

250 callers help Cablevision cut down on illegal hookups

By Jana Dahlman Bouma

About 250 anonymous callers have helped Lincoln Cablevision crack down on people who illegally tamper with cable television converter boxes. The callers used a toll-free number offering up to \$300 for tips on the illegal sale or hookup of the boxes.

Illegal tampering is a problem that may cost Cablevision between \$200,000 and \$500,000 this year, according to Terry Santo, assistant director in charge of security for Cablevision.

Cablevision began its efforts to stop converter-box tampering in March with its "Excuse Me" program. The program allowed people to turn in illegally modified boxes without penalty. By the time it ended in mid-April, Santo said, the program had netted 1,221 illegal boxes.

In the second phase of its program

to stop the theft of its services, Cablevision is joining with the National Business Crime Information Network and the Lincoln Crimestoppers program to offer the toll-free hotline, Santo said.

Rewards for tips vary, Santo said, from \$25 for reporting an illegal converter box to \$300 for reporting the sale of illegal boxes.

Cablevision controls access to its service by programming its converter boxes to receive only certain channels, Santo said. Some people, however, are able to reprogram the boxes to receive channels to which they are not entitled.

Such tampering is a misdemeanor, punishable by up to six months in prison and a \$5,000 fine, Santo said. But Cablevision does not usually prosecute on a first offense, he said. Instead, they charge a \$150 tampering fine.

The Cablevision hotline number is 1-800-241-5689.

Nebraska's economy...

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Retail sales also declined 1.3 percent from March 1982 to March 1984. Pursell said that adjusted for price changes, retail sales declined 6.5 percent, non-motor vehicle sales declined 5.1 percent, and motor-vehicle sales declined 14.8 percent.

Lincoln is among the Nebraska cities that have seen economic growth in the past few years, Pursell said. Other cities with "encouraging economic signs" are Omaha, Scottsbluff, Gering and Kearney, he said.

Pursell said he expects the Nebraska

economy to expand during the coming year. He also said he expects personal income and employment to rise. But, Pursell said, increasing interest rates may dampen the outlook of the agriculture and small business sectors. Despite the high interest rates, Pursell said, the agriculture market looks optimistic. Rumors of harvest problems in the Soviet Union have helped lead to that optimism, he said. Pursell said that anything short of a major crop shortfall would not affect the state economy because of large world grain stockpiles.

Bike trip applications available

Applications for the Oktobertrek bicycle trip are now at Lincoln's American Lung Association of Nebraska office. They are also available at many Nebraska bicycle shops.

The 100-mile trip is scheduled for Sept. 22 and 23 as a benefit for the Nebraska association. The cyclists will trek from Lincoln to Wilber, where they will camp overnight. They will return to Lincoln the next day.

will camp overnight.

The association will provide information on cycling and will provide dinner and breakfast on the trip.

Prizes will be available for people who raise more than \$200 in paid pledges. There will also be a grand prize winner.

Interested cyclists should call Sheri Larson McAuliffe at 474-5858 before Sept. 1.

UNL may share 3 data computers with high schools

By Jana Dahlman Bouma

UNL may eventually share its three Control Data Corporation computers with some of Nebraska's high schools, UNL Chancellor Martin Massengale said last week at a workshop at a Lincoln elementary school.

Massengale said UNL is interested in developing a pilot program to discover the costs and benefits of a telephone hookup between the computers and Nebraska high schools. The program, he said, might allow schools to offer college-level courses and special instruction for gifted high school students.

"We want to emphasize that this is a pilot project," Massengale said. UNL needs to know more about the cost of such a program before it could expand to serve more than a few high schools, he said.

Besides offering high school courses, Massengale said, a telephone hookup could allow graduate courses to be taught in remote locations, with only an occasional visit from a faculty member.

Massengale said the use of the CDC computers would add to the educational programs already offered by UNL through the Nebraska Educational Television Network, and through the new Videoplex system, which allows UNL classes to be broadcast to a classroom in Scottsbluff.

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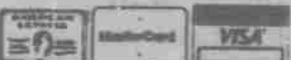


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