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February 17, 2015

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The borough is one step closer to having a new cable service, which was discussed during February's meeting of the Waymart Borough Council.

Eric Smith, general manager of Laurel Highlands/South Canaan Telephone Company, was in attendance to talk about the Cable Television Franchise Agreement.

He became general manager of South Canaan Telephone Company in November of 2013 after Laurel Highlands acquired the company.

Laurel Highland is a rural telephone company based in southwestern Pennsylvania, "with many similarities to South Canaan." The company has been around for more than 100 years, almost as long as South Canaan Telephone Company was.

Currently, Laurel Highland's TV is 60 percent digital. Smith said by the end of 2014, services will be 90 percent digital and in 2015 it will be 100 percent digital.

There will also be 85 high definition channels and a total of 230 channels. Smith previously said they also offer Internet speeds up to 30mg.

Some of the work Laurel Highlands has already done includes:

- Building a state of the art broadband infrastructure which will enhance

Bloomberg
Snapchat Said to Seek Up
to \$19 Billion Value in
Funding

internet for both homes and businesses in the area.

- Completed the connection to the internet through ION fiber network.
- Hiring of two local Johnson College graduates to assist with the fiber build.

“We started building fiber here first in the borough of Waymart,” he said. “We completed part of that and we’re going to complete another section in April.

“The thing that's really exciting to us is we're going to be putting IPTV [Internet Protocol TV] into wherever we have fiber, which is the borough of Waymart.”

He added they didn't anticipate that would happen for at least a few more years.

“It's [IPTV] really state of the art as far as TV service,” Smith stated. “One of the first things we looked at when we acquired South Canaan is upgrading the TV service. We didn't think we could do it for a few more years.

Smith added it's great because the company provides a very good service.

“We think any time we provide a top flight service, it benefits the borough of Waymart, whether it be Internet or TV,” he said. “The good thing about being in the borough of Waymart is that you're getting the fiber, the IPT fiber Internet and now the IPT re-service first in our territory.”

Smith said if everything goes according to plan, they're looking at June 1 to start offering services.

“The IPT re-service will provide much more HD [high definition] than what we have; DVR, which we do not have today with our existing service; multi-room DVR, multi-room recording and video on demand,” he stated. “Not everybody wants all of these things but some do.

“When it comes to providing a new Internet service or a new phone service in the borough of Waymart, there's not much we really need to do.”

Smith added that is because it's a new TV service and it's a new company providing the service.

“We offer our standard franchise agreement that we have around all of our various boroughs and townships in western Pennsylvania and we're looking to provide it here also,” Smith said. “Other townships like Cherry Ridge, Canaan and Clinton are in this first group of boroughs or townships.” He added when they built the fiber, it was built in those areas.

Smith and council discussed the agreement and addressed concerns and questions with the agreement. Smith and solicitor Chris Farrell will be meeting to finalize any changes that were made.

Other goals Laurel Highlands has include:

- To build a communications infrastructure to help attract and keep businesses and residential customers here in the area.
- Provide good paying jobs with health and retirement benefits.
- Participate in community events, support local organizations and provide scholarships. – Kelly Waters, *Wayne Independent*



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