

nation

Ma Bell requests 10.5% hike in interstate, overseas rates

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The American Telephone and Telegraph Co. asked the Federal Communications Commission for increases that would raise rates on interstate and overseas services by a total of 10.5 percent.

Under tariffs filed with the FCC Monday, AT&T would raise rates by 6 percent in June, and the remaining 4.9 percent in October.

AT&T expects the rate hikes could generate an additional \$1.2 billion annually. The request must be approved by the FCC. The company estimated the hikes

would increase the average residence customer's monthly bill by about 17 cents in June and another 13 cents in October. The average business customer's bill would go up about \$1.35 a month and \$1.05 a month more in October. Only long-distance and overseas calls would be affected.

The two-step process apparently would enable the company to comply with President Carter's voluntary wage-price guidelines, which are based on a fiscal year beginning Oct. 1.

AT&T Vice President James Billingsley said the company has not asked for a general interstate rate change since 1976, when it got a 2

percent hike. "We have held the line on general rate changes for more than four years," he said. "That's largely due to our productivity increases which, since 1970, have averaged more than 4 percent annually for the Bell System compared to about 1 percent for the private domestic economy as a whole. But these productivity gains alone can't match double-digit inflation."

Billingsley said the company must raise more than \$6 billion in new capital in 1980 to finance a Bell System construction program of \$16.7 billion. AT&T reported fourth-quarter in-

creases in 1979 of almost 11 percent in revenue and net income.

The proposed two-tier increase would be applied uniformly to interstate and overseas services, that is, out-of-state long distance calls, Wide Area Telecommunications Service, and private-line services (those for the exclusive use of a given customer, mostly businesses).

Customers who do not call out-of-state or overseas would not be affected.

Defense rests case in Ford Pinto trial

United Press International
WINAMAC, Ind. — The defense rested its case in Ford Motor Co.'s reckless homicide trial Tuesday after successfully arguing several prosecution rebuttal witnesses should not be allowed to testify.

Ford attorney James Neal said the prosecution was trying to repeat issues brought up in the state's original case and should be allowed only to answer or refute points brought out during the defense case.

"What the defense is trying to do is to get any particular issue just to the posture they want and then cut off any more evidence," said Deputy Prosecutor Bruce Berner.

Judge Harold Staffeldt ruled in Ford's favor in what he called "the toughest decision of the trial so far." He said the prosecution was trying

the case piecemeal, and should have presented all its evidence the first time around.

The prosecution would not immediately say how many rebuttal witnesses it would be able to present. It did manage to question a state trooper again about the accident scene, and the distance debris was hurled by the impact.

The state's case suffered a blow Monday when a nurse the prosecution failed to question prior to the trial for lack of manpower said the driver of the Pinto told her the car was stopped when it was struck.

Nancy Ellen Fogo, head nurse at Elkhart General Hospital in 1978, said driver Judy Ulrich, 18, told her the Pinto was stopped when a van plowed into it.



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Anti-inflation focus to be balancing 1981 budget

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The Carter administration hopes to bring its 1981 budget into balance, or nearly so, but has ruled out several other possible anti-inflation steps, government sources said Tuesday.

Among measures now said to be virtually rejected in the administration's anti-inflation review are controls over housing and automobile credit, gasoline rationing and a sharply increased gasoline tax.

Sources said that, while not contemplating controls limiting automobile and housing credit, the administration still is considering the possibility of some other types of credit controls.

The main focus appeared to be on trimming the federal budget. Sources said the administration is looking at possible ways to trim \$4 billion in spending during the current fiscal year and perhaps \$15 billion from the budget for fiscal 1981, which starts Oct. 1.

Officials are looking at other possible ways to trim perhaps an additional \$5 billion in 1981. These could include delaying programs, closing

some tax loopholes and possibly changing the extent to which federal benefit programs are adjusted for inflation.

The Energy Department has told the administration it could cut \$600 million to \$1 billion from its \$8 billion 1981 budget. The Department of Housing and Urban Development has proposed a more modest \$75 mil-

lion cut in community development programs.

In January, the president sent Congress a budget of \$615.8 billion for 1981, projecting a \$15.8 billion deficit. If he succeeds in eliminating that deficit, it would be the first federal budget since 1969 not to show red ink.

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Health sales may grow

United Press International
CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — A 30 percent increase in world health care product sales is forecast by 1983. The edition by Arthur D. Little, Inc., Cambridge market research organization, expects worldwide sales by manufacturers of pharmaceuticals, equipment, supplies and diagnostics to grow from \$79 billion in 1978 to \$106 billion (in constant 1978 dollars) in 1983.

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