

Cook's Farm and Bakery
793 Fuller
Road
VT 05051

Newbury,

April 10, 2018

Ms. Alma Royston
Newbury Selectboard
PO Box 126
Newbury, VT 05051

Dear Ms. Royston,

As the Town of Newbury works to provide high-speed internet for its residents, I am writing to express my family's need for this service for our business. My wife and I own a small farm and bake shop in Newbury, VT named Cook's Farm and Bakery, and due to our rural location, we rely on the internet for sales, marketing, and communication with vendors. However, due to the unreliable internet service that we have currently, we have been hesitant to expand our business and online store, which has prevented our business from working up to its potential. It is very difficult for small businesses in our area to be competitive with larger businesses in more populated settings. Therefore, if we are unable to keep up with online marketing, we may not be able to retain staff. If, however, we could develop a greater online presence and sales were to increase with high-speed internet, we could envision adding another full-time employee within the next three years.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter and your work developing resources to keep Newbury's businesses viable in our quickly changing market landscape.

Sincerely,



Simeon Cook

Owner of Cook's Farm and Bakery

(802) 429-2582

simeoncook@pivot.net

To Whom It May Concern,

My family lived in Newbury for 11 years, raising two children, and loving our life there. When it was time for the kids to start college, I needed to find a job that paid more than the occasional house-sitting I'd been doing in Vermont (ah, the joys of tuition!). I found a well-paid web development position in Massachusetts that allowed me to work from home. It was the best of both worlds ... until I actually tried to work from home.

The only options we had for internet were dial-up, DSL, and satellite. We had used satellite during our first few years in Newbury, because DSL wasn't available at our house. After that abysmal experience, the moment DSL became available, we jumped at the opportunity - despite the fact that it was over-priced and consistently under-delivered.

The poor quality connectivity wasn't much of a problem when I was doing small-scale web development for myself and friends. It became a HUGE problem, however, when I started as a full-time employee working on an enterprise-scale site that required frequent remote testing of a high-throughput system. The lag in the DSL connection resulted in frequent loss of connection mid-transaction, making it literally impossible to do my job.

I tried to find ways to continue to work in the area, by, for example, visiting libraries and cafes with cable wi-fi. Unfortunately, libraries are often open for limited hours, and their internet connections tend to be somewhat slow, since their networks are not designed for high throughput. The same is true for cafes. Additionally, such venues are not designed for deep concentration - there are people coming & going, talking with one another, stopping by to say hello, and so on, which reduces productivity almost as much as a laggy internet connection.

After a few months of trying to make it work, I had to give up. We eventually bought a house in Massachusetts - with high speed internet. I can do my work from here without worrying about having to start all over due to dropped packets.

In the interim, our son, a computer engineering major at RIT has started working on a cancer detecting deep learning system for a lab at Harvard Medical School, which requires using remote servers to do high-speed computing. It would be utterly impossible for him to do that work from Newbury, due to the lack of broadband. I can't speak to whether he'd want to move back, but I know he couldn't do his current job from there.

I'm guessing you can sense a trend here: it's not possible to do serious internet-based software development in Newbury, unless you're in one of the sharply limited locations with cable.

As for myself, I would move back to Newbury in a heartbeat if it were an option, but it's not an option without broadband, so I'm stuck in Massachusetts. I will be thrilled to no end when the Newbury REDInet project is complete.

Sincerely,
Liane Allen

14 Erhardt Terrace
Methuen, MA
(Formerly 1437 Jefferson Hill Rd, Newbury)

4/15/18

Brad P. Vietje
7262 Scotch Hollow Road
South Ryegate, VT 05069

April 5, 2018

Town Of Newbury Selectboard
Alma Roystan, Chair
4982 Main Street South
Newbury, VT 05051

Dear Ms. Roystan,

I am writing to express my strong support for a fiber optic broadband network in Newbury, and my commitment to establish a home-based business when it is built.

As the Clerk of the Newbury REDI District, it will come as no surprise that I'm a strong supporter of the project. However, my interest is professional, as well as personal. I have two completely different areas of interest, one to help sustain my current employment, and the other to build a business at home.

I currently work part-time teaching Physics and Astronomy through the Northeast Kingdom Astronomy Foundation, in Peacham, VT. (www.nkaf.org) We operate a very nice astronomical observatory where we teach students how to conduct research in Astronomy in particular, and about the value of science, in general. The observatory can be operated via remote or even fully robotic control (one of very few in the country), but a great deal of my involvement involves teaching classes or mentoring college students in their research projects, operating the observatory from my home, while communicating with students via Skype or other digital media. My current DSL is barely fast enough to handle this load, but only if no one else is on-line. If my wife turns on her computer, it all slows down so much that communication is difficult, and delays and disconnections are common. This is not only very frustrating for me and the students, but can put some very expensive equipment at risk, as well. With true broadband access (at least 25 mbps, symmetrical), this work could continue. My current connection (7 mbps down, and 1 mbps up) is just not keeping pace with the needs of the web, and the situation is getting steadily worse. Without enough bandwidth, my opportunities for billable hours teaching Physics and Astronomy will be greatly reduced.

One of the other hats I wear is wood turning, and wood turning instruction. Over the past 20 years, I've become an advanced wood turner, and have been an invited demonstrator at numerous woodturning conferences and workshops in the northeast. I've been doing this at the amateur level, but have plans to join the ranks of professional turners, but access to high speed internet is essential.

There are two main ways to pay the bills as a professional wood turner: making and selling products, or teaching the craft to others. The former is very tough – like making it to the major leagues in baseball. Teaching is the way to go, and these days, broadband access and live streaming is essential, so this is not currently possible where I live. With access to fiber optic broadband-to-the-premises, my plans become possible.

The plan is basically 3-fold:

1. Build an on-line following with free YouTube instructional video clips. Target is 5000 subscribers within the first year.
2. With at least 2000+ subscribers, offer weekly live-stream instructional videos to a paid global audience. Live stream access would typically be limited to a class size of 25 to 50 attendees, who would pay for exclusive access and the ability to ask questions live during the class.
3. Teach small classes or 1:1 instruction at my shop here in Newbury.

Live-stream broadcasts require much better upload speeds than are currently available where I live. While limited live-stream video can work at ~10 mbps upload, 20mbps is recommended for high resolution and smooth streaming. Without broadband access, I won't be able to start this at-home. I may be able to attract a few local customers for one-on-one instruction, but access to a wider customer base depends very heavily on a strong on-line presence.

I've been able to post a few instructional videos, but my DSL connection has been severely limiting. One short video on YouTube has over 50,000 views*, so it proves the concept. A much nicer version was published by the American Association of Woodturners, but after several failed attempts to upload the video in short segments, I ended up mailing a thumb drive to their art department for editing**. With high-speed internet and a small investment in video and editing equipment, I'd be ready to go.

I fully support the build-out of a fiber-to-the-home broadband network, and I'll even commit to starting a local at-home business when it becomes a reality.

Sincerely,



Brad P. Vietje

* self-edited version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1bpAMEglWY>

** cleaned-up (better) version: <https://vimeo.com/142137240>

April 2, 2018

Alma Roystan, Selectboard Chair
Town of Newbury, VT
PO Box 126
Newbury, VT 05051

Dear Ms. Roystan,

Thank you on behalf of the Newbury REDInet board for championing our efforts to bring reliable, affordable, high speed internet to Newbury's businesses and residents.

As you know, Newbury REDInet is unable to move forward without a detailed engineering study from Consolidated Communications in order to help determine the feasibility of the project. We also cannot move forward without a business plan to take to potential investors. We are hopeful that you will be successful in your application for a USDA Rural Business Development Grant, by which you will contract for the completion of these projects to support our emerging business as the high speed internet provider for our town.

A well-planned fiber network in Newbury would prove not only a boon for local businesses but an opportunity for Newbury REDInet to create 1-2 local jobs as well. At the very least, a full-time office manager will be needed to run the day-to day business operations of the network, such as accounts payable/receivable and subscriber services. A part-time field technician could be employed hourly to facilitate "last mile" connections as well as provide on-call technical support. And finally, our long range goal is to have what we consider the "special sauce" of our Newbury model: someone available (contracted hourly) to work closely with businesses and residents to make sure they take full advantage of the power and opportunities high speed internet will afford them.

We are excited about the prospects this project creates for revitalizing Newbury's economy. Thank you for supporting this effort.

Sincerely,


Claude Phipps
Newbury REDInet Chair