

# New equipment caused outages for Valley Telecom Group customers.

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It has been a rough few days out in the southern Sulphur Springs Valley as Valley TeleCom Group (VTG) performed some upgrades to enhance services for customers, though it sacrificed Internet access for some. The problem was the change out of new equipment which did not work with existing equipment as planned. Unfortunately, it resulted in a loss of service for some customers for a few days. However, the good news is the company is moving towards high-speed Internet, though the project could take five years to get fiber installed in the majority of its service territory. It was a \$45 million Rural Utilities Service loan that spurred the upgrade.

In a statement from VTG, the company pointed out the project to upgrade to broadband and fiber for faster speeds is an endeavor long awaited by the company as well as the customers.

“VTG has completed a significant milestone in its mission to provide cutting-edge Internet and Voice services to its ever-expanding customer base. The company embarked on a core router upgrade, a crucial component of its network infrastructure, designed to meet the growing demand for high-speed connectivity.”

In October, the equipment for the core router upgrade was finally delivered after a long wait on a back order.

“Now, VTG is poised to be able to offer the speed and reliability our customers deserve. The new equipment has a 100G (gigabytes) connection for core routing services, ensuring that VTG can not only accommodate a burgeoning customer count, but also meet the surging demands for Internet services, including streaming, gaming, and data services.”

While preparations were well underway for the core router upgrade, the “incumbent core router began experiencing issues in August which led to intermittent disruptions in the network, particularly affecting bandwidth speeds. The team diligently employed troubleshooting measures to maintain services until the new equipment arrived.

“Upon integrating the new hardware alongside the aging core router, network performance issues escalated, culminating in more pronounced disturbances on October 26. It was at this point that the transition to the new core router became imminent.”

The integration of the new equipment officially began in the early morning of Oct. 31st and was scheduled to wrap up by Nov. 2.

As technology continues to advance, so does VTG, and this upgrade represents a significant leap forward in the pursuit of delivering top-quality services.

“This challenging, but transformative project serves as a testament to VTG’s commitment to its customers, as the company overcomes growing pains to offer better-quality services to both current and future clientele.”

VTG’s Heather Floyd noted the customer count by the end of September was 8,914 which is a 7% growth over last year.

“To show the real growth, our customer count pre Covid in March 2020 was 6,005 customers,” she said. “Since that time we have seen an increase of 48%. So when we say our equipment was experiencing some growing pains we are not kidding.”