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## Press Release

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### **ALASKA INMATES TO BE CHARGED FOR LOCAL CALLS**

JUNEAU – Beginning September 1, prisoners in Alaska's correctional facilities will be charged \$2 to make a local telephone call. Until now, local calls have been free.

Prisoners being booked will not be charged to place a local phone call.

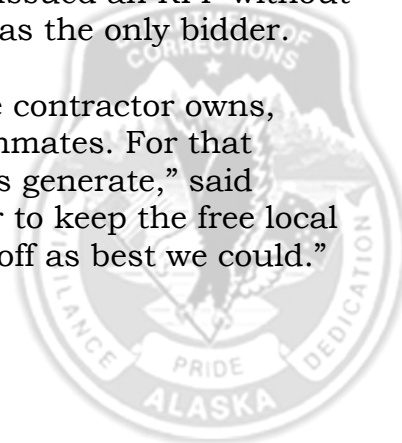
In March, the Department of Corrections approved a contract for inmate telephone service with Evercom Systems, Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Securus Technologies, Inc.

Under contract terms, Evercom/Securus owns, installs and maintains the telephone equipment at no cost to the department and provides specialized equipment needed to record and track all phone conversations for security purposes. Evercom/Securus also provides billing service and the ability to block phone numbers as required by the courts or by the recipients of calls.

The \$2 fee will appear on the phone bill of the receiving party. The contractor has a pre-pay account service for call recipients as well.

The department at first issued an RFP for telephone service which required the successful bidder to provide free local calls for inmates. After receiving no responsive bids, the department issued an RFP without the free local calls stipulation. Evercom/Securus was the only bidder.

"The context of how we got here is cost control. The contractor owns, installs and maintains the phone system used by inmates. For that service they get a portion of the revenue phone calls generate," said deputy commissioner Dwayne Peoples. "We'd prefer to keep the free local calls, but this is the industry norm and we've held off as best we could."



Inmate telephone rates are approved by the Regulatory Commission of Alaska.

The department inaugurated contracting for inmate telephone service in May, 1997.

Most, if not all, correctional facilities charge for local calls. Among unified systems (state corrections departments which, like Alaska, operate pre-trial jails as well as prisons), Delaware and Connecticut charge \$2 for a local call, New Hampshire \$1.10 plus 10 cents per minute, and Maryland 85 cents per minute.

Arkansas charges its inmates \$4.40 in-state for 15 minutes, Rhode Island 70 cents per minute, North Dakota 50 cents for 15 minutes, Montana \$2.75 plus 20 cents per minute, Wyoming \$1.24, New Jersey \$2.50 for 15 minutes, Idaho \$3.40 to \$3.80 for 30 minutes, Mecklenburg County (Charlotte, NC) Sheriffs Dept. \$1.10 for 15 minutes. Prisoners in Great Britain are charged around 22 cents per minute according to recent report on the BBC news web site.

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