

Massachusetts university suffers damage after 3-day crime spree

United Press International
AMHERST, Mass. — Police were still compiling reports Tuesday on a three-day Halloween crime spree at the University of Massachusetts that included rape, theft, vandalism and assault, and caused thousands of dollars of damage.

University Associate Director of Public Safety Philip J. Cavanaugh said between 12:01 a.m. Thursday and midnight Saturday, police responded to 253 calls, 197 of which

were considered emergencies. He said there were 56 criminal incidents, 28 persons taken into protective custody, and 14 arrests on criminal charges.

Cavanaugh said incidents still being catalogued, "range from assault and battery to possession of firearms to larcenies. There's a substantial amount of vandalism."

He said the majority of those arrested were persons with no affiliation with the university.

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New service may cut phone bills

United Press International
WASHINGTON — If you are a heavy long-distance telephone user, there is a new service available for your home phone which proponents claim can cut your toll charges from 25 to 50 percent.

One company has just started marketing the service and a second is considering it.

The service is a residential version of a commercial system which is being used by thousands of businesses across the country. The one now being offered to residential users comes from SP Communications, a division of Southern Pacific Co.

For in-home use, it is available only during non-business hours — from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. local time each day, and all day on Saturday and Sunday.

It works like this: SPC will allow residential telephone customers to use its private microwave system for a charge of \$10 per month.

The consumer in turn is billed by the company for each call. The company owns 8,000 miles of microwave systems — the equivalent of 14 million circuit miles — with more under construction.

The company says, for instance, that a 4½-minute call from Los Angeles to New York during the evening hours costs 64 cents compared to \$1.37 over regular tele-

phone company lines. Part of the savings comes from the fact that the bills are calculated by six-second intervals instead of by the minute as regular telephone charges are.

To use the system the consumer must first dial into the company's network, using a code provided by the firm. Only a push-button telephone will work, because the signal sent out by a rotary dial will not gain access to the company's computer.

The service is available only in towns where the network runs. But, according to Bill Green, manager of advertising and public relations for the company, it covers 80 metropolitan areas and the bulk of the country's population.

The service, however, will not pay for itself unless you have a habit of making a lot of long distance calls from home.

"It's not for the \$10 a month long-distance caller, obviously," Green said in an interview. "We estimate that at about 90 minutes of useage per month the consumer could start saving dollars."

That's the equivalent of one 3-minute call per day, every day, or six 15-minute calls per month.

While there has been an increase in commercial versions of SPC's operation, thanks to changes in government regulatory policies, Green said his company is the first to market the system to the residential customer.

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Feds reject Florida complaints

Mexican vegetable prices ON WA

United Press International
WASHINGTON — In a long-awaited decision, the government Tuesday tentatively rejected complaints by Florida winter vegetable farmers that imports of vegetables grown in Mexico are sold in the United States at unfair prices.

If the decision had gone the other way, supermarket prices of winter vegetables across the country would have soared.

A final decision in the case must be rendered by early next year, following appeal meetings between

Florida and Mexican growers. The meetings are expected to be held under Treasury Department auspices within 45 days, officials said.

The case was a tough one for the administration, because relations between the neighboring countries have been touchy in recent months during discussions on U.S. purchases of Mexican oil and the status of Mexican aliens in the United States.

Treasury Secretary G. William Miller approved the decision, but President Carter was not consulted,

officials said. The Florida vegetable case involved five types of fresh vegetables: cucumbers, eggplants, peppers, squash and tomatoes.

Florida growers filed a formal complaint with the government which said low-cost labor in Mexico allowed imports to be sold in the United States below domestic prices — a development that endangered the financial health of the American industry.

In the 1977-78 growing season, Mexico imported nearly \$200 million worth of the vegetables — 50 percent of the American market.

The Treasury said its extensive study of the case showed Mexican growers were demonstrating "discrimination" in the prices they sold vegetables for in the United States and Canada.

Canada was used as a "fair value" comparison country because winter vegetables are sold in Mexico, officials said.

Percentage of elected blacks up slightly

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The number of black elected officials in the United States rose by 2 percent last year, the smallest increase of the decade, the Joint Center for Political Studies said Tuesday.

The increase, recorded between July 1978 and July 1979, included the election of 23 officials in the Virgin Islands, which had previously been excluded from the survey.

Not counting the Virgin Islands, the gain would have been 81 — or only 1.9 percent.

The survey showed that there are 4,607 black elected officials in 48 states, the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands.

Louisiana leads all states with 334 blacks holding elected offices. Mississippi is second with 327 and Illinois third with 276.

Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont and Wyoming have no blacks in public office.

The survey showed black officials represent less than 1 percent of America's 490,265 elected officials.

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