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Daily Nebraskan

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## New telephone industry decontrol gives customers the final word

## **By Kris Mullen**

The first steps of telephone industry deregulation have put customers in charge of deciding where they will get the telephone they use and who they will get to repair it.

Since June 1, the Lincoln Telephone Co. customers have had four options for phone repair, said Art Thompson, the company's public relations manager.

Customers who opt for the company's service plan pay 50 cents each month. If wiring needs repair, the company fixes it at no charge.

Customers who do not wish to pay the monthly charge can notify Lincoln Telephone Co. when wiring needs repair, and the company will fix it for \$40, Thompson said.

The other options are customers fixing the wiring themselves or having someone else fix it.

Customers decide whether they want to pay the monthly charge when they have their phone installed. They can join the plan later, but they then must pay a \$10 service charge, Thompson said.

Phones leased from the phone company will be repaired free, Thompson said. He said monthly lease fees start at 50 cents and increase for fancier phones.

Phones can be bought at the company's phone stores or from other phone stores.

Dave Orr, manager of Pioneer Telephone, said customers who choose to buy their phone simply plug the unit into the jack at their home or apartment. They must report the phone's registration number to the phone company.

Orr said he sells new and refurbished phones. The phones come in a variety of prices and styles.

A basic rotary-dial desk phone costs \$17.50, he said. Push-button phones range from \$18 to \$36.

Beginning in January 1984, customers will pay an additional monthly long-distance access charge of \$2. A customer who does not make any long distance calls will be required to pay the \$2 fee, Thompson said. The fee will increase \$1 in 1985 and 1986, and is expected to increase to \$7 over the next several years.



