



September 9th, 2024

An update from the Broadband Implementation Committee:

1. As of September 1st, 1,800 people have expressed interest in municipal broadband. This is about a 50% take rate which was our goal at a minimum. This means we will be moving forward to the next stage of the project. People can still sign up as interested, so please continue to urge your friends and neighbors to go to our website (www.easthaddamfiber.com) and click on the interested link.
2. Since they are starting to look weathered and worn, the large lawn signs scattered around town will be taken down soon. However, for those who have small lawn signs still on their property, you can keep them up if you wish.
3. The next stage of the project is to obtain funding for engineering and infrastructure costs. Unfortunately, our application for state grant money was denied by DEEP last month. We will continue to look for grant money, but we have started discussions with the federal government in order to apply for a USDA loan. As details of the specific loan program are finalized over the next few months, we will evaluate the impact the loan will have on cost to the consumer and make a final decision. Our goal is to keep prices below \$75 a month. We believe this will be achievable with a USDA loan, especially if the expected Federal Reserve interest rate reduction over the next few months becomes reality.
4. And now for some big news: On September 5th, it was reported that Verizon has agreed to purchase Frontier for \$20 billion. Our consultants at Entry Point advised us of this possibility over a year ago and it has now come to fruition. Just as they did in the cable internet business a few decades ago, these types of mergers will continue in the fiber optic internet business over the next decade until only about four or five "big fish" will have total control of the industry. This monopolistic system is one of the major reasons we began this project three years ago.

Again, thank you for your patience. We all wish municipal broadband could become operational tomorrow, but we need to be methodical as we navigate through a lot of moving parts. We will keep you advised of our efforts to acquire a USDA loan and any other major news that may occur.

Link to Verizon/Frontier merger news: <https://www.ctinsider.com/business/article/ct-frontier-verizon-broadband-acquisition-snet-19744717.php>

Tom Sevigny
Chair, Broadband Implementation Committee