

PERSPECTIVES

ON PUBLIC COMMUNICATION • OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE APCC®

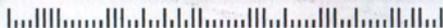
December 2007

Volume 15

Number 12



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PSPs talk about what they do to draw business to their phones

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ON PUBLIC COMMUNICATION • OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE APCC®

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Cover design by Ellen Custer,
zd - A design collaborative

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Jail time. Is this what it takes?

In late 2004, Qwest Communications agreed to a \$250 million settlement with the SEC for numerous fraudulent accounting practices that had been unearthed. And just this summer, Joseph Nacchio received a six year jail sentence for his various misdeeds while serving as Qwest's CEO.

After these scandals initially came to light, Qwest adopted new and much vaunted Governance Guidelines and a new Ethics and Compliance Program. These basically, among other high sounding sentiments, reaffirm the responsibility of the company and its employees to comply with legal obligations. Ironically, and notwithstanding these programs and policies, Qwest today appears to be doing just about everything it can to maintain a cover-up of past failures to pay independent payphone providers the dial-around compensation mandated by the Communications Act and FCC regulations.

As all of you know, APCC Services along with DataNet have been engaged in litigation against Qwest and the other long distance carriers for not paying, for many years, all of the required DAC payments. These cases have had a truly tortured history with various decisions at various levels of the federal court system that have eaten up years and an immense amount of money in litigation costs. However, all of these cases finally culminated in our victory this year at the U.S. Supreme Court, which affirmed our rights to bring these claims against the non-paying carriers.

We are now, finally, back in court before a trial judge who has made it clear she thinks these cases already have been delayed far too long and that she expects the parties to refrain from any further obstruction and delaying tactics. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, the carriers seem to have little regard for the judge's sentiments.

Already, with Qwest leading the argument, the carriers have challenged in the trial court that notwithstanding the Supreme Court's decisions, our damage claims predating October 2003 should be dismissed. In shorthand, the carriers have argued that the Supreme Court based its favorable decisions on a 2003 FCC Order that, in the carriers' minds, "created" the right of PSPs to sue them.

Lawyers continuing to make legal arguments are nothing new. And, as we are too painfully aware, the American court system is replete with opportunities for additional filings and proceedings that can easily be abused. So why would I characterize what the carriers are engaging in today as nothing more than obstruction and delay?

Well, first and foremost, the Supreme Court's decisions are quite clear, and there is nothing in them that provides any real support to the "strained" interpretation by the carriers. In fact, as they and their lawyers well know, the

initial Supreme Court decision itself was a case where the preponderance of damages predated the 2003 clarifying Order from the FCC. Moreover, the carriers already have made this argument several times — and lost.

- In February, Sprint made the pre/post 2003 argument before the federal district in Utah — it lost.
- In July, the carriers made the argument in asking for rehearing before the U.S. Court of Appeals in the District of Columbia — they lost.
- In August, once again before the Court of Appeals, they argued the same thing in support of a stay request — they lost.

With this history, I don't think it's any stretch to conclude that the carriers know their arguments have little chance of being taken seriously by the courts. What conclusion can you reasonably come to other than that they are simply maintaining their efforts at obstruction and delay, hoping to cost us additional expenses and wear us down? Well, that's not going to happen.

So how does all this argument and delay square with their responsibilities as good American corporate citizens, and in Qwest's case, with their vaunted Ethics Program? Simply put, it doesn't.

Now, I don't expect the recently elected chairman and CEO at Qwest to go to jail for the bad actions of previous executives at the company. But I also don't expect him and the other executives to maintain a cover-up of past misconduct by the executive who preceded them. Maybe in the end, when stockholders find out just how many dollars in corporate assets have been and are being wasted with frivolous and obstructionist court pleadings, they will have something to say about these new executives' conduct.

Oh, and by the way, in addition to the money they're wasting in legal expenses, millions of dollars in interest on their required payments keep building every day at 11.25 percent, as mandated by the FCC. So just what do you think their stockholders will think when they find out about that?

Editor's note: On Oct. 25, the federal district court in the District of Columbia agreed with APCC and rejected Qwest's motion to limit APCC's damages in the ongoing DAC litigation, finding the carriers' arguments "to be without merit."

Willard R. Nichols
President

by Flori Meeks

It's the little things

PSPs talk about what they do to draw business to their phones

Payphone service providers (PSPs) know they offer the public good value, convenience, and in some cases, a helping hand. But it can be a challenge, at times, convincing people to give you a chance. The good news is that there are plenty of ways of drawing customers to your payphones. PSPs throughout the country are using their business savvy, creativity and their sense of humor to encourage payphone usage. And in many cases, it's working.

Catch their eye

Jeffrey Wallmark, the owner of Arkansas-based American Products, is a big believer in using signage to draw potential customers' attention. "If they don't have a sign when people are driving down the boulevard looking for a phone, they won't find them," he says. Wallmark likes to use what he calls "good, old-fashioned phone signs," blue and white signs on a pole by the payphone, displaying the word, "Phone."

Brian Chamberlain, owner of Madison Communications Inc. of Jackson, Tenn., makes a point of keeping his payphones visible, day or night. "We make sure any phones that need to be lighted up at night have light," says Chamberlain, who has about 125 payphones in his route. "If people can't see the phones they won't use them." Sometimes, keeping phones properly lit is as simple as politely reminding a property owner to change a light bulb, he says.

Currently, Chamberlain is revising his upper housing cards. His primary goal is to keep the wording simple and easy to understand. "I go by other phones sometimes and look for ideas, and sometimes what I see is confusing," he says. "It's hard to step back sometimes and look at our phones from the point of view of people who aren't in the industry."

Chamberlain plans to divide his upper housing cards into three separate sections. One will state the rate for local calls; one will promote the rate for long distance calls; and the third section will display the rate for international calls. He also plans to work in concise information on the upper cards about 911 service, repair and refund requests and the payphones' collect call program. The lower housing cards will continue to display regulatory information.

Value-minded

Chamberlain believes the low rates his payphones offer are an effective customer draw as well. He charges 50 cents for local calls; 50 cents for five minutes of long distance; and 50 cents for two minutes of international calling. The long distance has been especially well-received, he says. "We're trying to keep the coin drop as low as possible and still give people a couple of minutes to talk. As soon as we find a better rate for us, we try to pass it on."

The international rates have been successful, too. Chamberlain's customers have been calling locations around the globe, including the United Kingdom, China and Japan. "It's kind of surprising," Chamberlain says. "This is a rural area."

Troy Brosseau is the owner of Telephone Technologies Inc. in Indianapolis and National Payphone Services in Los Angeles. His companies have a combined total of 2,000 payphones. His direct dial long distance program provides service anywhere in the country for 5 cents a minute. It doesn't hurt that Brosseau also is the owner of Tel Tec Inc., an Indiana-based interconnect company that provides local, long distance and voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) services. "I think it's been working out great," Brosseau says. "The guys in the field tell me that in the college towns and rural areas, people are looking for our phones and using them."

The long distance program is intended to be a win-win for the payphone companies and for the





customers. "The customers benefit from the rates, and we receive the money right then and there," Brosseau says. "The margins are small — we're offering a nice rate — but it offsets them using another alternative, such as a calling card. If they have 50 cents in their pockets, they can make the call." Not all of Brosseau's payphones offer this program, he says. The other phones charge 10 cents a minute, and that's well-received, too.

Wallmark is reaching out with pricing as well. His company, which has about 93 payphones, offers 10 minutes of long distance for \$1 for coin calls. Customers can also make credit card and prepaid card calls. Before Wallmark instituted the new price system in 2005, his company charged \$1 for three minutes of long distance. Customers have responded positively. "My philosophy is, you're building more loyalty with your customers because they're going to go for a better value," he says. Although coin calls have dropped overall during the last several quarters, dial-around compensation has been consistently strong. "Cash is always king, of course, but in terms of dial-around compensation, revenue is revenue if you know what I mean," Wallmark said.

David Fielder, the owner of Colony 14 Commu-

nications in Stone Mountain, Ga., still offers 25 cent local calls from some of his phones. "The key is they're still using it consistently," says Fielder, who has about 80 payphones. "If you can keep people coming to the phone, it becomes a habit, and people use it for other things. You have more chances of making money when people are using it than when they're not."

Fielder promotes his 25 cent calls with large blue and white signs on his phones' mast poles that read "25 Cent Calls Here."

Here to help

Some of Fielder's promotions are intended to create good will. For instance, he supports the advertising displays on his payphone enclosures from time to time by offering customers free calls to the business or organization in the ad. He incorporates a large message about the free calling right into the advertising. During one promotion for a club, he advertised a free number that allowed callers to find out who would be performing there on

any given evening. "It was good because we were able to accommodate the customer, the one paying for the ad," Fielder says.



A few years ago, Fielder ran a pizza promotion in one of the communities he serves. Customers were able to call three major pizza chains for free. "The word spread fast," Fielder says. "That actually was pretty cool."

"We sometimes do things like that. We want people to feel the company is doing something for the community."

Make 'em laugh

Mike Simon, the owner of Express Telephone Systems in Schaumburg, Ill., says he's been attracting a few more users to his phones since he launched his "LOL Dial A Joke" program, which he promotes with small stickers on his payphones' faceplates. By paying 50 cents and dialing *5, callers are routed to Simon's local joke line, which plays a new prerecorded joke every week. "We encourage people to leave a joke or message, and sometimes they do," Simon says.

Star appeal

Chamberlain, who is the vice president of the Tennessee Payphone Owners Association (TPOA), is working on a statewide program for attracting payphone business. He presented his ideas earlier this fall during a joint meeting with the Southern Public Communication Association (SPCA).

Chamberlain envisions a Mylar/aluminum sticker with a list of speed dial numbers on one side and a list of services on the other. It might read, *1, traffic; *2, weather; *3, prayer line, and so forth. "The main thing

is keeping people walking up to the payphone and using it, being user friendly," he says. The stickers probably would be placed to the left or right of the keypad. Chamberlain would like to see the TPOA develop a standard sticker that could be used statewide, so they could be purchased in bulk at a discounted rate. Plus, one common sticker that is used across the state would be a great way to draw attention to payphones.

Back to basics

Of course, creative business ideas won't help much if customers have an unpleasant experience with one of your phones.

Customers need to be able to depend on your services, Wallmark says. "You can lose a month's worth of business because of the two or three days your payphones weren't working. It's honestly not spending a lot of time on them every day, but a little time every day," he says. "When I'm drinking my coffee in the morning, I'm reading my reports."





MATT HAGE



Simon says his technicians spray his handsets with a citrus scent when they clean them. "Scent is a powerful thing," says Simon, who has about 500 payphones. "We keep them clean; we keep them working. Poll every night. The best thing you can do is complete every call that's attempted."

David and Faye Hollingsworth, the co-owners of Indiana-based Pay Fone Plus LLC, strive to be responsive to their customers' needs. If a phone isn't working, they're on it. "We take care of complaints, still, in a four-hour period during business hours," David Hollingsworth says. "That's our commitment."

Sometimes good customer service is a matter of common sense, Brosseau says. "In the Midwest, a lot of our outside phones are drive-up," he says. "The key there is to make sure there are drive-up handsets so you don't have a 32-inch handset that can't reach your car. You're hanging out of your automobile in the middle of the winter, and it's 3 degrees out there."

"By putting your best foot forward, you never know when you'll get another opportunity to serve a customer."

Worth the effort

Investing thought, effort and a little creativity into your payphone route definitely can have payoffs, Fielder says. "With any business you're in, you have to examine things that keep your business flowing and growing," he says. "Things like that definitely affect the industry and your bottom line. In some cases, you're not doing anything that costs a lot of money. You might be able to spur a little more excitement and a little more usage." ■

Flori Meeks is a freelance writer who is based in Houston.

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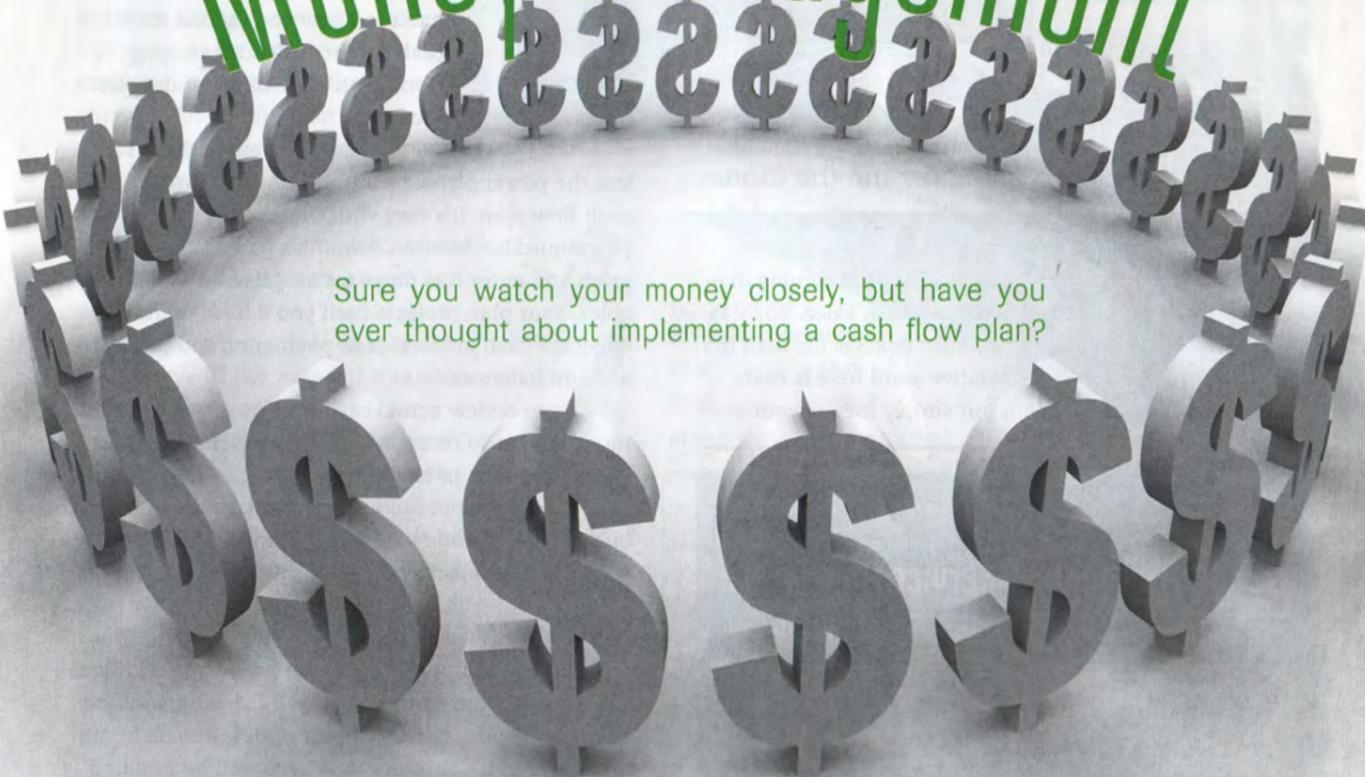
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by Jack G. Hardy

Money management



Sure you watch your money closely, but have you ever thought about implementing a cash flow plan?

Editor's note: Jack Hardy was a speaker at APCC 2007.

Former Vice President Dan Quayle once observed, "Business failures are caused by depositors who don't deposit enough money to cover payments due to mismanagement." Decoded, he was trying to say: The main reason for small business failure is they run out of cash.

Over the years I've learned that cash flow is the most important financial process a business manager has to master. As a consultant, I've learned that many successful managers fail to understand cash flow principles. They say, "We're very profitable, but short on cash. I don't know why."

The fact is that cash shortages have nothing to do with profits. ►



Show me the money

I liken managing cash flow to three cigar boxes. Visualize three cigar boxes placed on your desk. Box 1 is for cash coming in — primarily from collections and cash sales. Box 2 is for cash going out to pay bills. Box 3 is for cash that stays with you. The operative word here is cash.

Cash management put simply means your cash

inflows and cash outflows must keep pace with each other. If not, you create cash flow gaps. Lack of cash leads to financial collapse.

So how, then, can you close cash flow gaps and keep your business solvent? Use this idea as a powerful starting point: Make it a habit to know your actual daily cash balance. Avoid managing from bank statements or deposit receipts.

And how do you do that? You use the power of your computer to create a monthly cash flow plan. It's easy with QuickBooks Pro (www.quickbooks.intuit.com). You go into the program and enter due dates for all payables and receivables. Your plan projects cash you'll have on hand: expected cash inflows, cash payments, and bank account balances.

As you review actual cash flow during the month, learn to recognize potential cash flow problems. Take time to create new strategies that help support a more productive cash flow. For most small businesses, cash flow basics tend to be just plain common sense. Let's take a look at a few ideas.

Some suggestions

For starters, can you bring in cash faster? Yes, if you collect your phones more often, but of course you'd have to consider the extra cost of doing so. In some cases, the extra expense may very well be justified.

Secondly, for those of you who invoice, do you prepare them only at month end? If so, you add as many as 30 extra days to your cash flow conversion period. Consider preparing invoices bimonthly. I know that some PSPs with semi-public phones bill quarterly in advance, and I suspect most payphone providers who bill for semi-public phones do so at least one month in advance. These are all ideas for you to consider.

Third on our list is your checking account. Is there a cash balance accumulating in your checking account? Does your bank pay interest? If not, this is an area that needs your attention. Remember, a penny saved is a penny earned (and then some).

If you're not earning interest, link your business checking account to a business savings account. Sweep daily surplus cash balances into the interest-bearing savings account. Then you can

use your cash flow plan to transfer money to your business checking account as needed. Look for a bank that accrues interest daily (compounding monthly), and doesn't charge those pesky bank and service fees.

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My fourth recommendation concerns your operating costs — take a close look at them. Keep in mind that growth has a way of creating new costs and possibly the need for more employees. So just be sure to justify each added operating cost — is it really necessary? In the event of a sales falloff, what would be the least painful operating cost to sacrifice? And for those of you who are considering outsourcing some of the maintenance on your route, just be sure to consider the costs carefully. Obviously if you hire someone to do that, it means more cash out the door. But by all means, if it makes good sense in the bigger financial picture, then do it.

And finally, you should always negotiate purchase prices. Use a credit card for purchases when you can, especially when you gain added discounts.

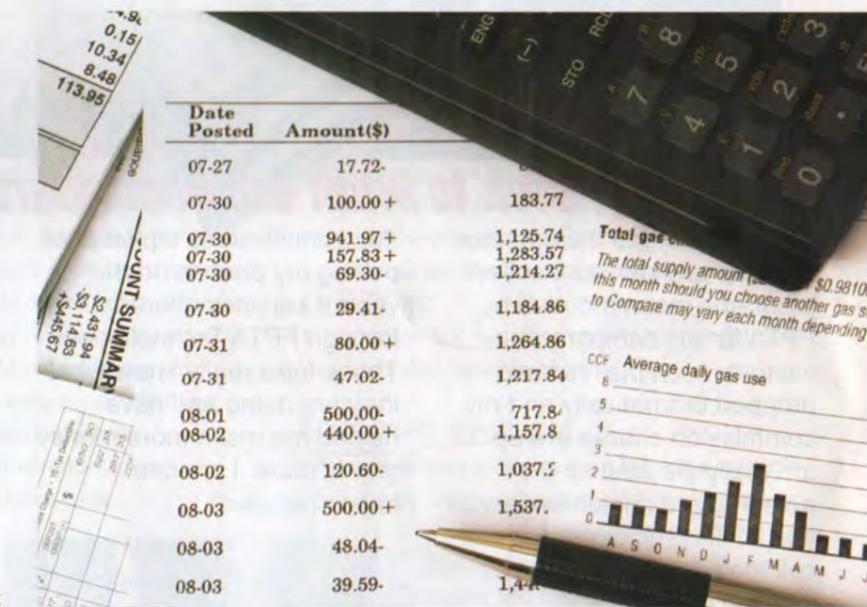
Closing arguments

If you're not yet convinced that it's important to pay attention to cash flow, I'll finish my case with a couple of closing arguments.

1. Banks do make mistakes. What if you deposit \$1,000 and they record it as \$100? What if you write a check for \$10 but they register it as \$100? The sooner you catch mistakes the better off your company — and your cash flow — will be.
2. If you ever want to get a loan or a line of credit, you will have to submit a cash flow statement that shows how much cash you have now and how much cash you'll have in the future. This informa-

tion is very useful to lenders as they evaluate a company's ability to make interest payments and repay debt.

3. If you're ever going to sell your company, the potential purchasers will want this information.
4. Cash flow management should be especially important to PSPs, as a significant portion of their revenue comes in on a quarterly basis — dial-around compensation.
5. Finally, identity and bank account theft is out of control in this country. In 2006, 9.9 million Americans were victims of identity theft, to the tune of \$5 billion. Clearly, you do not want to be



part of those stats. Well-organized cash flow management helps you watch out for both identity and bank account theft. The earlier you catch it, the better off you'll be.

So if cash flow is a new concept for you, then take it slow. But please do consider implementing a plan — your business will be better off for it. ■

Jack G. Hardy is a consultant and small business mentor who is active in the nonprofit organization SCORE — Counselors to America's Small Business, which provides advice and training as a public service to small businesses nationwide (www.score.org). Hardy has extensive experience in the corporate world, including work with Fortune 500 companies. He can be reached at JackH2132@mac.com.

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—Ron Vestuti
Connecticut Public Phones

"My commissions tripled after putting my phones on the vendor services offered through FPTA Technologies! These folks really know what they are doing and have helped me make more money on my route. I am one happy camper!"

—Buddy Childers
Grant Communications

"We use FPTA Technologies' excellent vendor programs for many of our service needs—and are fully satisfied with their quality and performance. Our company believes in supporting those who support our industry and FPTA Technologies is certainly a leader in this area."

—Walter Rice & Ralph Terrell
R&T Communications

tech talk

by Andy Horton

Testing — it's worth your time

If you want to maximize your revenue, you must have an effective field testing program in place

One of the best ways to enjoy long term success in the payphone business is to periodically take time to get back to basics. Philosopher and motivational expert Jim Rohn is quoted as saying, "Success is neither magical or mysterious. Success is the natural consequence of consistently applying the basic fundamentals." In this article, we're going to focus on one of the most the basic, fundamental aspects of your business — your field testing program.

By implementing and managing an effective field testing program, you can expect to:

- increase call volume and revenue;
- reduce the number of service calls;

- reduce windshield and other down time of field personnel;
- minimize the time required to troubleshoot problems;
- gain the peace of mind of knowing that your phones are working properly after each field visit; and
- increase the satisfaction levels of payphone users and location owners.

Four basic elements

What makes an effective field testing program? At the very least, make sure that your program:

1. is adopted company-wide;
2. applies to all field personnel;
3. makes people accountable; and
4. tests payphone hardware and programming.

By adopting a field testing program across the organization, you send the message that it is an important function of the business. Every one of your field service personnel should be taught the testing procedure and should be held accountable for completing the procedure — every time they visit a payphone.

Talk to your service team. Discuss the cost of unnecessary service calls that could be avoided by completing the test procedure. Demonstrate how a few moments invested at the end of each field visit will result in a meaningful return to the bottom line of the business.




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You must test both hardware and software

The revenue you generate from your payphone business depends on the optimal operation of the payphone hardware (i.e. electromechanical components) and correct payphone programming. You can have the hardware functioning at 100 percent and still face revenue-impacting issues related to the payphone's programming. To be effective, your field testing program must address both of these areas.

That said, be sure to test:

- the handset — both the microphone and ear-piece;
- the keypad — verify that each key (including “#” and “*”) is generating the correct tone;
- the coin path components — check for jams and restrictions and verify that coins are identified, counted and collected or returned appropriately;
- coin calls: local, 1+ domestic long distance and 011+ international;

- operator calls: 0-, 00-, 0+ local and long distance and 01+ international;
- toll-free (dial-around) calls: 800, 888, 877, 866 — test all access methods; and
- directory assistance calls, both local and national.

Before you dismiss this list as “too much work,” remember that you can combine several tasks into short sequences to quickly test and verify the operation of the phone. As a result, you will find that it is possible to complete the testing procedure in just a few minutes. Further, as many of you are not collecting your payphones as often as you once did, you won't be testing as often either.

Still think that testing requires too much effort? Consider the cost of sending a technician into the field to take care of an issue that could have been resolved yesterday while the phone was being collected. Remember, a small investment in time now can reap huge dividends in the coming days, weeks and months.

It could increase your traffic by 30 percent

We recently did some research in which we compared the performance of phones that had been tested thoroughly vs. those that had not. The results: 97 percent of the tested phones produced long distance coin and operator service traffic over the 30-day period after they were tested, while only 72 percent of the phones that were not tested produced long distance and operator service traffic during the same time period. That is a difference of nearly 30 percent! That represents a lot of potential revenue that is lost simply because the phones were not tested properly.

A field testing program is one of the most fundamental elements of your service operation. A well managed program could add thousands of dollars to your bottom line through additional revenue and cost reductions. Is your field testing program getting the attention it deserves? ■

Andy Horton is vice president of sales and marketing for Talk Too Me Coin-Less Services (formerly Elcotel Coin-Less Services), an OSP based in Sarasota, Fla. He can be reached at ahorton@talktoome.com.

Editor's note: If you would like to see another testing checklist, please see Page 15 of the January 2005 issue.



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20

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June 24-26, 2008

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APCC 2008: 20 Years Standing Strong 20th Anniversary Highlights and Special Events

Come celebrate with us.

APCC will be commemorating our 20th anniversary at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, Nevada, June 24 – 26, at APCC 2008.

■ Twenty years ago, five payphone owners had a vision – to establish an organization that would support the independent owners of payphones nationwide and to represent their issues to legal and regulatory bodies. That vision became the American Public Communications Council, Inc.

■ Today, APCC represents nearly 1,000 member companies and thousands of dedicated professionals who work diligently to protect the independent public communications industry.

APCC 2008 celebrates the spirit, resiliency, and on going legal & regulatory efforts on behalf of the independent payphone industry. We invite every public communications professional to make plans to join us for this milestone event.

EDUCATION SESSIONS

Wednesday, June 25 and Thursday, June 26

■ Revenue solutions. Advance your business 20 creative ways through information shared in the APCC 2008 **general education classes**, exhibitor-run **Bonus Mini Sessions**, and the expanded **computer lab**. **Innovation is no longer optional.**

EXPO HALL

Wednesday, June 25 and Thursday, June 26

■ Solutions your business needs to meet today's challenges – that's what you'll find in the APCC 2008 Expo Hall. Meet one-on-one with strategic partners and discover the many companies ready to meet the needs of the independent public communications industry.

20TH ANNIVERSARY INDUSTRY CELEBRATION

Thursday evening, June 26

- Remember the '80s? Pull out those acid-washed jeans, dust off the Members Only jacket, frizz up that hair, and put on those aviator sunglasses. APCC makes history again with a one-of-a-kind party celebrating 1988 in all of its overflowing coin box glory.
- This fun-filled evening, including dinner, music, dancing, contests, prizes and a few surprises, will cap off the APCC 2008 experience in true retro style. Mark your social calendar now. This is a can't miss tradeshow event. **Rock on!**

Visit www.apcc.net
for complete APCC 2008 details and updates.



Registration and Hotel Information

3 Easy Steps to Register for APCC 2008

1. Complete the APCC 2008 Pre-Registration form.

You'll need to choose between the All Inclusive Package or the Expo Hall Package. Details about what each package includes can be found on the pre-registration form.

2. Mail or fax completed form to:

Fax: 703-739-1041

Mail: APCC, Inc.
ATTN: APCC 2008
625 Slaters Lane, Suite 104
Alexandria, VA 22314

3. Contact Caesars Palace Hotel to make your room reservation.

Call Caesars Palace directly at 1.800.634.6661 or register online at www.apcc.net. Simply click on the **APCC 2008 Hotel and Attendee Registration Information** link and follow the directions for online registrations. APCC's contracted room rate with Caesars Palace is just \$169.00 a night. Be sure and reference **APCC Group Code SCAPC8** to access this special rate. Important note: you cannot go to the Caesars Palace web site and input APCC's group code. When registering online, you must use the special link provided on APCC's web site only. Pending availability, the **cut-off date for all registrations using the APCC Group Code is May 30, 2008.**

Golf, anyone?

APCC is looking into hosting a golf tournament as part of APCC 2008.

Details will be posted on APCC's web site, www.apcc.net, as soon as they are available.

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<http://www.harrahs.com/casinos/caesars-palace/hotel-casino/property-home.shtml>

APCC Group Code for all room reservations at Caesars Palace:

SCAPC8



PRE-REGISTRATION FORM

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ATTENDEE INFORMATION (One form per registrant. Please duplicate form for additional registrants.)

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Company Name: _____
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Country: _____ Email: _____
Phone: _____ Fax: _____

REGISTRATION OPTIONS

		EARLY BIRD Prior to May 30	After May 30	Amount Due
ALL INCLUSIVE PACKAGE Entrance to all APCC 2008 events including Welcome Breakfast, all education sessions, all Expo Hall events, the computer lab and the 20th Anniversary Industry Party.	APCC/APCCS Rate*	\$245	\$295	\$
	Additional Member Rate (if you are registering multiple attendees from the same member company)	\$195	n/a	
	Non-member Rate	\$495	\$595	
EXPO PACKAGE Entrance to all Expo Hall events and the computer lab. Tickets to other APCC 2008 events may be purchased separately.	APCC/APCCS Rate*	\$95	\$125	\$
	Non-member Rate	\$145	\$195	
INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCE SESSION TICKETS (pricing is per session)	All Attendees	\$50 (times the number of sessions purchased)		\$
WELCOME BREAKFAST TICKET	All Attendees	\$35		\$
APCC 20th ANNIVERSARY INDUSTRY PARTY TICKET	All Attendees	\$50		\$
*APCC/APCCS rate is available to APCC members and APCC Services customers only.		TOTAL DUE		\$

PAYMENT INFORMATION (Payment must accompany registration form)

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Cardholder's Name: _____ Cardholder's Signature: _____

CHECK: Check # _____

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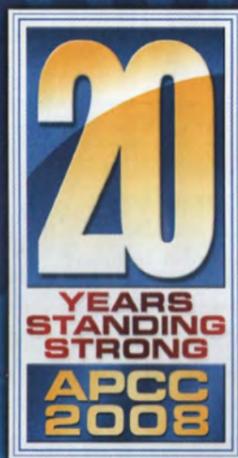
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**Cut-off date: May 30, 2008
APCC Group Code: SCAPC8**



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For attendee information,
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or email APCC2008@apcc.net

For exhibitor information,
contact Jannette at (864) 278-3013
or email jannettec@apcc.net

20 Years Standing Strong

state briefs

California

Since May 2006, the California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) has been conducting a rulemaking proceeding (R.06-05-028) regarding various telecommunications public policy programs created by the PUC, including lifeline telephone service, subsidies for high cost rural service, services for deaf and disabled users, maintenance of public policy payphones and enforcement of payphone operating rules.

In July 2007, PUC Commissioner Rachelle Chong issued a "scoping memo" which, among other things, set a schedule for comments on issues related to the PUC's Payphone Service Provider Enforcement Program and its Public Policy Payphone Program. Chong's memo noted proposals submitted by the California Payphone Association (CPA) to terminate the Public Policy Payphone Program and to combine the PSP Enforcement Program with the PUC's general enforcement program for telecom services, which would relieve payphone service providers (PSPs) from having to pay the costs of either program. Chong appeared agreeable to terminating the Public Policy Payphone Program, but showed concern about reducing oversight over payphone services and sought comments on ideas such as requiring posting of an 800 number for the PUC's consumer services staff and filing of annual reports by PSPs.

In response to Chong's memo, CPA filed comments in September 2007 noting its interest in enforcement of regulatory rules without burdening complying PSPs. CPA endorsed the required posting of the PUC's 800 number as part of payphone signage, but opposed imposition of a periodic reporting requirement.

AT&T and other local carriers also filed comments taking similar positions as CPA, including generally favoring termination of both the PSP Enforcement and Public Policy Payphone programs. Other parties, including the PUC's Division of Ratepayer Advocates (DRA) and consumer interest groups, argued for maintaining both programs while recognizing that funding should no longer be imposed on PSPs.

In response to the initial round of comments, Chong circulated a proposal to maintain the Public Policy Payphone Program through funding from the California Teleconnect Fund (CTF), a program that presently subsidizes the provision of advanced telecom services to schools, libraries, hospitals, and community-based organizations.

CPA subsequently filed additional comments stressing the limited resources for PSPs to participate in regulatory proceedings. CPA agreed with AT&T's position that

PUC oversight of payphone services should be limited to responding to complaints. In response to DRA's argument that public policy payphones are needed to serve emergency and public welfare needs, CPA argued that all payphones help to serve public safety and welfare and that the PUC should avoid burdening surviving PSPs with burdensome regulatory processes.

CPA also expressed support for bringing public interest payphones under the wing of the CTF. CPA further suggested that placement of public policy payphones could be limited to locations sponsored by entities already eligible for CTF support. CPA estimated that a subsidy of \$75 per month (comparable to carriers' monthly charges for "convenience" payphones) would be sufficient to support a low revenue public policy payphone, and that the cost of calling on the CTF for such support on a going-forward basis would not cost more than \$500,000 per year (small potatoes for a \$100 million fund).

A decision by PUC concerning the future of California's PSP Enforcement Program and its Public Policy Payphone Program is expected by the end of this year.

Maine

On Sept. 6, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit issued a ruling in the Maine PUC's litigation with Verizon New England (*Verizon New England v. Maine Public Utilities Commission*). Although the case does not directly involve payphone-related issues, the court's ruling could impact the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) decision on petitions filed by several state payphone associations regarding refunds for violations of the new services test (NST). The state associations had filed the petitions requesting the FCC to order refunds in states where they have been denied or not ruled upon for line rate overcharges by the Bell compa-

nies in violation of the FCC's mandated NST.

In order to bring the court's decision to the attention of the FCC, the American Public Communications Council Inc. (APCC) filed an ex parte letter with the agency in October 2007. APCC noted in its filing that the Appeals Court held that Congress granted exclusive authority to the FCC to adjudicate and enforce a Bell operating company's compliance with Section 271 of the Telecommunications Act (Act).

Given the close parallels between Section 271 and Section 276 of the Act, which the state associations cited in their petitions as requiring the FCC to order refunds, APCC argued that the court's ruling provided a compelling precedent for the position taken by the state associations that the FCC has a statutory obligation to carry out and enforce the Telecommunications Act, which overrides decisions by state commissions or courts denying refunds of payphone line charges in violation of the NST. APCC also stated that the court's ruling confirms the FCC's obligation to mandate refunds as the necessary remedy for any failure by the Bell companies to comply with the NST.

Texas

Beginning Sept. 1, 2007, PSPs no longer need to pay sales tax on their coin revenue in Texas due to passage by the Texas Legislature earlier this year of HB 1459, which removed payphone coin revenue from the sales tax base. (For background information, please see the State Briefs column in the August 2007 issue of *Perspectives*.) New rules implementing HB 1459 still need to be implemented by the Texas State Comptroller.

The rule change process will include publication of the proposed new rule change in the *Texas Register* as well as a 30-day comment period. Following the comment period, the State Controller's office will issue the final rule change. Although the final change is not expected to be implemented until later this year, the provisions of HB 1459 regarding coin revenue from payphones no longer being subject to state sales tax became effective Sept. 1. ■

Dan Collins is corporate counsel for the APCC.

state payphone association meetings calendar

Atlantic Payphone Association
(717) 790-9533
5:30 p.m. registration
6:15 p.m. dinner/meeting
Clyde's of Tysons Corner
December 6

Central Atlantic Payphone Association
(888) 930-9277
9 a.m. board meeting
11 a.m. general membership meeting
Sheraton Harrisburg-Hershey
Harrisburg, Pa.
December 5

Independent Payphone Association of New York
(718) 776-8179
6:30 p.m.
Holiday party
December 12
Terrace on the Park
Flushing Meadow Park

Midwest Independent Coin Payphone Association
(636) 922-5213
7 p.m.
Holiday Inn-Airport
St. Louis
December 5

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

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Wishing you the happiest of holidays from everyone at APCC.

industry briefs

PRODUCT NEWS

TPI

Telecom Products Inc. (TPI) is now manufacturing air vacuums. The company's air vacuum is made from 16 gauge stainless steel. Company representatives incorporated customer comments and requests into its design.



The air vacuum features a large motor, 1.5 horsepower or the motor of the customer's choice; dual vacuum motors; a single lock bar system to make servicing easier; a large control box, which has more room to perform service work and is capable of mounting Protel monitors; and a single coin box for easier and faster collection.

Other features include dual coin counters that are able to track air/vac vending; a four bag filter system; a TPI stainless steel coin mechanism; a crush resistant vacuum hose with a duck foot claw; a steel braided air hose with gauge; and lighted domes. Custom decals are available upon customer request.

In other news, Tim Thurston has been promoted to the position of sales and marketing manager for the production department of air/water machines, air vacs, payphone enclosures and pedestals.



Tim Thurston

Thurston has been in the payphone industry for more than 15 years and is available to answer payphone providers' questions about the air/water business.

For more information, call (866) 874-8210; e-mail telecomswink@aol.com; or visit www.tpitexas.com.

Talk Too Me

Talk Too Me has announced a new product line extension of its EncircleALL platform, related to VoIP markets.

Talk Too Me will further leverage the EncircleALL network during the first quarter of 2008 when it will launch an Entrepreneurial Business Franchise Unit designed to

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diversify the payphone businesses and revenue streams of PSPs, inmate providers, and likewise, entrepreneurs worldwide.

The next generation of Talk Too Me's products and services offered through this unit will be marketed under the EncircleALL residential and EncircleALL business brands. Andy Horton, vice president of sales and marketing, stated, "It is our intention to compete in the U.S. and global VoIP industry, just as we have successfully trained and empowered more than 1,000 entrepreneurs over the last 21 years to start and successfully operate their payphone businesses nationwide.

"Now, we will teach today's entrepreneurs how to start and grow a successful VoIP, broadband, telephone, video and Internet business leveraging Talk Too Me's comprehensive products and services. We see the potential in this market to be great and for many, even greater than the potential that may have ever existed in the payphone industry," Horton said.

Business owners in the new EncircleALL residential and EncircleALL business franchises will receive comprehensive training (in Sarasota, Fla. and elsewhere), a business development blueprint, ongoing field and back office support and coaching in the development and management of their new businesses.

For more information, please call (941) 308-8255, or send an e-mail to sales@talktoome.com.

Water Vendors by Us

Water Vendors by Us recently launched a new revenue opportunity for payphone service providers (PSPs).

The Atlanta-based company offers self-service vending machines that purify water and dispense it in bulk. Customers select the amount of water they want and collect it in their own bottles or in bottles provided at the machine location.

Water Vendors by Us utilizes a five-stage water purification process. It begins by moving municipal tap water through sediment and carbon filters. Then the water goes through the unit's reverse osmosis system and into a holding tank. Just before water is dispensed, it moves through another carbon filtration system and is exposed to an ultraviolet lamp for final sanitation.

"That's the final measure to really make sure there isn't any lingering scent or taste," said Betty Brown, who co-owns Water Vendors by Us with her



brother, Don Brown, a 25-year veteran of the purified water vending industry.

"Our slogan is 'Changing water into cash,'" Betty Brown said. "This can be a very lucrative business, and the payphone folks are absolutely the right people to do this. They have the locations, and they have the relationships."

The machines can be placed anywhere with access to tap water, an electrical outlet and a drain, she said. The machines range in price from \$5,000 to \$6,000, but discounts are available for multiple machines.

The water vending industry meets a very real demand, Brown said. "The United States withdraws 339 billion gallons of underground and surface water a day," she said.

Water Vendors by Us machines are intended to make high quality water affordable — typically 25 cents a gallon — and environmentally friendly, since the bottles are reused.

The company estimates that an operator who sells 50 gallons a day at 25 cents a gallon would bring in \$375 a month. Depending on how the operator shares that profit with the location owner, the operator could earn \$225 to \$281 for that month.

For more information, call (770) 642-7023 or (877) 846-2408; e-mail info@watervendorsbyus, or visit www.watervendorsbyus.com.

PEOPLE & PLACES

Talk Too Me

Talk Too Me has announced that it has reached an agreement with QuorTech Solutions that will result in Talk Too Me assuming the technical support functions for the domestic Elcotel products from QuorTech. Under the agreement, Talk Too Me will provide factory technical support for the entire range of domestic Elcotel products and services, while QuorTech will continue to support the international Elcotel products and services.

Beginning Nov. 1, domestic technical support services transitioned from QuorTech to Talk Too Me. "We worked closely with Talk Too Me to ensure that the transition was seamless. As of Nov. 1, PSPs are able to receive domestic technical support by dialing Talk Too Me's number, 1.800.ELCOTEL (1.800.352.6835)," said James MacKenzie, president and CEO of QuorTech.

"We are delighted to further serve the industry through this alliance," said Abbie Forrest, president and CEO of Talk Too Me. "Our team has a long history with Elcotel and QuorTech and many of our employees previously served in technical support, training and product development roles at Elcotel, and were instrumental in the creation of PNM PLUS and other Elcotel product features throughout the years. Our combined knowledge of the Elcotel product line is unparalleled. This is a wonderful opportunity for the industry to gain access to our team of technical experts for all of their Elcotel-related technical support matters."

In addition to providing technical support via telephone, fax, e-mail and the Internet, Talk Too Me's role will include the provisioning of domestic Elcotel firmware chips. Firmware chips are used to permanently upgrade Elcotel products so they may utilize the latest features and enhancements contained in the latest release of Elcotel payphone firmware.

Talk Too Me can be reached at (941) 308-8255, or via e-mail at Elcotel@talktoome.com. QuorTech can be reached at (941) 870-2276, or via e-mail at msakelaris@quortech.com.

FSCC, Cardtronics

Financial Services Centers Cooperative Inc. (FSCC), a credit union shared branch network, is placing 2,000 financial self-service kiosks in 7-Eleven stores across the country.

The kiosks, which are owned by Cardtronics Inc.,

will allow customers to withdraw cash, deposit checks, make loan payments, transfer cash between accounts, obtain credit advances, make balance inquiries and obtain recent history statements.



Cardtronics, a Houston-based owner/operator of ATMs, has units in more than 31,000 locations. For more information, visit www.cardtronics.net.

For more information about Financial Services Centers Cooperative Inc., visit www.fsc.com.

Jasper, Texas

Jasper City Council recently approved the installation of payphones in its city jail.

At the time of the council vote, city officials had two companies in mind for the project: JCW Electronics I Ltd. and ADS. Neither company would charge the city for installation.

Inmates will still have the option of making several free phone calls during the booking process.

A payphone is expected to be placed in each cell in the jail. ■

Please send industry news to:

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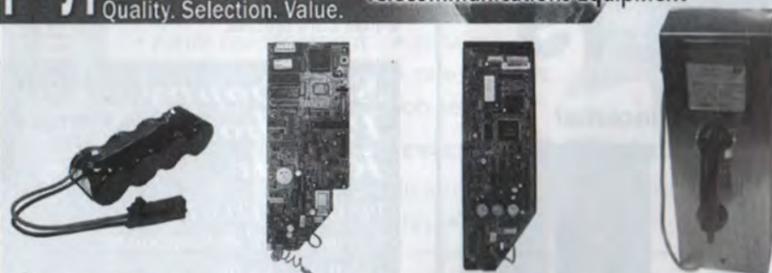


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last word

by Flori Meeks

Solid protection

Guard posts can help safeguard your investments

Robert Wellings is convinced that outdoor payphones have a Murphy's law all their own.

"If somebody can run into a payphone, they will run into a payphone," says Wellings, the owner of American General Payphone in Phoenix, Ariz.

He knows from experience. One of his most dramatic losses occurred when a drunken driver smashed into a utility pole. "This one guy hit it, smashed the pole, which then hit my phone," says Wellings, who has about 400 payphones.

Needless to say, Wellings is a big believer in placing posts by his outdoor payphones to protect his investments.

"What we have are steel pipes filled with concrete," he says. "That's the easiest way."

On guard

These units, known as bumper posts or guard posts, stand as a line of defense between vehicles and payphones.

They can range in height from 27 to 52 inches and in diameter from 4 to 8 inches.

"If the phone is against a building, we don't use them," Wellings says. "We do use them if we're putting them in the parking lot because that's where the vehicles will be."

Benny Neer used to think of guard posts as a warning of sorts for drivers. "What I found in using guard posts was the visibility of them was more important than their strength," says Neer, the owner of B Neer Communications in Houston. "It takes a heck of a strength to stop a car or a truck,

but the ability to see the guard post is important."

Neer keeps most of his company's 100 payphones indoors these days, but when he did have outdoor payphones, he protected them with posts, two per phone, when they weren't adjacent to a building.

Steve Moore, the owner of Consumer Communications in Fremont, Neb., has used posts, too, usually steel pipes. Placing them in grassy areas was fairly easy and inexpensive, he says, but it was costly to install them when concrete had to be broken up and removed.

Good defense

Moore is not sure how many mishaps his posts prevented, but he's fairly confident they've made a difference. "Let's put it this way, I did have a couple of locations without them, and they did get beat up pretty badly."

Placing bumper posts is standard procedure for Communications Management Services of Portland, Ore., says Chief Technical Officer Rich McCulloch. The company owns and manages 2,400 payphones in seven Northwest states. "We install bumper posts whenever we have a payphone in a parking lot or on a road, anywhere a car might back up to us," McCulloch says. "Probably one out of every five or six installs we have requires them."

Communications Management Services usually uses steel pipes filled with concrete. "The posts usually cost about \$20 apiece when purchased in bulk, and the concrete is \$4 to \$5 a bag and requires two to three bags," McCulloch says. When his company installs the posts for phones it's managing, it usually charges \$125 to cover materials and labor.

The posts can help protect the phones, he says, and the people who use them. "If we're going to protect our equipment, we're also going to protect our callers," McCulloch says. ■

Flori Meeks is a freelance writer who is based in Houston.



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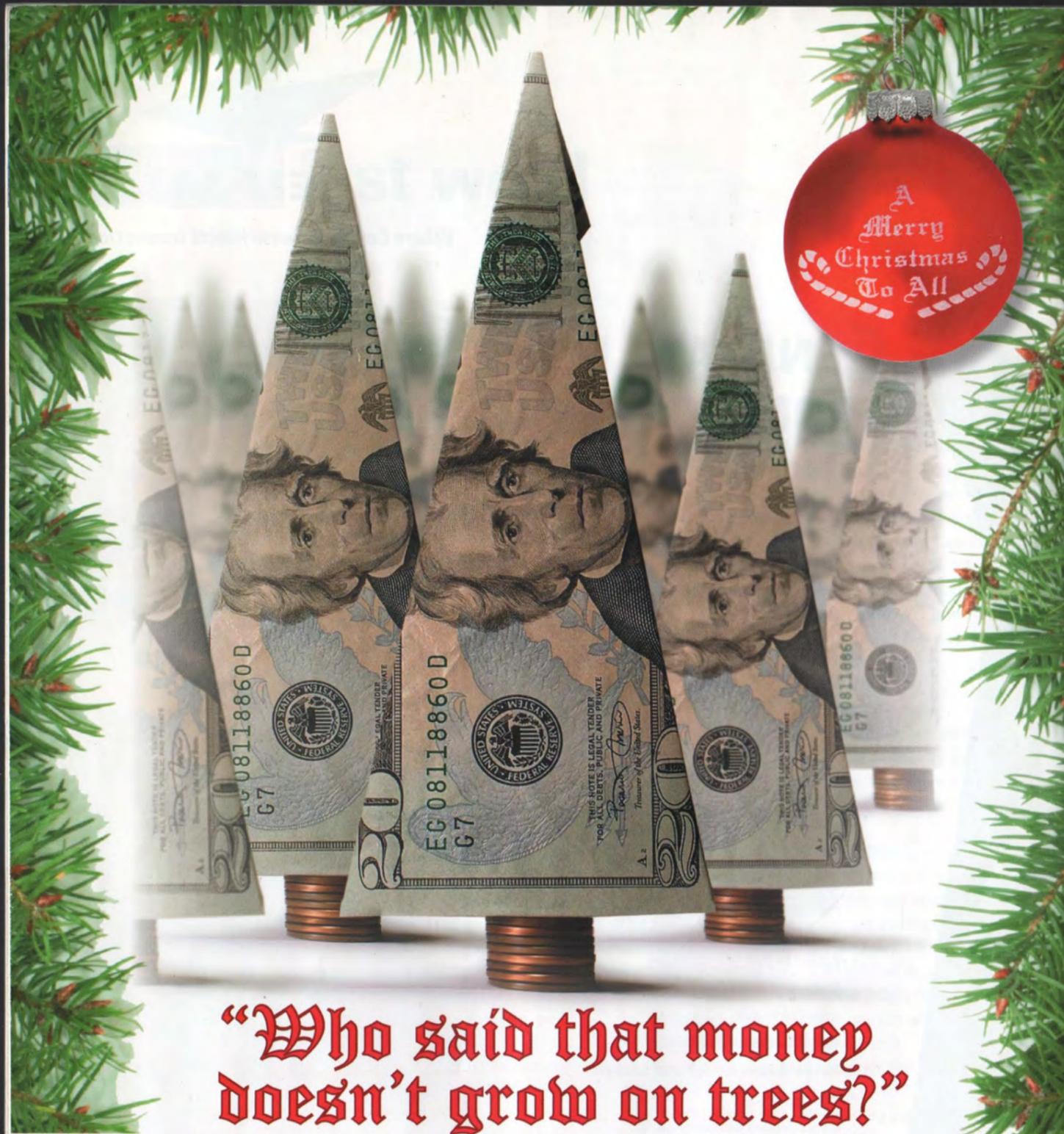
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