

Faster Internet connections come to Cibola County

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
Friday, 24 March 2017 09:56



Sacred Wind wires the Village of Milan, Grants

The hot Internet access technology that delivers connection speeds many times faster than dial-up phone connections over the same type of wiring, made its way to the Village of Milan and Grants late last year.

Broadband is the new “thing” in those parts of Cibola County. Users can talk on the telephone without breaking their Internet connections.

“(Broadband) is simply high access speed to the Internet,” John Badal, chief executive officer at Sacred Wind, said.

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Sacred Wind installed the service at an undisclosed price.

“Download capacity, or speeds, enable customers to retrieve files, information and videos,” Badal said. “Speeds enable people to send out such files, information or videos.”

In explaining how broadband came to Cibola County, Badal said the Cibola County Economic Development Department and the state Department of Information Technologies, held a conference in Grants in 2013 during which the issue of lack of broadband throughout Cibola County was a primary topic with the various working groups. Marcela Sandoval, manager of the Village of Milan, attended the conference.

“Several broadband and other companies attended the conference, but no one offered solutions to the delivery of broadband to the area except Sacred Wind, recommending a federal U.S. Department of Agricultural grant,” Badal said.

Badal said that for about a year after the conference, Sacred Wind and the Village of Milan worked on the grant, and when the application failed, the Village used what it had learned through the application process to issue a Request For Proposals for fiber optic connectivity to Milan’s anchor institutions, including its industrial park.

“Sacred Wind won the (RFP) and within a few months had connected Milan’s administrative building and police department, its industrial park, Courthouse and new community computer center,” he said.

MILAN – A SMALL COMMUNITY MODEL

With respect to small communities, Milan serves as a model for one of the most “wired” small towns in New Mexico, Badal said. Not a lot of small towns can really afford the service.

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“Because the traditional providers of broadband in any city – the local telecom company, the local cable TV company, national mobile wireless carriers – bypass smaller, rural towns due to the lack of a sound business case, Milan needed to find a different type of business plan and partner,” Badal said. “Sacred Wind built a fixed wireless network surrounding all of Milan and Grants and now provides the highest speed broadband anywhere available in Cibola County.”

MILAN LOVES BROADBAND

“We had a great need because we did not have any reasonable broadband service in Milan,” Sandoval, the Village manager, said. “We did a survey and it was found that this would be a worthwhile venture. They (Sacred Wind) agreed that they would offer reasonable rates.”

Sandoval said she couldn’t comment on the number of subscribers currently served by Sacred Wind in Milan, but said the amount is “substantial.”

Those residents in Milan who do receive the new broadband are pleased.

“I like it and it goes fast and helps me do my homework,” Jerry Hernandez, 15, a student at Grants High School, said. “There really is a difference in speed.”

***By Bernie Dotson
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