



THE SUN HERALD

Jackson County plans to save by downsizing phone systems

Pascagoula – Jackson County will save \$290,000 over three years by eliminating telephone lines, cashing in on discounts offered by telephone companies, modifying calling plans and streamlining its communications systems.

The audit by consultants with RMH Enterprises that made this possible cost the county \$18,000.

The consultants suggested the county use the savings to modernize and centralize its communications systems. What county leaders had agreed to do was to see what the consultants could save the county now as opposed to a long-range plan. County Administrator Alan Suduth said. “See how that goes before considering the rest.”

With such good results, the Board of Supervisors listened to what the firm offered in the line of modernizing for further cost savings. They made no decisions Monday. The consultants showed the county how they negotiated savings without degrading the quality of communication service the county receives. They proposed eliminating 67 old specialty lines that had been used to carry data before the county began using the Internet. They proposed the county cut back on the use of Southern Linc, a wireless radio between county and staff officials.

Telephone numbers have been eliminated and volume and term discounts negotiated. Butch Loper, special projects coordinator for the county Roads Dept. said he won't miss the duplication of communications equipment he carries around. “I feel like a wireless cowboy with a phone on one side and a radio on the other”, Loper said. Going cellular only will lighten his load literally, he said. The radio weighs the most by far.