

Belden Woods Estates – June 2020 Newsletter

Latest Information Regarding High(er) Speed Internet in Our Neighborhood

Here is an update on June 21st, 2020 from Bob Olsen regarding high speed Internet in our community:

Jeff Powell and I attended a Franklin Co. Council meeting last week where one of the agenda items was a hearing on the construction of 8 broadband towers by Blue Ridge Towers. The State had originally provided \$39 million to fund a private public partnership with Blue Ridge and Shentel to extend broadband in Franklin Co. Because of Covid the State redirected \$20 M to deal with Covid. With the \$19 M the funding is providing for the new 8 towers and Shentel extension of service on Coopers Cove Rd. to Rte 116. Result is no new tower or cable service reaches our community and will not until there is more grant \$ from the State. I spoke at the hearing expressed our concerns about Verizon abandoning our communities for DSL service, I was given approval to speak for Windy Gap Mtn. Village by their president, and no service provided in current funding. After the meeting we spoke to our Council rep and discussed what we he or we could do to expedite this issue. He agreed to look into what Verizon is doing and suggested we contact our State reps, Senators Stanley and Seutterlein and Delegates Byron and Poindexter, to ask they reinstate the grant funding this session since not all of the diverted funding was used. A rep. from Blue Ridge Towers took our contact info and said he would look at our situation. We also asked that they approach Shentel to see if they would look at going overhead on AEP poles to get to our community. If that happened, we would have justify to them the value of underground service to both communities. Some communities have agreed to pay surcharges to offset their capital costs. The surcharge would be significantly less than the savings we would see for access to triple play plans provided by Shentel. The status is we are in a non-service area until there is more grant funding or Shentel can be attracted by some incentive. If we hear anything back from this meeting, we will let you know but we can at least contact our State reps and express our concerns.