

January 2, 2023 - The November 'Timber Harvesting Storm' gets a Solution

Never again should such a storm shutdown portions of our network! During the weeks of work to rebuild our mainline fiber cable that is hung on many PUD utility poles from E. Beach south (there were 7 breaks just along E. Marrowstone Road), We developed and implemented a solution that is now fully operational.

Before getting into that solution, I need to share what we have learned in the past 6+ years of running our fiber system on Marrowstone. Although fiberoptic cable has great bandwidth carrying capability it breaks very easily. The only truly safe way to use fiber to distribute communications services on Marrowstone is to bury the system not hang it on utility poles. I made an error of judgement a few years ago by choosing to use a fiber run from Robbins Road & Beach all the way down Robbins continuing north the length of E. Marrowstone to E. Beach to supply the bandwidth for Nordland and Griffith Point. The price was paid in the November storm for that decision...

Now, the solution: Over the past two years, we have made huge capacity improvements over at our transmitter sites on Whidbey Island. Also, the radio systems we use have gained reliable capacity to handle fiber speed bandwidth between Whidbey and Marrowstone. While still doing repairs to the fiber mainline from that November storm, we engineered, tested and installed a new 'point to point' broadband radio link that now feeds the Nordland & Griffith Point areas instead of the fiber from the south island. Unaffected by our winter storms like fiber hung on poles, it just works!

But, we have gone a step further and configured our system that distributes Internet to Nordland & Griffith Point to automatically switch between the new radio feed and the old fiber feed! This automatic fail-over concept can be used by folks at home/office...

In fact, Marrowstone Wireless is in process of developing a simple add-on subsystem to do just that; serve to automatically switch between two or more Internet sources to connect your home/office during outages.

We have a few clients with home power generators and multiple Internet sources that they switch between manually even now. One such client has both our radio and fiber services. Another has StarLink and our radio service. A third uses our fiber and other satellite Internet services (in fact this client has been bugging me to figure out how to switch between them automatically). Stay tuned for a new service/product announcement from Marrowstone Wireless along these lines in the near future!

Peace, David
David G. Brader, President, MACaid, Inc. dba Marrowstone Wireless