

## Is Verizon DSL Service Good Enough?

We routinely hear complaints about speed and reliability of Verizon's DSL Internet service, an antiquated technology that no longer meets the FCC's definition of broadband. The DSL equipment that we have in western Mass came from the urban and suburban areas where Verizon installed FiOS (fiber). The equipment was old then and is obsolete now—in fact it's no longer manufactured. When the DSL equipment fails it will not be replaced.

"The vision that I have is we are going into the copper plant areas and every place we have FiOS, we are going to kill the copper." "In other areas that are more rural and more sparsely populated, we have got LTE [mobile wireless] built that will handle all of those services and so we are going to cut the copper off there. We are going to do it over wireless. So I am going to be really shrinking the amount of copper we have out there..."

- Lowell Mac Adams, Verizon Chairman & CEO and former CEO of Verizon Wireless.

## Consider the implications for us in western Mass:

- 1. There is very little 4G service in the hilltowns and even 3G service is spotty. And using 4G service for Internet access is prohibitively expensive. To consume 50GB of data per month, which is what the average American wired household uses, costs \$335/month with Verizon wireless.
- 2. Verizon has been <u>penalized and criticized in several states</u> by public utility commissions for the ongoing degradation of its copper network. Verizon sees further investment in copper technology as throwing good money after bad, but spending millions on additional fiber upgrades isn't appealing either. They have had bills filed in state legislatures around the country to eliminate their obligation to provide landline service. The result is deteriorating service on copper networks around the country.
- 3. Verizon sold off telephone service in northern New England several years ago to FairPoint Communications, knowing full well Verizon never had an interest in upgrading rural parts of Vermont, New Hampshire or Maine to fiber service. Here in Massachusetts, Verizon has decreased marketing its wired DSL service and stopped selling it altogether to customers who want broadband-only service.
- 4. Traditionally, customers reporting trouble on a phone line get a visit from Verizon technicians who track the problem down and repair it. But Verizon no longer wants to spend money fixing copper wire-related problems. Customers reporting chronic phone static or outages are now being asked to abandon their traditional landline service instead:
  - In areas where fiber upgrades are not forthcoming, the company now proposes to <u>disconnect the</u> customer in favor of Voice Link, a wireless home phone replacement.
  - Voice Link is not subject to state or federal oversight or quality of service consumer protection laws that apply to traditional landline service.
  - Voice Link does not work with any data services including DSL or dial-up Internet, fax, medical
    monitoring, alarm systems, etc. You will be pitched an expensive Verizon Wireless data plan if you want
    Internet access.
  - Customers who switch to Voice Link will lose their DSL service.

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