

# Phone service in Erin sparks joint meet

Promises were vague, but Community Telephone subscribers in the Erin-Hillsburgh area could see some action taken on their phone service in the near future.

Representatives of the Community Telephone, its parent company Continental Telephone of Sherbourne, New York, the Ontario Telephone Service Commission and the Committee for Better Service (CBS) met Monday evening in the Erin municipal offices to discuss possible resolutions to problems.

CBS was formed last year when Community Telephone applied for a rate increase. Residents complained the service they were receiving was not worth the cost of the service at the present rates. They charged service went out for practically no reason it was long distance to their next door neighbor, potential callers could not find them in the telephone book as numbers were scattered with various mailing addresses, poor quality connections, not enough trunk lines, long distance to emergency services, and an array of other complaints.

The commission, the company, CBS and about 200 irate customers met in Hillsburgh last December to air their views. The commission, the ruling body of all non-Bell telephone areas, learned other areas serviced by Community Telephone also had similar problems. They eventually ruled against the rate increase, at that time.

CBS representatives made it clear Monday that most subscribers would not mind paying a little bit more money each month to have a wider toll free calling area. It was revealed at the meeting that for Hillsburgh and Erin customers to call Acton, Georgetown, Guelph, and Orangeville free of charge would cost an initial capital cost of \$575,000.

Local customers urged the Commission to survey the subscribers to find out where they would like to phone. Bob Foote pointed out they wanted to know how much the service would cost before they went to the public.

"If you asked someone if they would like to telephone Toronto free of charge, they would say sure," he said. "But when you later tell them it will be an additional \$50 a month, they won't want it." Once final figures were in to their office, then they would approach customers with a survey.

Bell Canada has agreed, according to Mr. Foote, to look into the extended area service, although he noted, a letter from the company said they were not too optimistic about the chances of being any assistance. "But at least they are looking into it," Mr. Foote told the group, "which is more than they did five years ago."

Mr. Foote could not guarantee the increase would not be passed before CBS had all the answers to their questions.

The advantages of their requests to Bell customers was pointed out by CBS chairperson Jeanette Cox. She explained if they could call out, Bell customers would also call in. It was suggested a survey be done of adjoining users by the Commission. Mr. Foote explained however, the Commission could not step into Bell territory. If a survey were to be done, it would have to be done by CBS.

At the present time, Mr. Foote said, long distance calls between Erin and Hillsburgh, and Acton, Georgetown, Guelph Orangeville, Fergus and Rockwood ranged from one per cent of the calls to 19 per cent.

CBS member Bernie Mann charged this was inaccurate and could not be used fairly. He said if the service was free, more people would use it. Right now, people do not to call long distance. "They will visit instead."

Robin Searle, also of CBS, accused the commission of protecting Community Telephone rather than the subscriber. Mr. Foote denied the allegations saying his job was to protect both parties involved. He pointed out Community applied for the increase over a year ago, and it had not yet been granted. That was one example of his group's protection of the public.

Telephone subscribers, said Ian Barrett of CBS were concerned their area would be split up if and when extended area service came into effect. He emphasized both Erin and Hillsburgh should receive the same dialing service. "We are banned together and we will not split," he said.

Margaret Chapman, secretary of CBS, asked the Community Telephone representatives what happened to a survey about four years ago asking what areas they would like to call toll free. Neither the company or the commission could give them the answer, but both said they would look into it. Agnes Hyatt, of Community said everything involved went to the commission.

Frank Trotter emphasized to the commission and the company the customers were not dissatisfied with the local workers, but the company and service itself.

When Mrs. Hyatt meets with Bell Canada in the next few weeks, she will have many suggestions to give to them regarding their telephone directory. At the present time, customers with an R.R. 2 Acton, or Rockwood address, but Erin or Hillsburgh telephone are listed in the Peel-Halton book. When someone wants to find their number, they will automatically look under their mailing addresses, and will not find it. Even Bell operators, charged Mrs. Cox, are ignorant of this fact.

A sub-committee of CBS, is looking into directory improvements. Their first suggestion is the merging of all exchanges in the general area. In a letter to Mrs. Hyatt, Mrs. Cox suggested indicating the name of the exchanges at the top

of the page and also automatic (no charge) additional listing under postal address, when different from telephone exchange. The letter pointed out if someone lives at R.R. 4 Rockwood, with a Hillsburgh phone, their name and number should be placed in Hillsburgh, as it is now, in Rockwood at no extra cost, and in Guelph, for additional cost.

The third suggestion was to make information regarding possible listings in adjacent municipalities more available both in directory layout and through directory assistance. The top of the page for Acton listings should read Acton—see also Erin, Georgetown, Rockwood, Fergus and Hillsburgh.

Rearranging of the Peel and Waterloo creating one directory which lists all surrounding exchanges was also pointed out as an alternative. CBS suggests removing Mississauga and Oakville and replacing it with Guelph, Acton, Rockwood and Fergus.

CBS would also like to see the directory for Guelph and other exchanges available to Community customers automatically. At the present time, says Mrs. Cox, they must pay extra.

CBS is also displeased with the yellow pages they receive. Even though they conduct their business in Guelph, they get Georgetown and Brampton yellow pages.

A special page in the directory with information as it applies to Community Telephone customers is also suggested. Mrs. Cox pointed out Bell gives a list of numbers to call for service, etc. for Bell customers. CBS would like to see the same type of page for them containing the addresses and phone numbers of the company's Dunnville office, the divisional customer

service manager, the address of Continental Telephone's head office, and the address of the Ontario Telephone Service Commission.

Examples of the inconveniences caused by the mixed up directory ranged from relatives being stranded at the airport because no one could find an Erin telephone number, to a barn burning down and thousands of dollars worth of livestock dying because the fire department was long distance and the farmer had to locate the number of the proper fire department.

In the case of a major snow storm last April, explained Bob Trimble, also of CBS, telephone

service was off for several hours when hydro went off. CBS wanted to know why Community Telephone did not have an extra generator to make its own hydro until power was restored.

Lester Beydler, of Continental Telephone, who drove up from New York specifically for the meeting explained that their terminals have an eight hour reserve for hydro. In most cases, the power would be back on before that time period was up. However, he did say he would look into getting a generator installed to prevent the problems which came up in April. He also assured CBS and the Commission these problems and the

suggested solutions would be looked into in the next few weeks. If need be, he said, experts from Dallas, Texas, can be brought up to meet with the two groups to discuss the problems.

Although no date was set for the next meeting between CBS, the Commission and the Community Telephone Company, both the Commission and the company told CBS they would have the answers to their questions as soon as possible.



Building Products of Canada Ltd. celebrated five years without an accident with a party at the band hall last Saturday. All employees were invited.



Five years without an accident warranted awards and plaques by Building Products of Canada Ltd. Proudly displaying them are: front row left to right; Garnet Roszel, union executive; Jerry Toulouse, Plant Manager; Peter Pomeroy, mayor. Back row: Bill Brennan, Field Consultant for Industrial Accident Association; Bob Waller, Sr. vice president, Building Products in Montreal; Bill Wadland, Division.

## Authority bans windsurfing

Halton Region Conservation Authority has banned windsurfing at its Scotch Block and Mountsberg reservoirs.

In a meeting at its Milton headquarters Wednesday, July 4, the Authority made the announcement in order to avoid conflicts.

General Manager Murray Stephen said the Authority has agreements with property owners around the Scotch Block reservoir stating the reservoir would not be used for recreation purposes.

At Mountsberg, he said, there are logs and trees at or below the surface, causing hazards. The Authority has

approved windsurfing at Kelso Lake.

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