

MANAGING YOUR MONEY

How To Pick A Plan That Makes 'Cents': It's Your Call

(NAPSA)—When it comes to electronic gear, consumers are thankful for their cell phones. Yet, interestingly, more than 50 percent of Americans are paying more than the original amount they signed up for with their wireless service provider. That's a key finding from a recent Opinion Research Corporation survey of people responsible for paying their cell phone bill.

Other survey highlights included:

- Fifty percent of survey respondents selected cell phones as the consumer electronic device they were most thankful for. Laptop computers, at 14 percent, were second.

Some industry experts believe that much of this loyalty consumers feel toward their wireless phone is based on the dependability and affordability of a wireless phone service. How do you choose a wireless plan? Here are some items to think about:

- The high cost of activation and deactivation fees. Some plans may charge up to \$240 to cancel a plan.

- Long distance charges for calling outside your local area can add up. Know the prices in advance to avoid any surprises.

- Can you control your costs? Taxes, service charges and fees can be costly. Of the 51 percent who said their bills were higher, 64 percent said it was primarily due to these charges.

- Customer service should be easily accessible via telephone and Internet. PlanetFeedback.com, the nation's leading online consumer feedback service, recently awarded TracFone Wireless, the



ANSWERING THE CALL to uninterrupted wireless service is a new bill payment program.

largest nationwide prepaid service provider, the highest rating in the wireless category.

- Find a plan that suits your calling pattern. Prepaid plans are viable options for casual users and most do not require contracts and credit checks. Look for a plan where your unused minutes never expire with active service and the handset display lets you keep track of your talk time.

In an effort to increase the affordability of what is, by most standards, an already affordable service, TracFone Wireless recently introduced Double Minute Auto-Pay. TracFone customers who enroll in this will have their \$14.99 monthly charge (approximately 50 cents per day) automatically deducted from their checking account or billed to their credit card. Customers who enroll in this automatic payment program receive double minutes on all air-time card purchases.

More information is available by visiting the Web site at www.tracfone.com.