

Tuesday, April 4, 1989

## Long-distance companies say local access fees increase rates

AUSTIN (AP) — Long-distance telephone companies distributed a letter to Texas lawmakers Monday saying access charges paid to Southwestern Bell cause rates for long distance calls within Texas to be "much higher than they should be."

"For example, it's cheaper to call from Dallas to Honolulu than it is to call from Dallas to Waco," stated the letter signed by representatives of ClayDesta, MCI, US Sprint, AT&T, Metromedia and ITT.

"In fact, it's cheaper to call anywhere in the U.S. from Texas than it is to call practically any place within Texas," the letter stated.

More than half of a Texas carrier's costs of providing long-distance service is made up of the charges paid to the local telephone company for access to the local network, according to the letter.

The companies said Southwestern Bell's Texas access rates, set by the Public Utility Commission, are more than double the rates set by the Federal Communications Commission for interstate calls and at least 57 percent higher than rates the company charges in any other state.

"High intrastate long-distance rates are a significant deterrent to economic development in Texas, and a burden to residential and business users alike," the companies said.

AT&T spokesman Rick Morrison said the company pays 20.8 cents per minute in Texas for access to the Southwestern Bell network. That compares to 9.4 cents in Oklahoma, 10.4 cents in Kansas, 11.4 cents in Missouri and 11.8 cents in Arkansas, he said.

In Texas, access charges make up about 70 percent of AT&T's cost of handling a long-distance call, he said.

Morrison said long distance companies sent the letter with an eye to the Senate confirmation hearings to begin Tuesday on PUC Chairman Marta Greytok and PUC member William Cassin. The two commissioners on the three-member PUC were appointed by Gov. Bill Clements.

"We think questions may come up,

## Employees of GTE ask legislators to save jobs

AUSTIN (AP) — Several GTE Southwest Inc. employees who fear a rate reduction imposed on the company could cost them their jobs and hurt the Texas economy asked for help from state lawmakers Monday.

The company has announced that it will cut about 1,100 jobs and reduce investments in response to a \$59 million rate cut and \$128 million refund of overcharges to customers that was ordered by the Public Utility Commission.

The Senate Nominations Committee will begin confirmation hearings Tuesday for two of the three PUC members, Chairman Marta Greytok and William Cassin, who were appointed by Gov. Bill Clements. Also this week, the PUC is to consider a motion for rehearing in the rate case by GTE.

"As one of more than 8,000 tax-paying voters of GTE Southwest Inc., I am asking for your

and we'd like for the legislators to be as well-versed on the subject as possible," Morrison said. "We think that there is a lot of concern on the part of lawmakers with respect to the telecommunications industry in the state."

Southwestern Bell has proposed an economic development plan called "Texas First" that includes a freeze on local rates for five years and upgrading of the state network.

Part of the plan would lower charges to long-distance companies for use of the local network, and Southwestern Bell has said that reduction could allow long-distance companies to lower rates.

But the long-distance companies said the proposed reduction is "nominal" and would "have little impact on Texas long distance rates."

help to save my job, along with 1,099 more jobs that will be lost because of a force adjustment caused by a recent Public Utility Commission decision against GTE Southwest Inc.," stated the letter distributed to legislators by J.D. Cooper, James Hart, John Brown and B.J. Smith of Texarkana.

Cooper and Hart said they are cable splicers, Brown is a maintenance splicer and Smith is a customer service specialist.

The PUC decision "will send a message to all companies large and small — stay out of Texas!" stated the letter, which said the approach to officials was being made "without the knowledge or consent of my employer."

"I strongly urge you to vote against confirmation of the present nominees of this commission, and to look elsewhere for more responsible individuals to represent the utility rate payers of Texas," the letter stated.

Morrison said the "Texas First" proposal includes "something less than a 5 percent reduction" in access charges, but Southwestern Bell spokesman Dave Lopez said the proposed decrease could be as high as 14 percent.

"I would say a 14 percent reduction is more than nominal," Lopez said. He said Southwestern Bell must balance access charge rates against basic local service rates.

"The basic local service rates in Texas are 20 percent below the national average" for residential customers, with \$9.71 the average monthly one-party rate, Lopez said.

"The reason that those access charges have been high previously is to try to keep basic local service rates as low as they are," Lopez said.

## Professor says South Korea is recovering economically

By Sharon Maberry  
STAFF WRITER

South Korea's economy is recovering at a rapid pace 35 years after it was devastated by the Korean War, a Southern Methodist University political science professor said at the MSC Jordan Institute's presentation of "Korea: History, Culture and Future Prospects" Monday.

"South Korea has emerged as the showpiece of Western capitalism in Eastern Asia and in the Third World, as a whole," Wonmo Dong, Director of SMU's Asian Study Program, said of the country that is smaller than one-fourth of Texas. "Even with all the problems it has encountered since 1945, it has become one of the miracles of economic development in the book of economic history."

The Honorable Seung Ho, consulate general of the Republic of Korea in Houston, agreed that South Korea's economic recovery has been miraculous.

"For 10 years after the Korean War, Koreans desperately focused on meeting the basic human needs of food, clothing and shelter," Ho said. "The country was sustained only by grants from the U.S. government and other foreign powers."

"However, in the last 25 years, the country has expanded greatly. In the last three years, we have seen an impressive annual growth rate of 12 percent with relatively stable prices. We are the 12th largest trading nation in the world and our gross national product of \$118 billion is 17th in the world."

"When the Korean War broke out in 1950, many American soldiers had never even heard of Korea. Today, that war-torn, wretched country has become a major trading partner with America."

Ho credited Korea's economic recovery primarily to its hardworking labor force and its innovative entrepreneurs. He also recognized the United States' role in developing Korea's economy.

"America has played an important role and will continue to further Korea's economic development," Ho said. "South Korea has the same political ideology of the United States. The future of the United States-South Korean relationship shall be characterized as a partnership. We are confident that we can be a responsible partner of the United States."

Although South Korea's economic recovery is regarded as a great suc-

cess by its people, the reunification between North and South Korea is still doubtful, Dong said of the 44-year national division.

The majority of Koreans want national unification because 10 million families are divided in the country with a total population of 72 million, Dong said.

He said reunification will not result as long as North and South Korea have radically different approaches to the issue.

## April Fool's joke ends in shooting of teen-ager

AUSTIN (AP) — A 17-year-old boy was hospitalized in good condition Monday after he was shot in the head by another teen-ager in a movie theater during the showing of a horror film, officials said.

Robert Latta of Round Rock was admitted to Brackenridge Hospital late Saturday with a .25 caliber gunshot wound to the head near his left ear, officials said.

Round Rock police chief Wes Wolff said the shooting was under investigation, but preliminary reports indicate it was accidental.

Officials planned to decide Tuesday whether to charge the 14-year-old girl who allegedly fired the shot, Wolff said.

"It was an April fool's joke; that's the way it started out," Wolff said. Those involved "thought the gun was unloaded," he said.

The girl got the .25-caliber automatic pistol, which Wolff described as a "real small pistol" from home.

Authorities said Latta and three friends entered the Movies 8 theater in Round Rock on Saturday night and purchased tickets for "The Terror Within."

The shooting occurred several

minutes after the 9:30 p.m. show began, authorities said.

Wolff said the bullet split into two pieces, and that hospital officials were unsure whether vision in the youth's left eye would be affected. He said the teen-ager's hearing had been affected, but it could not be determined whether that would be permanent.

The showing of the movie continued without interruption and most of those in attendance were unaware the shooting had occurred, officials said.

## Correction

Curtis Rick was incorrectly identified as the 1988-89 Off-Campus Aggies president in Monday's *Battalion*. Laurie Lustfield, a senior political science major, is the OCA president.

Rick is in the run-off election against Shawn Knight. Knight and Rick are directors in OCA this semester.

The *Battalion* regrets the error.

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## The Middle East: Peace or Powder Keg

April 12, 1989

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Javier Pérez de Cuéllar

United Nations Secretary-General

The Honorable

Robert C. McFarlane

former National Security Advisor

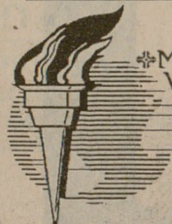
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