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Montana State University to get new dial system

University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations

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MISSOULA, AUG.(00)--In approximately five minutes in the early morning of August 26, a telephone engineer armed with a pair of nippers, will cut in one of the largest private telephone exchanges in the state of Montana--the new dial system at Montana State University.

The new exchange will serve more than 500 extensions in and around the campus, more than are required to serve the individual communities of Superior, Terry, Bridger, Philipsburg or Fort Peck. And as the state's only university continues to expand, the new exchange will have the ability to expand right with the school.

While the actual cutover from the present limited exchange is relatively simple and quick, it has taken phone company engineers since early May to get ready for the actual event. Due to space limitations, there was no opportunity to install the new exchange adjacent to present telephone facilities in Main Hall. However, in anticipation of the change, space on the lower level of the Liberal Arts building had been assigned for the purpose a long time ago and plans for the change were drafted in January 1957. From this new location, approximately half a city block from the board in Main Hall, engineers established a cable route, linking the old installation with the new. The actual severance of the umbilical cord will take place in the cable terminal room in the basement of Main Hall, and since the new lines have already been checked out in test runs, the new board will be functioning the instant that the old connections are severed.
New telephone setup at MSU, page two

The new MSU dial system will replace a three-operator manual board and it has several features that campus officials believe will speed up campus telephone traffic. Any telephone on campus can be dialed directly from any other phone at the school, eliminating the process of first calling the university operator. Additionally, the trunk lines from campus to the phone company exchange will be expanded from 13 to 18. Outside dialers using any number between Lincoln 3-7241 and Lincoln 3-7259 will raise the campus during operating hours. Conversely, any campus phone can be dialed to reach a Missoula area number direct instead of the user first having to call the campus operator, asking for an outside line, and then going through the dialing routine.

In spite of the changeover, telephone traffic through the new board is expected to follow about the same patterns as at present. Daytimes, the calls will originate all over the place. But with close of the regular school day, the residence halls can be expected to take up the calling burden as young male student seeks wire conversation with young female student, or vice versa.

Being realists about such matters, the telephone engineers expect that the new exchange may have a few bugs in it to begin with. Following the cutover, every campus extension will be checked out individually to make certain that the heating plant isn't getting calls for the dressing room in the Women's Center, or that somebody isn't calling a microbiologist in the music building. Depending on the extent of such troubles, phone company officials expect the new board to be functioning without hitches within a day or two of the cutover.

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