

A letter from Verizon Wireless

To the Warm Springs Tribe and area residents:

Verizon Wireless recently bought Unicel, a wireless carrier that successfully served rural areas of the U.S., particularly in eastern Oregon, eastern Washington and northern Idaho.

In Unicel, Verizon Wireless acquired a quality company, great wireless network and loyal customers, especially on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation and nearby cities of Redmond and Bend.

The two companies share a similar approach, emphasizing strong customer service and a reliable network. However our network technologies were different, requiring a significant conversion.

Without getting into the details of wireless technology platforms, Unicel and Verizon Wireless have unique network systems to complete cell phone calls, send text messages, download music and access the Internet.

Each system requires different equipment, from the antennas at the cell sites to the internal parts of phones and mobile broadband devices. In short, converting Unicel and its customers to Verizon Wireless standards in central Oregon requires time, effort and equipment.

We realize there has been some confusion over

the personal impact of this change and apologize for any inconvenience that has resulted.

We will live up to our hard-earned reputation as America's largest and most reliable wireless network.

To help with the conversion from Unicel to Verizon Wireless last weekend, we provided local on-site support with a team of Verizon Wireless employees assisting residents of Warm Springs starting on Sunday, April 5th and continuing for several days this week.

The team helped make equipment corrections on site, answering customer concerns to improve wireless connections on the reservation. In addition, customers can receive service at retail stores in Redmond and Bend.

Perhaps you've seen one of the portable Verizon Wireless cell sites on the reservation. We call them COLTs, which stands for Cell On Light Truck. These COLTs are temporarily enhancing coverage for Verizon Wireless customers at Ka-Nee-Tah and much of the Warm Springs reservation, helping to connect phone calls.

Eventually, there will be permanent cell sites. Those of you with PDAs or smartphones may already be noticing the Web, email,

music and video speeds are much faster on the Verizon Wireless network. Over time, the size, speed and capacity of the network will grow in north central Oregon.

To ensure coverage during emergencies such as wildfires and windstorms, our cell sites will be equipped with back-up generators to maintain communications, even during a power outage.

Our commitment to network reliability makes Verizon Wireless a frequent partner with firefighters and law enforcement. During wildfire season in the West, the company regularly provides phones and portable cell sites to help firefighters communicate in remote areas, saving lives and protecting property.

We appreciate your business and encourage those of you who have yet to switch to Verizon Wireless to learn more about our best in class devices and superior network. If you do, you'll be surprised at how much you can accomplish, whether you're a teenager or a senior citizen. We appreciate your business.

Thank you for your patience.

Kelley Kurtzman,
President, Verizon Wireless,
Pacific Northwest Region.