

MANAGING YOUR MONEY



Price Hikes Getting You Down?

(NAPSA)—With an unpredictable economy; rising gas, energy and food prices; and expected increases to the unemployment rate, the last thing Americans need is another increase in their monthly expenses to add to their growing list of financial concerns.

February's "Economic Report of the President" said that from 2003 to 2007, consumer energy prices increased 41 percent relative to nonenergy prices. As a result of energy increases, energy expenditures rose to 6 percent of consumer purchases in 2006 and 2007.

Bills, Bills, Bills

A 2006 study by The Pew Research Center, "What Americans Pay For, And How 'Information Age' Bills Keep Piling Up," showed communications services topped the public's list of regular, monthly expenses. Each month, 78 percent of adults said they pay cable or satellite television service bills, 74 percent pay cell phone service bills, and 65 percent pay Internet connection bills.

While the arrival of monthly bills is never a surprise, the charges are not always as predictable. Some cable providers, in particular, entice customers with introductory offers that often change into bigger, second prices later—sometimes as early as the second month.

Hearing the concerns of consumers, some telecom service providers have made a commitment to offer service plans with pricing structures designed to prevent their customers from experiencing higher, second prices after



Don't be enticed by an introductory offer that changes into a bigger price months later.

the introductory phase of service offers concludes.

One company, EMBARQ, offers high-speed Internet for just \$19.95 a month. And because it is not an introductory offer, it will not become a higher, second price later. This means customers will get a consistently fast broadband connection and a monthly budget that remains intact.

"Not only do cable rate hikes test the nerves of customers, they also affect their monthly expenses and budget, which can lead to other problems," said Dan Alcazar, EMBARQ's consumer marketing officer. "At EMBARQ, we are committed to providing our customers with reliable service plans with reliable prices."

For more information about the "no-second-price" high-speed Internet offer, visit embarq.com.