

Thursday July 1, 2010 Phone transition not going smoothly for a few customers

by **George Hohmann**
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CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- The transition from Verizon's landline network to Frontier Communications Corp. went smoothly for all but a few West Virginia customers.

Some customers reported that their caller ID didn't work and there was a report that attempts to use a landline to call a cell phone number resulted in either a "fast -busy" signal or a false automated message that said the cell phone number was no longer in service.

Both of those problems may have been related to a couple of situations where Verizon customers who had been served by out -of-state facilities were being switched to in -state facilities.

Frontier Communications Manager Karen Miller said the cutover from Verizon to Frontier was going very well. She said Frontier hadn't received any reports of problems with caller ID but was looking into it.

"However, we did find that Verizon had a problem" on Wednesday with some calls being made from landlines to cell phones, she said.

Frontier brought 250 employees from out of state to West Virginia to help resolve any issues that crop up.

David Armentrout, president and chief operating officer of FiberNet, said his company had 15 circuits in Ridgeley and Wiley Ford that had been served out of Cumberland, Md., that had to be "re -homed" to a central office in Keyser.

"Some have been out of service for several days and they're still out of service," he said Thursday morning. But Thursday afternoon Armentrout said those problems had been fixed.

Regarding "re-homed" customers, Frontier spokeswoman Christy Reap said, "Over the past couple of weeks there have been customers, one or two at a time, who needed a new cable drop or there was a records mismatch -- things like that. But nothing related to Frontier."

Armentrout said Thursday morning that his company had technicians standing around, unable to get into co-location sites to make service installations, repairs or upgrades because security passes didn't work. Thursday afternoon he said, "The access issue has been addressed and is being resolved today."

Early Thursday, FiberNet was unable to process trouble tickets. But that problem was also resolved by Thursday afternoon.

Frontier has been very responsive to our concerns and issues," Armentrout said. "Certainly we have seen a better response from them than (we had) historically with Verizon.

"They (Frontier) are working on it and cooperating very well."

Frontier has about 2,100 employees in West Virginia, including workers who were employed by Verizon until Thursday.

Frontier, which already served more than 144,000 customers in 38 West Virginia counties, acquired about 617,000 landlines in 47 counties from Verizon.

It was the largest telecommunications deal in West Virginia's history. It involved landlines in a total of 14 states and was valued at \$8.6 billion.

Frontier issued a press release that said the transaction "positions Frontier as the largest pure rural telecommunications carrier in the United States."

As a result of the all-stock deal, Verizon stockholders now collectively own about 68 percent of Frontier's common stock.

Frontier's stock trades on the New York Stock Exchange under the ticker symbol "FTR." The company is headquartered in Stamford, Conn.

Frontier's new Southeast Region headquarters is at 1500 MacCorkle Ave. in Charleston, in the building that formerly housed Verizon's West Virginia headquarters.

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July 21, 2010 FRONTIER PROBLEMS

Local Business Having Major Problems Since Frontier Switch

Reported by: [✉Darrah Wilcox](#)

Videographer: Chad Hypes

Web Producer: Darrah Wilcox

Reported: Jul. 21, 2010 12:35 PM EDT

Updated: Jul. 21, 2010 12:45 PM EDT

Just three weeks into their takeover of Verizon customers, Frontier is feeling some heat from local customers.

Fruth Pharmacy is one of those unsatisfied customers.

They say just after the switch this month, they had a n outage that lasted more than 39 hours in their 25 stores.

They were unable to consult insurance companies through their online system, and many other compliance checks they have to go through to fill a prescription.

There have also been outages on at least four other days this month.

Fruth employees say they've been given the run-around with frontier blaming verizon and vice versa. Employees say they are getting extremely frustrated.

Pharmacist in charge at the Summers Street location Sam Arco say s, "Without that kind of connection, we're just incapacitated. We just cannot do anything basically. It's really, really an inconvenience to us and also to our customers, and that's who our main concern is."

Chairman of the board Lynne Fruth says she tol d Frontier, "This is completely unacceptable. We are a health care provider. People are counting on us for their medication, for things that they cannot do without."

Fruth says she has filed a formal complaint with the Public Service Commission.

Several other business owners and residential customers who have had major service problems in the past couple weeks have emailed Eyewitness News.

We are waiting on a formal statement from Frontier Communications, but a spokesperson told us over the phone that any customers experiencing problems should call their customer service hotline for help.

EYEWITNESS ONLINE WEBCAST VIDEO
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Frontier claims overtime is needed: Problems force telecom company to work employees up to 70 hours a week

Posted on: Wed, 28 Jul 2010 13:05:49 EDT

Symbols: [FTRw](#)

Jul 28, 2010 (Charleston Daily Mail - McClatchy-Tribune Information Services via COMTEX) –

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -Frontier Communications Corp. said it is requiring unionized employees in West Virginia to work overtime so the company can take care of urgent problems.

The company acquired Verizon's landline networks in West Virginia and 13 other states on July 1. FiberNet, a Charleston-based competitor, immediately complained that some trouble tickets were not being resolved in a timely manner.

Last week FiberNet claimed Frontier's operational support system is so bad the state Public Service Commission should re-open the case that allowed Frontier to buy Verizon's network. Frontier has not yet replied to FiberNet's petition and the commission has not yet acted.

On July 9, Frontier notified the Communications Workers of America of an "emergency and longterm service difficulty" - labor contract language that allows Frontier to require unionized employees to work up to 70 hours of overtime a week.

Frontier has about 2,100 employees in West Virginia, including many who are union members that previously worked for Verizon.

An anonymous e-mailer wrote the Daily Mail to say that some employees are overstressed, including some older workers "who are having a very difficult time coping with 70-hour weeks, especially those who work outside in this unbearable heat. "Frontier employees are willing to help the company succeed, but this is not the way to proceed," the e-mailer wrote. "It is alienating employees and showing a total lack of respect for their mental and physical well-being. Their family lives are suffering and the company doesn't seem to care at all."

Frontier spokesman Steve Crosby said that if an employee has a specific need and can't work the required overtime, "they need to work with their manager to work through the accommodation."

Crosby said he doesn't know how many employees have been required to work overtime since July 9 or how much overtime West Virginia employees have worked. He said the union might have that information.

Union spokeswoman Elaine Harris said, "They're telling people they have to work up to 30 hours of overtime, for a total of 70 hours. That's a requirement. I don't have a breakdown but a lot of people are being asked and required to work that. They (Frontier) should be able to answer that."

Harris said the fact the company had declared an emergency and invoked mandatory overtime was the reason she objected a few weeks ago when Frontier required employees to attend a series of speeches around the state by Chief Executive Officer Maggie Wilderotter.

"The company said they were declaring an emergency and we were saying, 'Wait a minute – an emergency is for things like floods,'" Harris said.

"We've had quality of service issues in the past with Verizon. "We do have a difference in opinion on what's an emergency, what's a service quality issue in the collective bargaining agreement," Harris said.

"We'll handle those issues through the grievance and arbitration process if necessary. We believe the company has not properly applied the contract. It should be storms, acts of God - not normal service issues."

"I don't want to come across as uncaring about the customers because we do care," Harris said. "But there has to be a balance here. People are tired. There is the heat."

Under the contract, "Employees can tell the company they have a reasonable excuse" and be excused from overtime, she said. "Some employees may coach their kids' ball teams or have something to do with family. Initially they (Frontier) put it out that they weren't accepting family issues or childcare. I went back to them and they said they would look at those things. I've been on the phone telling them we expect them to honor reasonable excuses."

Crosby said that in addition to unionized employees working overtime, "we have management and other people who are non-union who are working equal or more hours and they're not paid overtime. They're just working hard and diligently to make sure the work that needs done in West Virginia and other states is being done appropriately and as fast as it can be done."

"This is not 'us vs. them,'" Crosby said. This is a 'we.' We are the team, all working very long hours to make sure we're doing the right thing for customers in West Virginia and other states."

"The (unionized) men and women in West Virginia are getting paid for overtime. It's not like we're not paying them for their work. I would think getting paid overtime is a nice reward."

Crosby said he is among those working long hours and not getting paid overtime. "In this economy I'm going to continue to work as much as I need to," he said. "I do the work to do the right thing for the company, the customer."

He said the company asked non-union employees in other states to come to West Virginia to help during the transition and 250 volunteered. "We have a lot of folks who came down for eight weeks who are not looking for reasons to leave. They're looking to get the work done."

"The bottom line is we're trying to run a business, satisfy the customer, do what's right for the state," Crosby said. "So you have certain provisions in the collective bargaining agreement. In terms of the emergency provision, we have it in the collective bargaining contract so we can fix the things that need to be fixed immediately."

Frontier spokeswoman Brigid Smith said the date the emergency declaration will end "depends upon reducing the backlog of troubles, orders and other requests that we inherited at cut-over from Verizon and that continue due to a variety of factors." Smith said those factors include:

-- Long-term service difficulties, as evidenced by the Public Service Commission's recent investigation of Verizon's service quality.

-- Network degradation events such as cable outages and repeated thefts of copper cable, especially in Logan County.

"We also need a change for the better in the severely hot weather and thunderstorms that are hitting so much of the state," she said.

Although Frontier has invoked mandatory overtime, "safety is paramount," Smith said.

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