

AT&T dealing with 'insensitivity'

WASHINGTON (AP) — American Telephone & Telegraph Co. says it is working with the Congressional Black Caucus to make amends for an illustration in a company magazine that depicted Africans as monkeys.

"We agreed to work with them in the coming weeks. I don't know what will come out in the end," Jim McGann, an AT&T spokesman in Washington, said Thursday.

A day earlier, Rep. Donald Payne, D-N.J., and other caucus members met with AT&T Chairman Robert Allen to discuss the illustration. AT&T agreed to cooperate with the caucus through follow-up meetings with one of its members, Rep. Cardiss Collins, D-Ill.

Payne views the flap surrounding publication of the image as a springboard to better corporate policies from the communications giant.

The incident "sort of highlighted the insensitivity and it drew us to this company that had

'It drew us to this company that had professed to have positive business and social consciousness levels in their corporation.'

— Rep. Donald Payne, D-N.J.

professed to have positive business and social consciousness levels in their corporation," Payne said.

Payne wants the company, based both in New York and Basking Ridge, N.J., to take "bold steps to reverse the damage," such as bolstering its minority work force — especially in middle- and senior-management slots — and having a summit with other large corporations to combat workplace racism.

The caucus also would like

AT&T to have black officers or senior-level managers in Washington acting as liaisons to the black political and business communities. And, they would like to see the company hire more minority contractors.

"He's going to take it back (to the company), and we expect there will be some very specific outcomes," Payne said.

A drawing on the Fun'N'Games page of in the September issue of *AT&T Focus*, an in-house publication, depicted people talking on the telephone on all continents but Africa, where a monkey was doing the talking.

AT&T dismissed the freelance illustrator who created the image and the outside design firm that worked on the publication.

"We are putting that work out to bid and we certainly would entertain bids from minority firms," McGann said.

McGann said Allen wrote to all employees saying the monkey image was "antithetical to the company's values," and offered apologies.

Customer is always right? Wrong

PHOENIX (AP) — John Leo Laetch refused the free Big Mac and fries and said only \$1,000 would make him feel better about the obscene message printed on his receipt. Now he faces up to five years in prison for extortion.

Laetch declined to comment after his conviction Wednesday. Sentencing was set for Oct. 27.

He ordered two Big Macs, a Happy Meal, fries and drinks on April 29, 1992. Instead of the usual "Thank You," Laetch's receipt came back with an obscene message, apparently programmed into the cash register computer by a disgruntled worker.

Several employees tried to apologize and offered Laetch free meals and coupons, but he "wanted \$1,000 and implied, 'If you don't give me it, I'm going to hurt your business. This information is going to get out,'" said prosecutor Caroline Como.

The 65-year-old resident of suburban Scottsdale was arrested after the owner reported the demand and set up a meeting with Laetch. Police were listening when he came to collect.

Laetch denied making any threats and said he thought \$1,000 was just compensation for his distress.

Police search for beef thief

HILLSIDE, Ariz., (AP) — Authorities believe a man they suspect shot seven cattle and carved out 100-pound chunks of prime beef is a survivalist trying to live off of the land.

"He likes the prime cuts. He's just taking the hindquarters. Might as well have the best," said Yavapai County Sheriff's Deputy R.W. Belmore.

Authorities believe they are searching for a survivalist.

"I don't know if he's crazy, but he sure is eating well," Belmore said.



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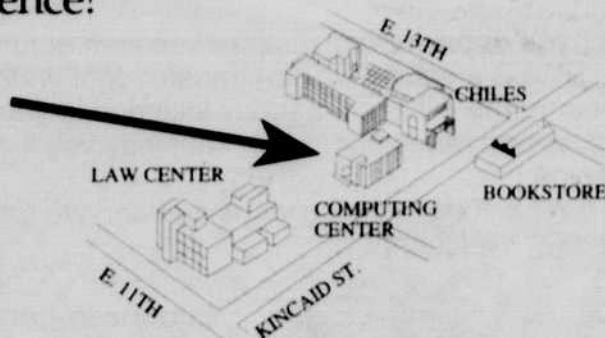
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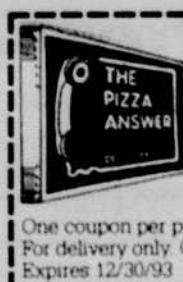
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