

Frontier makes fiber upgrades to Valley

Jason McMillen
IVN Contributing Writer

After years of abysmal internet connection rates and instability a great deal of the Illinois Valley is finally going to make a huge step forward into the digital age. Frontier Communications reported that they are currently in the process of upgrading their servers with fiber optic cable and soon those that use, or are forced to use,

their services will be better connected to the internet and the world. "We've been in the process for almost two and a half years," said Joel Walter local manager for the area.

"We added a lot of bandwidth from where we were at before," Walter stated before explaining that the main issue was extreme congestion at peak hours. Essentially, what Walter said was that the "pipe" wasn't

big enough for everyone to use simultaneously. For some customers, in addition to more reliable and faster connections for basic plans, there will be faster plans to sign up for at additional cost. Frontier's sales team is currently in the process of contacting customers who are eligible for an upgrade.

"The target is for mid-February for everything to be completed and on the new circuit," Walter stated.

As far as the waiting list is concerned it highly depends on a person's location but with that being said "the largest majority of the caps are coming off."

"We moved Cave Junction over on the new system and we're transferring the O'Brien and Selma areas over onto the same circuit," Walter explained, "The process of getting that all changed out and everything took quite a while. Plus the

engineering projects. We upgraded 10 sites between Cave Junction and O'Brien." In addition, Walter noted funding issues and technical hurdles to overcome which included changing network pathways and the overall engineering scheme so that upgrading the system was even possible. "In this area they had a lot of copper fed sites," Walter said, "The problem is we had to change all those areas into fiber fed

so that we can support the higher bandwidth." Unfortunately for some, the last two miles or so of the network will still be using copper as opposed to fiber optic cable. However, those users will enjoy better and more reliable service on account of the increased bandwidth available. Congestion will be much less of an issue for all users.

Childcare class fills 2 needs in Valley

Judy Hoyle
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Child care is an important, but unmet need in the Illinois Valley. Those interested in earning certification in this micro-business opportunity are encouraged to attend a free presentation from 10 a.m. to noon on Feb. 11 at the I.V. branch of Josephine Community Libraries, 209 Palmer St. in Cave Junction. Free child care is available with advance registration.

This introductory session will explain the different levels of certification required to provide paid child care and will feature a presentation by Michelle Gallas of Imagine That! Creative Children's Center. Gallas will discuss the joys and hurdles of running a child care business.

Participants who chose to

pursue training will be required to take four classes, all provided in the Illinois Valley. Some next-step classes, such as Infant CPR will require fees, but help with the cost is available.

Graduates of the course who become fully certified will be welcome to join the I.V. Child Care Business Cohort.

This project is one of the first developments generated by the Illinois Valley Community Development Organization's (IVCanDO) I.V. 20/20 Community Vision & Strategic Plan.

IVCanDO plans to fill other gaps in local services by offering a Senior Support Business Cohort and a Small Lodging Business Cohort later this year.

"There is currently no licensed or certified child care available in the Illinois Valley," said Kate Dwyer, IVCanDO's Community

Development Coordinator. "Establishing child care solutions is an action item in the Strategic Plan."

Dwyer feels traveling to Grants Pass or Medford for this training presents a barrier for would-be entrepreneurs.

Through IVCanDO's microloan program, cohort members can also receive free business counseling and can apply for low-interest loans to start their businesses.

People who are currently providing child care without certification can feel safe attending the training to learn how to become legal.

"No one here is looking to turn in casual operators," said Dwyer. "Barring evidence of abuse or a dire lack of safety, it's none of our business what folks are doing now. We are here to help people become legitimate businesses."

The Feb. 11 introductory class

is also open to people who work in family agencies or job placement to learn more about this sector so they can better advise their clients.

Dwyer is connecting the dots between what services are available and what is needed in the Valley.

"It's unique that we are bringing the classes here, and tying them to business counseling and financial assistance. We want local people to succeed while serving local needs," she said.

The Child Care Business Cohort project is funded through a grant from the Oregon Community Foundation and will be offered through a multi-agency partnership.

Staff members from the Child Care Resource Network (CCRN) will be teaching the four session course. CCRN is part of the Southern Oregon Education Service District.

The I.V. Business Development

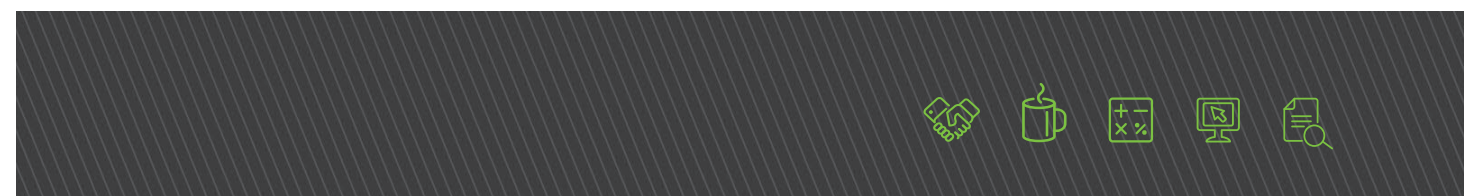
Center (IVBEC) will be offering business skills enhancement, counseling and loan-readiness training.

IVBEC is in itself a partnership between IVCanDO and the Small Business Development Center of Rogue Community College.

In addition, Josephine County Planning has agreed to advise and assist the new child care business owners on how to alter their homes to be in compliance with state standards.

Dwyer said, "We are all working together to solve the Valley's child care gap while growing local business success."

To register for the Feb. 11 introductory class, call IVBEC at 541-956-7400. For more information, visit Facebook.com/ivcd. The I.V. 20/20 Community Vision & Strategic Plan is available at www.ivcd.org.




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