

Partial upgrade in Pembroke

Verizon workers install all-fiber network

By Valerie Kroon
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Want to know what all those Verizon trucks are doing around town, with their workers high up in the wires along Pembroke? Selectmen wanted to know, and got the information at their meeting Monday.

Richard Colon, Verizon's regional director for external affairs, met with the board to explain what the company is doing, and what is planned for the future.

Workers are installing a 100 percent all-fiber network, in what the company calls its Fiber to the Premise Project. The project, currently in its fourth year, is covering 16 states and will cost Verizon \$23 billion through the year 2010. Colon said that Verizon is the only company in the United States using 100 percent fiber, a material producing "unprecedented speeds and is revolutionizing the industry."

Colon's original letter to Town Administrator Edwin Thorne explains what the project's new technology will be able to accomplish.

"This 100 percent, all-fiber network offers crystal-clear, low-maintenance voice connections, lightning-fast broadband connections, and the ability to carry video signals over a single strand of fiber," he wrote.

The company is in various stages of building the network in 77 communities in Massachusetts.

Because Verizon began building the network in Hanover in 2006, the project will include areas of Pembroke with 826 or 829 telephone exchanges. This means that the Hanover switching station will serve approximately 2,000 households in the area served by these exchanges, most likely by the end of summer, Colon said.

The services initially offered

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would be Verizon's FiOS voice and data services, or Internet service with speeds of 20 and 50 megawatts. At some point in the future, Colon said Verizon is hoping to become a competitor in the cable television market. He said that that has already happened in Dedham, where the town formerly had two cable licensees and now, with Verizon, it has three.

"It offers consumers a real competitive price," Colon said. "This is what takes place in a truly competitive community."

The switching station in Bryantville, hosting telephone exchanges of 293 and 294, is servicing two-thirds of

Pembroke Verizon customers, but Colon said there is no starting date planned yet for when the project will begin in those sections of town.

Selectman Arthur Boyle asked if the company would offer community access programming similar to what is now offered by Comcast if Verizon brings competitive cable service to Pembroke.

Boyle said this programming is very important to the community, airing public meetings and featuring local cable shows.

"Verizon is committed to keeping public access programming."

"It's all about negotiations,"

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