

Cape Cod cell reception to improve – for customers of one lucky carrier

By Jack Newsham Globe Correspondent July 06, 2015

One of the country's four major cell phone carriers is hooking up dozens of antennas along Cape Cod to high-speed fiber-optic lines to improve call reception and download speeds.

CapeNet, which uses fiber-optic data transmission lines along Cape Cod to transmit phone calls and data, said it would lay the high-speed connections to 59 cell phone towers over the course of 2015. A spokesman for CapeNet said a nondisclosure statement prohibited him from naming the carrier or providing financial details.

Cell phone coverage can be spotty along the Cape during the summer, when vacationers flock to the area's beaches and seaside towns for weekend getaways. Matt Ellis, a spokesman for CapeNet, said the unnamed carrier's reception would improve on the Cape and in Southeastern Massachusetts once the carrier connected its antennas to the fiber network.

"There are some towers on the Cape that are still using 2G," a cell phone technology that only transmits voice calls and text messages, not data, Ellis said. "This technology will enable the carrier to get to 4G."

Many cell phone towers are owned by a third party and used by multiple networks, such as AT&T, Verizon, Sprint, and T-Mobile. Those carriers pay to place their antenna on a tower and string a data line up to it, but Ellis said the quality and capacity of that line can vary widely. Once completed, he said, the unnamed carrier's fiber connections will be the first such high-speed links on the Cape.

Eventually, Ellis said, the hope is that other companies also will pay for fiber connections to their Cape Cod antennas.

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