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# AT&T 'billing error' overcharges thousands

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Thousands of Tennessee residents may have been overcharged on recent phone bills because of an admitted AT&T "billing error," the Tennessee Regulatory Authority said yesterday.

AT&T said it will notify people it erroneously billed, apologize and adjust the bills, said Eddie Roberson, head of the agency's consumer services division. About 18,000 Tennessee consumers are affected, he said.

The TRA discovered the problem late

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last month when people started to call to complain about the charges, generally about \$7.50. The callers — about 90 to 95 people in all as of yesterday — were former AT&T customers who saw the charge on their BellSouth bills.

Roberson said AT&T representatives said their company had been notifying customers of a new charge but mistakenly billed former customers.

"We are working with AT&T on a

plan that will ensure that all consumers that have been improperly billed will be automatically credited for the amount charged," TRA Chairwoman Debi Tate said in a written statement.

A TRA news release quoted AT&T as follows: "AT&T confirms that we experienced a billing error caused by system issues affecting some of our customers, as well as consumers who are not customers of AT&T but billed through third parties."

AT&T says it will cooperate fully with the TRA to resolve the problem. AT&T representatives couldn't be

reached for direct comment yesterday evening.

The TRA says consumers who have received the unauthorized charges should call AT&T at 1-800-CALL-ATT (1-800-225-5288).

Consumers should contact the TRA at 741-2904 (within Nashville) or 1-800-342-8359 (outside of Nashville) if they have difficulty resolving their billing problem with AT&T.

"We are still investigating the charges, and all we're trying to do is get the message to consumers and get the charges stopped," Roberson said. ■