

To: Jefferson Selectmen
From: Ingerson Road Property Owners - Julia Gilmore & Adam Bartley
Date: Monday, December 17, 2018
Re: Fiber Optic Internet Service

Problem: Lack of Fiber Optic Internet Service

We believe that fiber optic internet should be installed in the entire Town of Jefferson. While broadband and cable internet were both useful technologies of the past they are not as fast as fiber and should be considered interim measures at best. We are bringing this issue to the attention of the town because we understand that the cable contract will be up for renewal next year and we would like to see improvements in connectivity for the Town of Jefferson.

Back when the contract was initially negotiated it was understandable that the cable company focused on connecting residences on the main roads in Jefferson. However, that is no longer acceptable. All residences and businesses on all town maintained roads should have access to the same level of internet service.

How it is affecting me personally:

- I am a small business owner. Lack of internet service at my place of business is resulting in a loss of business.
- Without internet I have had a loss of communication with my family members including my elderly father in Florida.
- Due to outrageous cell phone fees incurred via long distance to Canada my son and I had planned to communicate via FaceTime, an Apple version of Skype, while he is at university in Toronto. However, this is obviously impossible without internet connection.
- Lastly, it is a great inconvenience and a source of embarrassment, as well as a waste of fuel and time, to get to a location where there is available public internet connection to conduct business.

How it is affecting the Town of Jefferson:

- The lack of fiber internet affects the education of the children and students of Jefferson. All students in Jefferson, residing on any town road should have the same level of internet connectivity. Without sufficiently fast internet they cannot access databases and online libraries, cannot watch informative videos, complete projects, stay abreast of current news and events nor can they take part in university level online courses. A majority of teachers now require that assignments be submitted online through various methods such as Google Classroom.
- Frank Edelblut, NH Commissioner of Education appointed by Chris Sununu has said, "Student access to high-speed connectivity is no longer an educational luxury. This includes connectivity and access devices both in school and when out of school." Here is a link to Mr. Edelblut's quote. <http://www.nheon.org/nhsci/>
- Governor Chris Sununu has stated that "It is clear that New Hampshire has made important strides in increasing bandwidth in our schools, providing students a 21st Century education and a pathway into a competitive American workforce." If Jefferson brings fiber optic internet service to town, it will prepare the students of Jefferson for the "American

workforce” as Mr. Sununu has stated, and bring their learning to a progressive “21st Century education.”

- It limits current AND future small businesses and business opportunities. Business in 2018 simply can not be conducted without internet at the level of fiber optic connectivity.
- The internet is no longer a luxury. Additional to the communication & educational issues stated previously the internet is required for safety. For example, I recently had a propane generator installed on our property. After physical installation of the unit, a document included with the unit stated that the generator can NOT “Start Automatically” without doing one of 3 procedures listed. All of these 3 procedures involved using WiFi internet connection to activate the generator. Thus, at an additional cost to myself I had to hire an electrician to activate the generator through a separate means not involving an internet connection.

Solutions:

- Private: Contact a privately owned Internet Service Provider company that installs fiber optic internet service for Jefferson. For example, Argent has successfully done this in the remote town of Milan. ECFiber is a private fiber optics installation company that provides “Fast, Reliable, and Affordable Internet for East-Central Vermont.” They currently have a network completion for 6 more towns in Vermont. Here is an online link to their website: <https://www.ecfiber.net>. Jefferson, in between Gorham and Lancaster is more centrally located on Route 2 and would make a valuable addition to their network
- Public: The Town creates their own network. There are some towns in New England that have started their own broadband networks. On May 30, 2018, Governor Chris Sununu signed bill SB 170, a bill that allows municipalities to bond for publicly owned Internet network infrastructure. Here is a link to an article regarding this bill on the Institute for Local Self Reliance website. <https://muninetworks.org/content/new-hampshire-sets-example-expands-local-authority-broadband-investment>
- Public: In Alford, Massachusetts the community has subscribed to Fiber-to-the-Premise (FTTP) Internet access from AlfordLink, their own municipal network. Here is a link to their journey to successful public access fiber optic internet connection: <https://ilsr.org/tiny-massachusetts-town-takes-a-stand-for-local-internet-access/>
- Grant Funded: There may be grant monies available through organizations such as the Tillotson Fund or the New Hampshire Charitable Fund.
- Combination of Private and Public

In conclusion, a century and a half ago, when the railroads expanded across the US they would approach your town offering to connect you with the world and the world with you. If you said no, your town died, fading into a ghost town. The modern equivalent of the railroad is connectivity to the internet.

Growing up in Gorham I had a lifelong dream to build a home in the highly regarded gem of the North Country - Jefferson, New Hampshire. That dream has come true. Subsequently, I have been dismayed to learn of the opinions of some residents that reside in surrounding towns regarding Jefferson’s reputation. Simply put it is that Jefferson has not progressed. Please, do not let the modern equivalent of the railroad pass our town by. We all need internet.