

Taghkanic Broadband Committee Report

All members of the Taghkanic Broadband Committee met on June 12, 2019. The members discussed topics for Broadband articles in the TGazette and Gtel's progress here.

Questions of the Committee

The members had questions for Frank Boscarillo of Gtel, which have since been answered:

— Will the Committee be able to visit the East Gallatin Hut?

Frank has assured us that we may visit. He or a colleague will be happy to show us the Hut and explain its use.

— We had heard at the Broadband Open House that about 2% of our town may not receive fiber from Gtel. What is this?

Frank explained that they have not received State Funding for all census blocks. Some of these unawarded census blocks might not be eligible for service. We are looking for further clarification as to where these census blocks are located.

— While we understand that Gtel will install first 300 feet of fiber from a pole to a house for free, how much will it cost for more than 300 feet?

After 300 feet, the homeowner will pay \$1.20 per foot for the fiber plus hourly costs for the installation. Work by one technician costs \$60 per hour and two technicians cost \$120 per hour. The average cost for homes beyond the 300 feet has been \$400. The greatest cost has been \$1,500 for a large estate on the Hudson River. Frank also noted that customers may engage the company on a time and materials basis for other services, such as hooking up a television set or simple smart home systems.

— How do installation costs relate to back poles?

Back poles are utility poles not located on a public road, for instance poles through the woods. These poles are more expensive to maintain, sometimes requiring tracked vehicles to access them. The State Grants do not cover installation from back poles. However, Gtel's current policy is to start the free first 300 feet of installation from the nearest pole, be it a back pole or a road pole.

Gtel Update

In the last month, Gtel has run eight miles of fiber in Gallatin and Taghkanic. National Grid has been completing make-ready on its poles more quickly than before and there are now 300 poles in make-ready. Response from National Grid has dramatically improved. Pole license applications that used to take several weeks are now completed in two. Gallatin now has 30 miles of fiber installed and will have 400 eligible customers within three weeks. As the town most distant from Germantown, Taghkanic will be next.

In Taghkanic, drilling is beginning under the Taghkanic State Parkway. That will be followed by the third boring just south of Route 82. Residents are reporting more sightings of Gtel trucks in Taghkanic.

As before, Gtel is working in Taghkanic and Broadband is coming closer. So far as we know, those who have Mid-Hudson already have fiber and Consolidated Communications is now installing it in the small area of Taghkanic it covers.

Mapping Funds

The Register Star recently reported that Representative Antonio Delgado has obtained funding for more accurate Broadband mapping in rural areas. This may help us with the continuing mapping problems that we have experienced in Columbia County since these Broadband projects have begun here.

Arthur McGuire
Chairman
July 8, 2019