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Press Release

Time Warner Gouges Customers with “Special Fees”

Pay your bill online or by check and you potentially won't incur a special fee, says Cable Watch. But, talk to a Time Warner customer service representative on the phone in order to pay your bill and incur an additional five dollar service charge. Or call up customer service to order Pay-Per-View and that's another five bucks.

Reviewing policies in California, Texas, North Carolina and Ohio, Cable Watch discovered Time Warner charges for agents to assist their customers, even calling it an “Agent Assisted Payment” or “Agent Assisted PPV”.

“This reminds us of the nickel and diming of passengers by the airline industry,” said Bunnie Riedel, Executive Director of American Community Television. “Or the ATM fee proposed by Bank of America. Providing a live customer service agent should be a cost-of-doing-business.”

While most people pay their cable bills by mail or online, many people have to avail themselves of paying over the phone and when they do, they are penalized.

“If you think about who's calling to pay over the phone, it's typically people who are late or on the verge of being late,” said Riedel. “If they are late, they are assessed a late fee, but to pile on an additional charge for the privilege of giving an agent your credit card information over the phone is ridiculous.”

Cable Watch also pointed out that many Pay-Per-View events, such as sporting events, are quite pricey, running as much as sixty or seventy dollars. And in the case of ordering PPV movies, the special fee can be more than the actual cost of the movie.

“Cable operators do this because they can,” said Riedel. “Because nobody's taking them to task.”

Cable Watch is a project of American Community Television. Contact Bunnie Riedel at riedel@acomunitytv.org or 410-992-4976.

Because They Bear Watching

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