

GTE rate hikes

\$110 million increase possible in mid-March if request approved

by Johna Jo Maurer

Battalion Staff
A rate increase for General Telephone of the Southwest could go into effect as soon as mid-March.
GTE filed a \$110 million rate increase request with the Public Utilities Commission of Texas Jan. 29, after the PUC lifted a GTE service penalty Jan. 28.
Most Bryan-College Station customers can expect a \$1 per month increase in their local service charges if the request is approved.

"The \$110 million increase in additional revenues that we are asking for is required to meet customer pressure for a better quality of service," GTE Division Manager Bill Erwin said.
The service penalty imposed on GTE by the Public Utilities Commission a year ago demanded that GTE raise the level of its service capabilities.
"We've been working very diligently to get our service levels up," Erwin said. "Quite honestly, we've got to overcome a bad image problem that we've had

with service levels in the past."
Bryan-College Station residential customers have seen a 30-cent increase in their phone bills while business customers have seen a 95-cent increase in order to maintain these service levels, he said.
GTE has added about 1,400 employees to the company and increased construction and maintenance. A 58 percent increase in maintenance expenses and a 29 percent increase in outside-plant construction has been achieved since 1980.

The rate increase requested by GTE is separate from the issue of the PUC ruling and only occurred coincidentally within the same year, Erwin said.
The \$110-million proposed rate increase must be approved by the Federal Communications Commission. The total amount and the final determination of how the increase will be spread

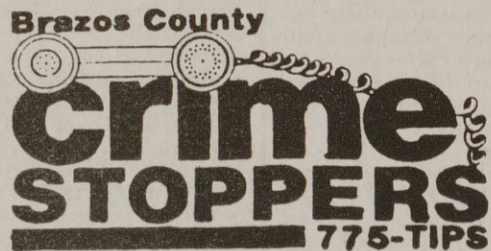
over the areas to be affected by the increase will be decided by the FCC.
A directory assistance charge also is being proposed by GTE, based on the philosophy that "the cost causer is the cost payer." A customer will be charged for directory assistance calls if he makes more than three directory assistance calls a

month; however, the amount of this charge has not yet been determined.
"In Bryan-College Station, over 80 percent of our customers make less than three calls to directory assistance for numbers so that (the directory assistance charge) is not going to affect the majority of customers," Erwin said.

The rate hike requested by GTE could go into effect anywhere from 35 days to five months from the date of filing after approval.
"We have to provide the PUC with a lot of back-up data pertaining to the case," Erwin said. "They take their staff and very carefully and adequately research all of our facts and figures. The PUC has a strong responsibility to consumers."
The last GTE rate increase was more than two years ago, so the increase over a two-year period will be about 24 percent.
"For us to continue to meet the PUC requirements, to give service, to meet the demands of Bryan-College Station," Erwin said, "we've got to have good earnings, and unfortunately, we're talking about higher rates."

Crime Stoppers looks for robbery suspect

The armed robbery of a downtown Bryan pizza parlor is this week's Crime of the Week.
On Jan. 30, about 7:49 p.m., a man entered Mr. Gatti's, 100 N. Main. He stood in the service line and waited until when no other customers were present, then pulled a .38-caliber blue-steel revolver and asked the clerk for money.
After she gave him the money, he thanked her and walked out of the restaurant. Police do not know in what direction he headed.
The robber is described as a white male, 5 feet 9 inches tall, weighing about 170 pounds. He has a light complexion, dark hair, heavy mustache and wide sideburns. He is right-handed and may be either Hispanic or



At the time of the robbery, the man was wearing a dark, waist-length jacket, blue jeans and a ski cap.
This week, Crime Stoppers will pay \$1,000 for information that leads to the arrest and indictment of the man responsible for this robbery. Crime Stoppers also will pay cash rewards of up to \$1,000 to anyone who pro-

vides information leading to an arrest and indictment of any unsolved felony.
In all cases, Crime Stoppers guarantees callers' anonymity. Callers can reach Crime Stoppers at 775-TIPS.
The crime will be dramatized tonight on KBTX-TV, Channel 3, during its 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. news broadcasts.

Phone conversion nears completion

by Johna Jo Maurer

Battalion Staff
The update of the Texas A&M phone system, which includes changing parts of the campus from the 845 prefix to the 260 prefix, should be completed within three months, University Telecommunications Manager Bob Sather says.

Since the start of the conversion process in August, about 65 percent of Texas A&M campus buildings have had new touch-tone phones installed, and in some buildings, new lines have been added.

A conversion schedule was set up by the administration in conjunction with General Telephone of the Southwest, giving priority to buildings with switch-board telephone systems.
Departments converted early in the schedule included the Data Processing Center, the Research Foundation, Admissions and Records, the Fiscal Department and the A. P. Beutel Health Center.

Bill Erwin, division manager for GTE, said the campus telephone system was converted so that GTE could better accommodate the University's needs.

51-year-old FFA chapter still promoting ag at A&M

by Brenda C. Davidson

Battalion Reporter
The Future Farmers of America at Texas A&M University is one of the oldest and largest collegiate chapters in the United States.
Collegiate FFA at Texas A&M was first recognized on a national basis in 1931 as the Winkler Chapter of Collegiate FFA. The chapter was named after Charles Winkler, dean of the School of Vocational Teaching.
Collegiate FFA serves as a

continuation of high school FFA. At the college level, FFA prepares students professionally for careers in agriculture and especially for careers as future vocational agriculture teachers, FFA adviser Jeffrey W. Moss, visiting professor of Agriculture Education, said.
With more than 120 members, the chapter is an active force in promoting agriculture at Texas A&M and throughout the nation, Moss said.
Chapter members participate in such projects as Agriculture

Day and Career Day. During Agriculture Day, members work with professional career planning, a project that gives students an opportunity to meet with prospective employers.
Other chapter activities include working at the Houston Rodeo and Livestock Show and sponsoring livestock judging contests for high school students.
Each spring the Collegiate FFA holds a Student-Professor Banquet to show appreciation for the staff.

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