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## Rural Broadband Tales

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### 45 hours

“Frontier Communications is the only broadband service provider (other than HughesNet which is even worse/more expensive). When my mother and I share files, it takes me a minute to download the file whereas it takes her 45 minutes to download the same file even though we both pay for broadband service. Attached is my favorite graphic to represent broadband in our region. The photo was taken outside of Huttonsville, West Virginia, a region considered the Potomac Highlands. It is a screenshot of my mom’s computer while we were working on a joint project where you can see the estimated download time of 45 hours. Although the photo was taken a little over a year ago, there has been no improvement in the region, and we have been paying full price for broadband.”

– Jenny Lancaster from Terzetto Creative, LLC, Barboursville, WV

### In a Black Hole

“AT&T [upset] me and I cancelled my wifi, and no one else services this area. I hate them. I would rather be in a black hole than give them my money.”

“I had Uverse and AT&T doubled my bill from \$29 to \$59 per month. When I complained the rudeness was beyond compare! They told me they didn't have to notify me [about the rate change]. I asked them to cancel my service because I would rather be in a black hole than give them my money. They didn't even care that I cancelled, they were like, ‘Alright. Done.’ I have been a customer for two years. They did this before once and I had to call several times to get it handled. I'm just not willing to put in the effort anymore since they don't even care to reciprocate loyalty. Their customer service needs immediate help. I have zero signal here and Sprint reception sucks too so I guess I'm in a black hole at home.”

– Julie Garcia, Round Rock, Texas

### Landlines are Lifelines

“In our community the landlines have not been working correctly for at least a week. We all thought it was our individual phones, but as neighbors have talked to each other it is bigger than that. I am luckier than most and can get a mobile signal from two rooms in my house. Windstream called [a week later] to let us know they are working on the problem with our phones. I am sure the problem is ten or more years of neglect and no investment. Landlines are lifelines. Does anyone really think any of the new technology will work during an extended power outage? It won't because mobile and VOIP will be out of juice.”

– Carol Miller from Ojo Sarco Community Center, Ojo Sarco, New Mexico

### **Free Wifi Spot is an Asset**

“Our broadband news is quite good because we receive it through our member-owned rural electric co-op. The Kit Carson Co-op is leading a fiber-over-powerline project funded with \$64 million from USDA (ARRA). The co-op has already installed a free wifi hotspot at the Ojo Sarco Community Center, where I am an officer. This hotspot is a real asset, as the price of Internet currently is over the budgets of many of the people in the village.”

– Carol Miller from Ojo Sarco Community Center, Ojo Sarco, New Mexico

### **Economic Progress in the Aridondacks**

“The difference between fake and real competition has been abundantly clear at my home in upstate New York. A decade ago there were no affordable options, there was satellite but it was expensive and just a bit above dialup. A couple of years later DSL arrived for a lot of money and at the minimum of the FCC definition of high speed. Then came the build-out of the cable system. DSL max speed went from 3 MB to 12 MB the next year at half the price. The build-out used some public subsidy and made it so that half a dozen small (1-3 employees) businesses are now running from our neighborhood. 8-10 jobs in a town with year around population of under 500 is real impact.”

– Marty Newell from the Center for Rural Strategies, Caroga Lake, NY

### **\*Denied Markets**

“We have been denied access to markets because of the lack of broadband.”

– Joyce Dearstyne from Framing Our Community, Inc., Elk City, Idaho

Elk City is a community nestled in the Nez Perce National Forest transitioning its economic base from timber to value added products, and struggling with the limitations that lack of broadband places on the transition.

### **\*Visionary Telephone Co-op**

“We have been very fortunate and lucky, our cooperative [Pioneer Telephone Cooperative] was definitively forward thinking.”

– Shiloh Sundstrom from Siuslaw Institute, Deadwood, Oregon

Pioneer Telephone Cooperative installed fiber cable throughout their area in the late 90s, which it started using 11 years ago. As a result, their service area including Deadwood, a town of 200 people, has enjoyed DSL service for about \$40 per month. Customers like Shiloh says this is “amazing” and notes that other communities who are not part of the cooperative are barely getting service.

*\*You can view this story on the **Rural Broadband Tales** site at:*

<http://placestories.com/project/7996#!v=stories>