

The Citizen Second front page

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OFFICE OPENING HERE

Computer billing service offered to local doctors

by HAZEL ALLAN
Citizen Staff Reporter

Doctors in Prince George now have the opportunity to leave their billing in the hands of a computer.

The computer will be run by Medical Management Services, a data-processing firm, which is opening an office in Prince George May 1.

David Pollock, president of M.M.S., is at the Inn of the North this week to demonstrate how the computer billing works and to show medical clerical staff how to fill out the day sheets.

"We only provide this service for doctors and clinics. We have offices in Nelson and Kelowna as well as Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver," Pollock said.

Dr. L. M. Cook is one of the Prince George doctors taking advantage of the computer billing service.

"It won't affect my patients at all. It is simply going to take over the billing information from this office to the Medical Services Plan."

"I'm hoping to learn more about computer technology and the sort of things available such as record keeping, appointment making etc. I don't know much about it and this seemed like a reasonable introduction in a conservative fashion."

The reasons for providing this service in Prince George is because of its location in the B.C. interior and also "because of the data pac network that was introduced here last year."

"It is the world's first public packet switched network and works through the microwave system," Pollock said.

"A year ago for us to hook up to a computer in Calgary from Prince George, it would have cost \$2,000 a month. With the new network system it costs \$60 a month."

The public packet switched network system is a project of Trans Canada Telephone Systems, which includes all the telephone companies in Canada.

"B.C. Tel will service all our needs in Prince George," Pollock said.

Local doctors will fill out day sheets rather than the traditional claim cards and these will be picked up by M.M.S. taken to the terminal in their office.

"We enter the data and send the tape to the Medical Services Plan office."

"The advantage of this system is that it speeds up payment, gives doctors control on receivables and only costs \$125 a month for up to 700 claims," he said.

So far 25 Prince George doctors have joined the Medical Management Services computerized billing service.



Citizen photo to Dave Milne

Outdoor classroom

Out to enjoy the first really warm days are the Grade 7 students at Wildwood Elementary school. They exchanged their classroom for the playground, while doing their school work. "It's a much nicer being outside and we hope the sun will keep shining, because we like to stay out here," the kids said.

PAY TELEVISION

Canadian market eyed

VANCOUVER (CP) — A California pay television system offering first-run movies such as The Goodbye Girl has agreed to sell half its shares to a Vancouver firm that hopes the experience will help it sell Canadians the same service.

George Fierheller, president of Premier Cablevision Ltd., said Thursday his company expects to complete an agreement in May to buy shares in California Satellite Systems, which shows new movies, celebrity specials and live sports events in Sacramento and Stockton, Calif.

The California system provides 10 or 12 new movies repeated several times during the month, live sports events such as boxing and soccer matches as well as other specials not shown on regular channels. It costs \$13 a month.

"I think Canadian television viewers are ready for something like this," said Fierheller in an interview.

He said that although pay television has not yet been approved by the Canadian Radiotelevision and Telecommunications Commission, he hopes buying into the California company will give Premier first-hand information on the marketing and distribution of pay television. Purchase price was not disclosed.

Premier, through its subsidiaries, provides cable television service to 530,000 subscribers in the Vancouver area, Victoria, part of Toronto, Borden and Oakville, Ont., along with Dublin and Waterford, Ire.

Fierheller said cable subscribers, who pay about \$6.50 a month each, would pay an additional charge if they want the entertainment package. That price is still undetermined but he said both standard and additional cable services might total \$15.

Federal Communications Minister Jeanne Sauve, Fierheller noted, has said pay television is inevitable in Canada and the Canadian Television Association has

asked the CRTC for permission to introduce it.

He said Premier also is beginning to invest in films being produced in Canada and it is possible some of them could be shown through the American pay television system.

Fierheller said Premier, primarily Canadian with 16 per cent of its shares owned by Columbia Broadcasting System of the United States, is looking at several other undisclosed American acquisitions.

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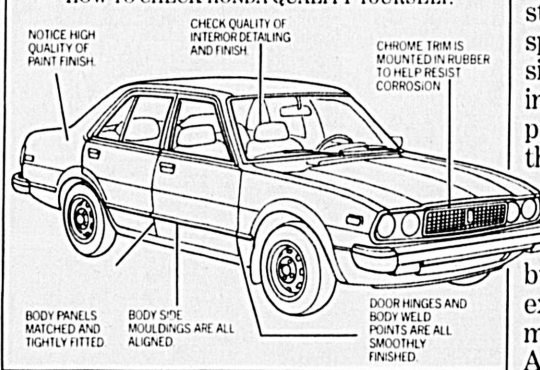
tinted glass and fitted carpeting further add to the enjoyment of driving. And all are standard. But features don't necessarily add to the quality of a car, unless

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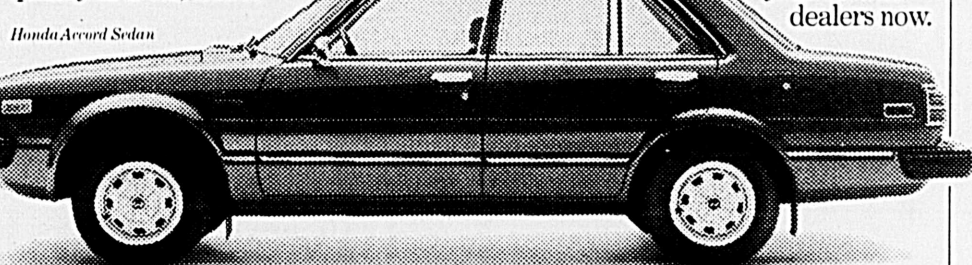
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