

ERIE, INC.

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HERE TO HELP

Cable rates rise but there are options



David Bruce

Bob Jahn wants to know why his cable television and internet bill is going up in March by nearly 10 percent.

Jahn, who lives near Edinboro, receives his cable TV and internet through Armstrong, which serves Crawford County and part of southern Erie County. Right now he is paying \$123.15 a month but that figure will increase by about \$12 starting in March.

"I just want internet and cable but I'm starting to feel like I'm getting ripped off," Jahn said.

Jahn isn't alone. Cable and satellite TV providers have increased their rates in 2018 as much as 15 percent, according to www.broad-castingcable.com.

Many of them link the price hike to similar rate increases from channels such as ESPN, Disney and TNT.

"We are passing along the content rate increases, about \$6 a month, from our existing (stations)," said Dave Wittmann, Armstrong's vice president of cable marketing. He said the rest of Jahn's price increase is likely due to increased internet costs.

Rising rates aren't new. Cable and satellite TV bills rose 53 percent from 2007 to 2017 and now average \$100.98 a month, USA Today reported in January.

See **BRUCE, D2**

Talk to us

Have a consumer question you'd like us to help you with? Call David Bruce at 870-1736, send email to david.bruce@timesnews.com, or send mail to 205 W. 12th St., Erie, PA 16534.

Saying yes to Erie



Attending a Young Erie Professionals lunch discussion at the Erie Club in Erie on Tuesday are, from left, Matthew Petruso, 30, president of Benefit Advisors Insurance Group; Joelyn Bush, 32, director of marketing and communications at the United Way of Erie County; and Nick Cianci, 25, development officer at the United Way of Erie County. [CHRISTOPHER MILLETTE/ERIE TIMES-NEWS]



A reinvented Young Erie Professionals has a new approach

By **Jim Martin**
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One person's networking event, it turns out, can be another person's happy hour.

And Joelyn Bush, director of marketing and communications for the United Way of Erie County, said she didn't need another happy hour. That's why she quit the Young Erie Professionals a while back.

But the group, which is an affiliate of the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership, hit the reset button in July, bringing on new leaders and a new way of thinking about its mission.

Kristi Bailey, the 33-year-old director of business development and services for the Erie Federal Credit Union, joined YEP about a year ago.

In certain circles, she said, "The group didn't have the greatest reputation in the world. We realized (some) young people were looking for more value. They didn't just want to go to happy hour



Kristi Bailey is the president of the Young Erie Professionals. Bailey, 33, is also the director of business development and services for the Erie Federal Credit Union. [CHRISTOPHER MILLETTE/ERIE TIMES-NEWS]

and network. They wanted there to be more to it."

The more Bailey thought about it, the more she thought she should help take the group in a different direction.

"It was time for a new structure," she said. "I knew the old president's term was coming to an end. I made the decision to talk to them about potentially stepping up and leading."

Now, eight months after Bailey took over as president at YEP, the

organization appears to have a new playbook.

Tuesday found 20 members attending a roundtable event with Jim Berlin, CEO of Logistics Plus. Other scheduled events include a panel discussion with Erie Mayor Joe Schember, a breakfast gathering at newly opened coffee shop Ember & Forge and a gathering for mentors and those they are mentoring.

See **YEP, D2**

Young Erie Professionals

For more information: www.eriepa.com/get-connected/young-erie-professionals
Who can join: Interested individuals between 21 and 40
Cost: \$50 for chamber members, \$75 for nonmembers

MOTLEY FOOL WINNER

Leon J. Buczynski Jr. is this week's Motley Fool winner for correctly answering that **Eli Lilly and Co.** was the answer to last week's question. For a list of those who answered correctly, turn to **D2**. For this week's question, turn to **D6**.

MOVER OF THE WEEK

Beverly Weaver has been named executive director of the Erie County Housing Authority.

Weaver, who had served as deputy director, takes over for Michele McNierney, who retired Jan. 15.



A lifelong resident of Erie County, Weaver is a graduate of Seneca High School. She lives in Union City with her husband and two children.

She has worked for the Erie County Housing Authority for 32 years, serving as deputy director since 2014. Her duties have included administration of the city of Corry's community development block grant program and human resources director. She also administered the county's housing rehabilitation and worked with the public housing and Section 8 housing assistance programs.

THE BUZZ

Acutec Precision Aerospace, a locally owned aerospace industry supplier that has operations in Saegertown and Meadville, is now a supplier for SpaceX, a private company led by technology innovator Elon Musk that designs, builds and launches rockets and spacecraft. "Our first purchase order from SpaceX is a 60-piece order for an injector post that goes into the Falcon 9 rocket for testing," said Elisabeth Smith, CEO of Acutec. "This is a very exciting time to be in aerospace."

The Falcon rocket had its maiden flight Feb. 6 from the Kennedy Space Center. Its test payload was a Tesla Roadster bound for Mars. The electric Tesla is built by another company owned by Musk.

The **Erie County Public Library** and **Radius Cowork** are inviting local entrepreneurs, business owners, workers and

concerned citizens to the Erie Economic Exchange Talk and Learn at 11 a.m. Saturday at the Blasco Library.

Participants will have the opportunity to share perspectives on economics in daily life, gain educational tips and offer opinions about the state of the local economy. Interested individuals are asked to prepare a three-minute presentation. Visit www.erialibrary.org/events or call the Idea Lab at 451-6939.

ErieBank has announced a scholarship essay contest open to seniors who plan to seek a business-related college degree. Winners, each of whom will receive \$500, will be named from ErieBank market areas of Erie, Harbork-creek Township, Meadville, Mentor, Ohio and Warren. For more information, call Amy Potter at 814 765-9621.



Jim Berlin, at far left, president and CEO of Logistics Plus, talks about good business practices during a lunch discussion with members of the Young Erie Professionals at the Erie Club. [CHRISTOPHER MILLETTE/ERIE TIMES-NEWS]

YEP

From Page D1

It is perhaps a measure of how much the group has changed that Bush has rejoined the organization and was sitting around the table Tuesday asking questions of Berlin.

She said she's happy to be back, happy to be learning things, and to be getting involved and finding opportunities to mentor and be mentored.

Terry Carson, 26, who works in the information technology department at Erie Insurance, said he had attended a few YEP-sponsored events in the past.

He had a nice time but was left with no urge to join. Carson said he's focused on building his career and doing

his part to transform Erie and this group didn't seem like it would help him do either one.

"It felt more like a boys' club rather than a group of people I could imagine having an impact on my career," he said.

He began to rethink that decision after meeting Bailey at an Erie Community Foundation event last summer.

Carson, who serves as YEP's chairman of community and civic engagement, said members of the newly enlarged group share a common trait. They aren't shy to admit they want to make a difference.

"We truly care about the future of Erie," he said. "We want to have an impact on the transformation Erie is having. We all have different backgrounds, but we are all trying to work together."

Perhaps no one can speak

more convincingly about the turnaround at YEP than someone who was part of the previous group's leadership's structure.

Bill Lillis, 37, a certified financial planner, said the group did great work between 2009 and 2012.

"After 2012, it really took a downturn," said Lillis, who was chairman of YEP's board of directors both before and after the leadership change. "We weren't offering enough of what professionals wanted in Erie. We were missing the ball. It was a lack of leadership across the board."

Previous leaders, himself included, wanted many of the same things for Erie's young leaders that the group is pursuing now, he said.

"We had high hopes, but our execution wasn't there," he said. "We put on some networking events, but that

was really about it."

Lillis, who calls himself the last remnant of the old YEP, said the new group operates under four guiding principals:

- "Want to have fun."
- "Want to better ourselves and make ourselves more valuable."
- "Want to better our community."
- "Want to have a voice."

Bailey said the restructured organization was built around higher expectations.

"We realized that young people were looking for more value," she said. "They wanted to have more meaningful events."

It's an approach that seems to be finding an audience. Lillis said the group's kickoff event held in January attracted more than 100 people, many of them new to the organization.

"It showed me there is a demand for a new organization that is doing what the old YEP wasn't getting done," he said.

YEP, which is once again affiliated with the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership, has a part-time staff person assigned by the chamber to handle much of the behind-the-scenes work that helps the organization operate.

Lillis said that's freed up Bailey and the group's other members to set about reinventing the organization and Erie.

"She found great young people," he said. "They are ambitious, they are passionate and they love Erie."

Jim Martin can be reached at 870-1668 or by email. Follow him on Twitter at www.twitter.com/ETNMartin.

BRUCE

From Page D1

Fortunately for TV watchers, they have more choices than ever — as long as they have fast internet service (at least 3-5 Mbps to stream video on one TV or computer).

One of my coworkers is an Armstrong customer who is tired of the routine rate hikes. Here is his plan to slash his TV expenses:

Plug in a TV antenna.

These antennas can be bought for as little as \$15, though most good ones will cost you around \$40.

Hook it up to your TV and scan to see what local channels you receive. If you live far away from the stations'

transmitters in Summit Township, you might have to place your antenna in your attic or on your roof.

Erie's commercial TV stations currently broadcast 15 different channels (WSEE is broadcast on both 12.4 and 35.1). They are all free.

Buy a streaming device.

These are players that enable your TV to receive channels carried over the internet. They include Roku, Google Chromecast, Apple TV and Amazon Fire TV, and usually cost between \$20 and \$80.

You won't need one if you have a smart TV that is already internet-compatible. Each TV you use will require its own streaming device.

Test drive at least a few video streaming services.

I call these services — which include Sling TV, PlayStation Vue, YouTube TV and

DirecTV Now — "internet cable providers."

They offer many of the same channels you get from your cable company or satellite provider. Since you get them over the internet, there are fewer overhead costs, so they often cost less than traditional cable or satellite TV.

You can purchase a Sling TV package for as low as \$21.20 a month, tax included. It even includes ESPN, the most expensive cable channel.

Most of these services offer a free trial week, so give them a try. There are no contracts to sign or cancellation fees.

Once you find a streaming service you like, go ahead and cancel your cable or satellite TV. That's what I did more than two years ago and I have no regrets.

MOTLEY FOOL WINNERS

The following people correctly responded that Eli Lilly and Co. was the answer to last week's Motley Fool trivia question:

Kathy Martin, Carolyn M. Welther, Deb Cole, LuAnn Patterson, Mary Ann Fogle, Barbara Alonge, Bernie Smith, Susan Cenfetelli, Roger Aaron, Debbie Bowers, Susan Gomolchak, Frankie Vandermark, Fran and Paul Kuzma, Jerry Kraus, Carolyn Schenker, Paul Scholl, Leon J Buczynski Jr., Greg Tower, Len Jefferson, Sheryl Carpenter, Mike Zeller, Gregory L. Swanson, Mike Roesch, Vance L. Duncan III, Greta Jones, Dave Halas, Greg Lessig, Sam and Karen Amendola, Kristina Straub, Eric Amendola, Jared Daly, David Strazisar, Jill Gomes, Jerry Lutz, Malcolm Pollard, Keith and Laura Farnham, Beverly Zarella, Dick Forbes and John McClelland.

Think you know the answer to this week's question? Send your answer to jim.martin@timesnews.com. Or, mail your answer to Motley Fool, Erie Times-News, 205 W. 12th St., Erie PA 16534.

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