

**Mayor's column for
The Beacon
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Here are a couple of comments following up on the Verizon install. If you decide to go this direction, make sure that you do have that "responsible" adult home at that time. I had to help the installer take my TV off the wall to repair a broken cable, and he couldn't have done it by himself. There also was a minor glitch with the phone service switchover, but he quickly fixed it. He programmed the computer and there was little for me to do except hit the power button. An added benefit was that all TVs work off a Verizon remote and they were all programmed for each TV in the house. The DVR box looked identical to Comcast's box and took up the same amount of space.

As many of you have seen, Verizon came out with a better offer on the day before my installation was scheduled. The biggest change in their offer was a two-year price guarantee. I called and asked if I could have that since my installation wasn't implemented yet. After some conversation, they agreed to do so, but I had to give up the free six months of the DVR box, value \$120. But then they replaced that with \$150 cash back (also part of their new offer). There were some other minor changes, but the customer service rep was accommodating. My first bill should be an interesting read. City staff says the number-one complaint we have received is about Verizon's billing practices, so we'll see. That might be a column in and of itself!

While I still haven't had the time to check out all the features Verizon offers, I have been happy with the product. The picture on HD channels is very clear. I must say that I was happy with Comcast's HD picture as well. I do notice that the picture on non-HD channels on my older TVs is much improved. I believe that is due to the fiber coming right to the house.

One feature I found particularly interesting was called Verizon Media Center, a program on your computer that gathers all your photos and music into one place. Then, as you sit in the comfort of your family room (or wherever your DVR box is), you can actually view photos from your computer or listen to your computer music files even though your computer is somewhere else in your home.

I have tested the DVR and it worked perfectly. Verizon allows you to view recorded programs on a different TV than the DVR box is actually on, so you can see the program in a different room. I love the music channels; Comcast has those as well. Because of the intricacies of the special offers and my constant changes to my order, I won't have the extra HD Extreme package for a couple days, but I'm looking forward to that. It also comes with faster internet download speeds, twice as fast as offered in the original package. When I called to add that package, they told me I will get it free for 90 days. Like I said, that first bill will be interesting.

Speaking of internet, I was impressed with the fact that I had to do virtually nothing to use the new provider's web service. I also took advantage of Verizon's antivirus software offer. It is cheaper than buying your own but not as good a deal as Comcast's where you can download McAfee Anti-Virus Software for free. Verizon's cost was around \$60 a year.

The speed of downloads is faster but not yet as fast as I get at work. Maybe when my upgrade kicks in it will be much more noticeable. Then again, my seven-year-old computer might be my next target for replacement!

Next week will bring the conclusion to my jump into the void!