In 2001, Strayer and colleagues received worldwide publicity when they used a joystick-equipped computer display to show that people talking on cell phones were more likely to miss or react slowly to simulated traffic signals than people who were not conversing on cell phones. Driving impairment was just as bad regardless of whether participants used hands-free or hand-held cell phones. That suggested the phone conversation itself was a distraction for motorists in addition to the distraction of handling the phone.

The earlier study also found there was no impairment of drivers who either conversed with a passenger or who listened to the radio or books on tape.

The new study included four experiments aimed at explaining why cell phone conversations are more distracting than those activities and why hands-free and hand-held cell phone users were equally impaired when driving.

The experiments involved 110 University of Utah under-

graduates who sat in a \$100,000 PatrolSim II+ Driver Training Simulator manufactured by GE Capital I-Sim in Salt Lake City. Such simulators are used by law enforcement agencies.

A person using the simulator sits in a replica of the driver's portion of a Ford Crown Victoria patrol car — including a steering wheel, ignition key, accelerator and brake pedals and dashboard displays — and is surrounded by screens that show a realistic driving environment.

Sometimes students who drove the simulator also spoke on a cell phone, conversing with another student who was instructed to keep a balance between making the driver talk and listen. Only hands-free cell phones were used in the study so the researchers could avoid any distracting effects from handling phones and focus on distracting effects of conversation.

The researchers said the overall study supports the inattention blindness hypothesis that "the disruptive effects of cell phone conversations on driving are due in large part to the diversion of attention from driving to the phone conversation."

The findings also suggest cell phone conversations may interfere with the ability to react to sudden events like a pedestrian darting into traffic or a car running a red light.

The researchers said their studies and others suggesting that cell phones quadruple the risk of a traffic accident "provide converging evidence indicating that conversing on a cell phone while driving poses significant risks both to the driver and the general public."

"Our data further suggest that legislative initiatives to restrict hand-held devices but permit hands-free devices are not likely to eliminate problems associated with using cell phones while driving because these problems are attributed in large part to the distracting effects of the phone conversations themselves."

The researchers also noted half the students in the study "reported they have observed other drivers driving erratically while using a cell phone, but rarely if ever thought that their own driving was impaired when they used the cell phone. ... A consequence of using a cell phone is that it may make drivers insensitive to their own impaired driving behavior."

Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, Ohio, Texas and Wisconsin.

Phone1's service allows callers to dial around the world for one minute starting at 25 cents in coins. An additional \$1 in coins will buy 10 minutes, depending on the call's destination. The service is available only when using coins.

Phone1 also works with Verizon and a host of independent payphone service providers (PSPs) across the United States.

"There are over 20 million international calls made per weekend in the United States," said Dario Echeverry, president and CEO of Phone1 Globalwide Inc., Phone1's parent company. "Together with two of the most powerful brands in telecommunications, Verizon and SBC, we were able to take to market a solid customer offer that allows users to call anywhere in the world from payphones using coins."

Echeverry also commented on how pleased he is with the relationship Phone1 has established with independent PSPs. "We began our business plan with independent payphone providers, and they have been our supporters all along," he said. "They provide an increasing distribution channel for us, and they have helped us create Phone1 as a brand."

A complete list of countries and per-minute prices is available at www.phone1.com.

Info Touch Technologies

Roy Goncalves has been named chief technology officer (CTO) for Info Touch Technologies.

His promotion means that he will strategically oversee, review and validate technology-related decisions for Info Touch while mapping the organization's technology direction. As CTO, Goncalves also will drive Info Touch internally and externally in professional services and research and development projects, including involvement as a sponsor of strategic projects, reviews and architecture and design.

Prior to his appointment, Goncalves

was Info Touch's vice president of software development.

"Roy Goncalves is well regarded industry-wide for building the original Netlock and Surfnet technologies and has made significant contributions to our brand as a technology and value added services leader," said Hamed Shahbazi, chairman and CEO of Info Touch Technologies.

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Transaction Network Services

Transaction Network Services (TNS) has announced that Cavalier Telephone has selected TNS' Telecom Services Division to provide Signaling System 7 (SS7) services.

Under the agreement, TNS will consolidate all of Cavalier's SS7 signaling requirements and provide a single point of access to SS7 services across the TNS network.

"Prior to our contract with TNS, we were using two different organizations to meet our SS7 requirements, which meant two sets of invoices and multiple points of contact," said Brad Evans, CEO, Cavalier Telephone. "After evaluating a number of comparable solutions, we found that TNS could consolidate all of our SS7 needs and provide intelligent network services at competitive prices and with total management. TNS will be an important partner as we continue to grow our network to deliver the competitive packages that the market demands."

For more information about Cavalier Telephone, call (804) 422-4505, or visit www.cavtel.com.

For more information about TNS, visit www.tnsi.com.

Deutsche Telekom

Mobile phone technology has cut demand for public phones in Germany, but the public phone booth still has a future in that country, according to European telecom company Deutsche Telekom (DT).

DT is introducing two phone booth models this year.

The company will install 1,000 "telekiosks" across the country that will "bring the Internet onto the streets," said

DT spokesman Stephan Broszio. The dark gray multimedia terminals will offer people the chance to surf the Internet and to make phone calls.

At the start of this year, DT also launched new "telestations," slim metal columns, usually without a roof, containing modern push-button phones.

The number of public phones in Germany has dropped in the last decade from 160,000 in 1990 to 135,000 today.

Many public phone booths do not even cover their costs, Broszio said. Added to this comes the huge cost of vandalism. Cut wires, smashed windows and ripped and stolen phone books cost DT around DM 10 million a year.

Nevertheless, DT is not planning any cuts in the public phone network. This is partly the result of a regulation passed in 1997. The Telecommunication Universal Service Ordinance stipulates the maintenance of the universal provision of public phones. Emergency services in particular demand a strong public phone network, in which emergency calls can be made at no charge.

Public phone history has turned full circle with DT's latest generation of "telestation" phone columns, company representatives say. The first public phones introduced in Germany at the end of the 19th century were attached to street advertising pillars next to tram stops, said Rainer Pfeiffer, founder of a large private phone museum near Hamburg. Individual phone booths were not launched until the 1920s, he said. ■

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state payphone association meetings calendar

Atlantic Payphone Association

(717) 790-9533

5:30 p.m.

Tysons Corner

Vienna, Va.

June 4

Central Atlantic Payphone Association

(717) 790-9399

April 9

October 16-17 (Toftrees Resort, State College, Pa.)

December 3

Florida Public Telecommunications Association

(850) 222-5050

Fort Lauderdale

April 10

Illinois Public Telecommunications Association

(847) 808-8988

All meetings begin at 6 p.m.

Marriott Chicago O'Hare

May 20

August 19

November 18

Independent Payphone Association of New York

(914) 725-8500

Crowne Plaza

East Elmhurst

May 21

June 25

Kentucky Payphone Association

(314) 544-7656

All meetings begin at 5 p.m.

Galt House

Louisville

April 24

July 24

October 23

Michigan Pay Telephone Association

(866) 367-6782

All meetings begin at 6 p.m.

Doubletree Hotel

Novi, Mich.

May 12

August 11

November 10

New England Public Communications Council

(603) 632-5596

All meetings run from 12 to 3 p.m.

Cafe Escadrille

June 10

September 9

December 9

Payphone Association of Ohio

(859) 901-1479

All meetings begin at 1 p.m.

Radisson Columbus Airport

June 5

September 4

December 4

Southern Public Communication Association

(318) 442-6009

The Wynfrey Hotel

Birmingham

April 1-2

Texas Payphone Association

(512) 477-1860

Hyatt Regency

San Antonio

July 31-August 1

All dates are subject to change; please verify with state associations prior to making travel arrangements.

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