

Portland gets free line on info

By Lisa Kneefel
Emerald Associate Editor

Callers in the Portland metropolitan area will be able to access more than 1,500 categories of news and information 24 hours a day thanks to a new hotline offered by *The Oregonian*.

The hotline, called Oregonian Inside Line, will be available free of charge. Through an Audiotex system, callers can dial a main menu line and access specific news lines via a sequence of touch-tone phone commands. The news categories range from breaking news stories to weather information, sports updates and stock market figures.

Jeff Wohler, editor of Oregonian Sports Information Systems, said Inside Line is an extension of the newspaper's attempt to provide Oregonians with the latest in news and information.

"In addition to presenting (news) to our readers in ink on paper on their doorstep each

'With the Audiotex system, people can determine what they want (to know.)'

— Jeff Wohler,
Oregon Sports Information Systems

morning," Wohler said, "we're making it available to them 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

Similar news lines are offered by about 125 other newspapers including *The Sacramento Bee* and *The Seattle Times*. Wohler said *The Seattle Times* receives 600,000 to 700,000 calls per month.

Wohler said people are bombarded daily with scores of messages in forms ranging from outdoor advertisements to radio commercials and newspaper articles. He said the Audiotex system is a means of

accessing information selectively, so people can avoid excess messages of no use to them.

"What we're really talking about is information and how people control the amount of information they want," Wohler said. "With the Audiotex system, people can determine what they want (to know)."

Inside Line is not yet accessible through an 800 number, so University students interested in using it will have to pay long-distance charges. Wohler said adding an 800 number might be a possibility in the near future.

This Sunday's edition of the newspaper will include a special insert explaining the phone system and its use. It will also list all current 4-digit access codes for respective news categories. Wohler said each of *The Oregonian's* printed sections will begin listing related news line access codes on a daily basis.

Inside Line's main menu number is (503)225-5555.

Record companies inflate music prices

By David C. Zartman
Emerald Contributor

People shopping for compact discs or cassettes over the holidays probably noticed their wallets took a pretty good beating.

Music prices have gone steadily up, and the trend is unlikely to reverse itself.

The average price increase is \$1, with tapes now going for about \$10 each and CDs for \$16. Yet it only costs the labels about \$1 to make and package a compact disc.

Huge corporations such as Warner Bros. are causing the increases, said Mike McAdams, owner of the Record Garden.

"The labels say that they have to recoup promotional costs or recover from business losses within the company," McAdams said. "It's also probably sheer greed."

Superstar artists such as Madonna and Garth Brooks have seen price increases because the companies know their popularity will ensure large sales regardless of cost, according to *Rolling Stone* magazine.

Record companies also raise prices to cover huge megadeals they have signed with artists. Michael Jackson (Sony) has a deal worth a reported \$1 billion, and Prince (Warner Bros.) has inked a deal somewhere in the \$100 million range.

While retail prices of established stars are going up, costs for newer artists are going down.

"When the labels are trying to break in a new artist, they don't want to scare off consumers, so they drop the prices," McAdams said.

Other factors could contribute to possible price reductions in the near future.

The cardboard longbox that CDs are packaged in is due to be discontinued this year, but the reduction in price to the consumer will be minimal.

Several new forms of music media will bring competition to the popular CD and cause a further drop in price.

One is the digital audio tape, with digital sound to rival CDs as well as home recording capability.

At the moment, however, DATs do not pose a threat to the CD market. Cost is high (\$16), and only about 300 titles are available, compared to more than 70,000 on CD.

A new mini digital disc is much smaller than a conventional CD, but holds the same amount of music. MDDs are not widely known because of poor quality of sound and limited availability.

Even the venerable vinyl record is not immune to price hikes.

"A lot of records are only available as an import," said Ryder Greene, owner of Green Noise Records.

It is still possible to get a good deal on vinyl.

"A lot of the independent labels such as Dischord put out quality products for around \$7 an album," Greene said.

ET ALS

MEETINGS

Southeast Asian Studies Will present a Brown Bag Talk "Thailand as a Rapidly Industrializing Agricultural Economy" today from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in EMU Century Room A. Speakers will be Dr. Chaiwat Konjing and Dr. Paitoon Rodvini. For more information, call 346-1521.

Club Français French interest group will meet tonight at 7 in the EMU Fishbowl. For more information, call 345-1366.

OSPIRG Open House will meet today at 3 p.m. in EMU Suite One. For more information, call 346-4377.

U.S. Peace Corps will meet tonight from 6:30 to 10:00 in the EMU Maple Room.

The Searchers will meet for an open forum tonight at 7 at 1920 W. 22nd Ave. For more information, call 686-1352.

RELIGION

Campus Crusade Prime Time will meet tonight at 7:30 in Room 238 Gilbert. For more information, call 683-0686.

MISCELLANEOUS

Career Planning and Placement Service will have an office orientation today from 10:30 to 11:30 in Room 221 Hendricks. There will also be a Resume Writing Workshop today from 2:30 to 4:00 in Room 221 Hendricks. For more information, go to Room 244 Hendricks.

Career Planning and Placement Service will start bidding today for the following companies: Battelle Northwest Laboratories, Washington Department of Transportation, Meier & Frank, and Public Financial Management.

Sierra Club will discuss "The Northwest Salmon in Peril" with Jim Baker, Northwest Salmon Campaign Coordinator, tonight at 7:30 at Roosevelt Middle School Cafeteria, 24th & Hilyard.

Deadline for submitting Et Als to the Emerald front desk, EMU Suite 300, is noon the day before publication. The news editor does not have a time machine. Et Als run the day of the event unless the event takes place before noon.

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