

Digital phone owners will pay for updated phone lines

By NORMAN NELSON

Milton's phone system has gone digital, and Bell Telephone customers, beginning July 15, will have an eight week free trial period to try out the new technology.

Ma Bell, of course, hopes customers will be so impressed that they will retain some of the options — for a monthly fee.

Some people, however, have already indicated they're not happy with the new technology.

That's because some Milton residents presently using touchtone phones have been sent notices by Bell Telephone indicating they will now have to pay for this service.

Pat Winterburn told *The Champion* she didn't like the tone of the letter she received which, she conveyed, stated that "customers who are using the (touchtone service) and not paying for it, will not be able to make outgoing telephone calls..."

She termed this "extortion."

Bell Business Office Manager Bob Shaver disagreed. The situation, he said affects about 1,200 residential customers and 120 business customers.

They have been able to tap into the touchtone lines without paying for it, he said, because of a unique situation where Milton had the "oldest kind of switch" whereby any customer with a touchtone phone could access the service.

With the new digital technology, he said, Bell can now ensure that only those who have paid for the touchtone lines can access the service.

In order to give customers adequate warning, he said they do not plan to bring this into affect until late summer or early fall.

He conceded that customers will either have to pay the extra fee (\$2.55 per month residential or \$3.80 business) to use a touchtone phone or

revert to the normal dial phone setting.

Some of the new options made possible by the new digital equipment include "call waiting", "call forwarding" and "speed dialing".

Each of the options, per month, cost \$4 for home phones and \$5.55 for business phones — even less if a combination of options is taken.

Replacing the old analogue system with the state-of-the-art digital system, in terms of technology, can be compared to the replacing of a record player by a compact disc player.

"Customers will notice that the transmission is clearer and the connection is faster to the number dialed," said Mr. Shaver at a press conference in Milton on Friday.

At Bell's Main Street office, the new system, which handles '878' and '876' exchanges, takes up only about a quarter of the space of the old

switching equipment and has the capability of handling a lot more telephone lines.

The conversion occurred on June 16, with most customers unaware. "We only got two complaints," said Bell Operations Manager Maggs Barrett.

Campbellville's '854' exchange, she said, is not slated to be switched over until next year. And when it does, she said, it would be handled through the Milton building.

Milton's new '875' exchange, she added, is already on stream since the exchange is handled out of Mississauga.

The new \$6 million system in Milton is part of a \$12 billion modernization plan Bell is implementing over the next five years. All major urban areas are already on the digital system, said Ms Barrett, and Bell is now in the process of hooking up the outlying areas.



Milton Mayor Gord Krantz, along with Bell's general manager of sales, Terry Mosey, officially switch Milton's phone service over to digital from analogue.

Shopping spree

Is it possible to spend more than \$1,000 in five minutes in a grocery store? Norm Coulter proved it is when he collected on the shopping spree he bought at the Beef and Beans Barbecue auction in support of Milton District Hospital Foundation. He paid \$250 for the spree during which he filled three carts with items ranging from frozen dinners to canned salmon and pounds of butter and cheese. The bill at the IGA store on Bronte Street came to \$1,071.12. Mr. Coulter cased the store aisles one evening to decide just what he'd throw in the baskets. His wife Donna and daughter Fran were there to cheer him on and capture the five-minute spree on video. Posing for a photograph with the super shopper are from left; store co-owner Tony Casa; Mr. and Mrs. Coulter; and store co-owner Peter Casa with his son Matthew, 2. The hospital fundraiser had brought in more than \$50,000 for the audiology department at last count.

Photos by JANE MULLER



The Canadian Champion, Wednesday, July 4, 1990

THIS WEEK'S INSERTS

Wed., July 4/90

- Shoppers Drug Mart
- Little Caesars Pizza

Fri., July 6/90

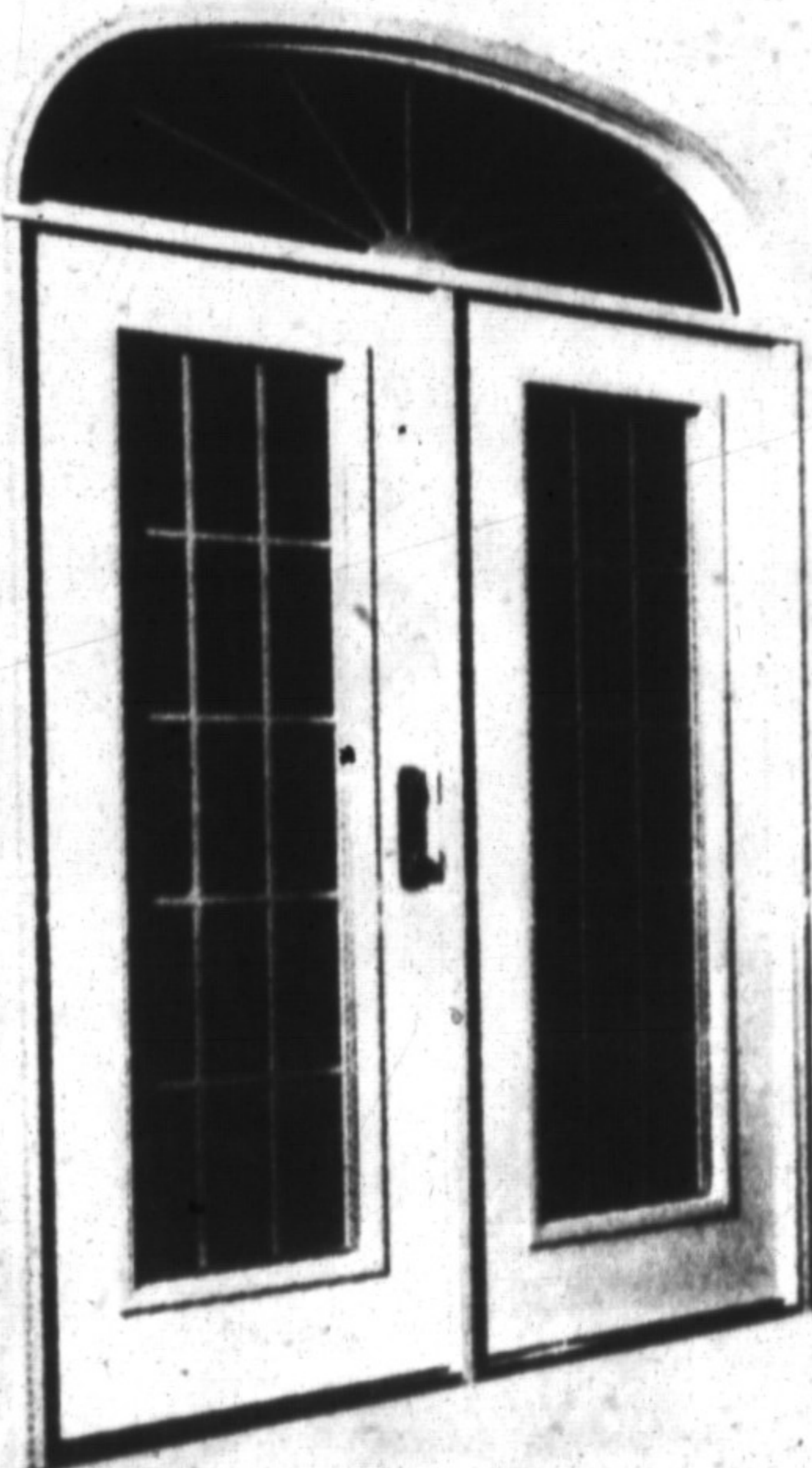
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