

**Mayor's column for  
The Beacon  
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Here's the weekly report on my switch from Comcast to Verizon for all my communications needs.

Verizon is all about email communications. They sent me confirmations about the new service, the install date, and a video about how it all is going to go down. The installation is scheduled to take between four to six hours. Now I know why a "responsible adult" has to be on the scene. They also sent my order number, with which I can enter a drawing online. I tried several times to enter, but my number was rejected as being nonexistent. That worries me a little bit. They also left two voicemails reminding us of the installation, which should ease my fears.

I came home from work on Monday, four days before the scheduled install date to find a double-sided info sheet about how Verizon's subcontractor is coming in the next few days to run the fiber line from the street to my house. We have underground wiring so they will dig up my garden and maybe the concrete. Not to worry, the memo says—they will make sure it's as good as new when they're finished.

There is a little note that says the homeowner should call the folks who locate underground utilities and have them identify where all my "stuff" is. "Stuff" being power lines, cable, water line, sewer, gas line, sprinkler system, and anything else I don't want ripped into.

The next day I found that the "locate company" had marked my existing utilities with their colorful paint (guaranteed to wash away over time). I must say they were very cautious and tried to avoid pavement. Of all the necessary things a homeowner should do, this might be the most important. There's a lot of infrastructure in our dirt, and it needs to be protected from the boring machine.

Wednesday morning the "diggers" showed up. They hand dug down my driveway, carefully avoiding any belowground piping or wires; they actually chose the opposite side of the driveway from where all my other utilities were buried. Then they bored under the driveway and sidewalk. They laid the fiber line in place, buried it, and were gone in less than two hours. Other than the colorful remains from the locate company, there were no signs of digging or anything being out of place. A very nice job.

Next came installation day. Prep work on my part included making the decision as to whether the large box should be mounted on the inside or outside, where the battery backup should be located in the garage, and making certain there was an outlet nearby. Oh, and making sure the installer could actually find a path through my garage to do this work.

A router needed to be installed next to my computer, and my two HD TV's required boxes to receive the HD signal. They have a monthly fee attached to them, by the way, and one of them, the DVR box, was free for six months as part of the deal. One thing I didn't pick up on when I ordered service was that all other non-HD TV's using the Verizon system also required boxes;

smaller, but also carrying a monthly charge. I'll admit to a little trepidation about what my monthly charge might be this time next year!

Using existing cable in my house, the hookups went smoothly. Total install time about three hours.

Now, let's see...a new remote, new programming, new computer instructions...

Next week: was the new product worth the effort?