

Ocean Pines Association

Telecommunications Info & FAQ Sheet

(Updated Nov. 2020)

First, let us outline what Telecom services are available to Ocean Pines residents and then we'll try to answer some common questions in our FAQ section below. Disclaimer: All content and web links in this document are subject to change.

1. Options for television service?

Traditional 'Cable' TV:

Mediacom presently offers its Xtreme cable television service to all members throughout the community. Comcast is presently building out their network in Ocean Pines and will be offering their Xfinity cable television service. Roughly half of the community can now order services from Comcast and the company expects to complete installation to all sections of Ocean Pines by spring 2021. Both providers offer various levels of TV service, including premium movie channels and sports packages, as well as bundles that include TV, phone, and internet services.

- To inquire about Mediacom TV services, visit: www.mediacomcable.com/products/television
- To inquire about Comcast TV services, visit: www.xfinity.com/learn/digital-cable-tv

'Satellite' TV

Satellite TV service is available in Ocean Pines from Dish Network and DirectTV with one major caveat: There must be a clear line-of-sight from the satellite dish installed on your property to the southwestern sky. With all the tall trees surrounding homes in our community, this service type is not a practical choice for many members.

- To inquire about Dish Network services, visit: www.dish.com
- To inquire about DirectTV services, visit: www.att.com/directv

Free 'Over-the-Air' TV:

TV channel reception via over-the-air (OTA) broadcasts is limited in our area. There is a handful of local channels available with the use of a set-top or attic-mounted antenna (see FAQs). However, reception at your location will be affected by many factors, such as antenna gain, receiver sensitivity, buildings, and trees. Your experience may vary. Please be advised, most OPA sectional Declaration of Restrictions (DRs) do not permit the installation of exterior tv or radio antennas.

2. Options for land-line telephone service?

While most telephone customers now use cellular-based smart phones, some still prefer having the availability of a land-based telephone line. Along with the familiar names in telephone service, e.g., Verizon and AT&T, cable TV providers are also now offering land-based phone service. Check out available telephone options at the following links:

- www.verizon.com/home/phone
- www.att.com/home-phone/landline.html
- www.mediacomcable.com/products/phone
- www.xfinity.com/learn/home-phone-services

3. Options for internet service?

Broadband internet choices for Ocean Pines members have expanded significantly over the past five years. While some older telecom technologies are still around – such as DSL – high-speed broadband internet service is now available from Mediacom and Comcast. Both companies offer various packages based on desired bandwidth (speed) and other options. As noted, both also offer bundled services for internet, TV, and land-line phone.

Satellite internet access is available from HughesNet and ViaSat to those OPA members whose property has a clear view of the southwest sky. Cellular service providers like Verizon and AT&T offer plans that include access to the internet and feature various digital content. In addition, a fixed wireless provider is offering internet service here in the Pines.

As you can imagine, the plans, packages, options, and choices are varied and many. Please check out the links below for more information:

Residential (wired):

- www.mediacomcable.com/products/internet
- www.xfinity.com/learn/internet-service
- www.verizon.com/info/dsl-services

Satellite:

- www.viasatspecials.com/lp/internet
- www.satelliteinternet.com/providers/hughesnet

Cellular (major USA carriers):

- www.verizon.com/plans
- www.att.com/plans/unlimited-data-plans
- www.t-mobile.com/cell-phone-plans

Fixed Wireless:

- www.bloosurf.com/residential/internet

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Are there any free-of-charge telecommunication services available to OPA membership?

Ocean Pines residents currently or will soon have access to free Wi-Fi hot spots at most facilities and amenity locations. Mediacom currently supplies free Wi-Fi in three outdoor areas: White Horse Park, the Golf Clubhouse, and the Racquet Center. Comcast as of November 2020 offers free Wi-Fi at the Beach

Club and Golf Clubhouse, with plans to provide free Wi-Fi inside and outside most of Ocean Pines' public buildings.

Free wireless Internet access is also available at all Worcester County Library branches, including the Ocean Pines branch on Cathell Road.

2. How can I save money on the telecom services that I want/need?

Both Mediacom and Comcast offer bundled services, e.g., internet and TV, which can be more economical than individual services. Internet-only options offer the ability to “stream” digital content (using proper equipment) without paying for TV or telephone service. Cellular service providers can satisfy some customer's overall telecom requirements, which then precludes the need for cable service. There are many options from and between the various service providers to accommodate most needs.

For those part-time residents who have cable service year-round but are absent here in the winter, Mediacom may offer a special off-season rate for the winter months. Please call your cable provider and ask for details.

3. I work from home and the family needs the fastest internet speeds available. What are the options in OP?

Mediacom and Comcast offer Gigabit internet Service to Ocean Pines customers (at this time, Comcast service is limited to their installed areas).

4. What is 5G and is it available here in OP?

In telecommunications, 5G is the fifth-generation technology standard for broadband cellular networks, which cellular phone companies began deploying worldwide in 2019, and is the planned successor to the 4G networks which provide connectivity to most current cellphones.

While 5G service is presently rolling out to various corners of the country, 5G service coverage is not yet available here in Ocean Pines. Only your cellular service provider can provide info on when 5G service will be available on their network and what new equipment (cell phone) may be required.

5. I hear that Comcast has finally come to OP. What is the status of their network and service offerings?

As of November 2020, Comcast is about halfway done installing their network infrastructure throughout Ocean Pines. OPA members living in the now completed sections of Comcast's network can order services through their web site www.xfinity.com. Comcast sales representatives have also been visiting the neighborhoods where their service is now available to answer member questions and provide sign-up guidance.

Be sure to keep an eye out for the latest progress updates on Comcast's infrastructure installation by visiting OPA's web site: www.oceanpines.org/web/pages/opa-news. Look for the “Comcast Update” news headings.

6. I want to ‘cut the cord’ and ‘stream’ my favorite shows only. What options do I have for streaming?

“Streaming” digital content requires an internet connection and a streaming device, e.g., AppleTV, Roku, smart phone or TV, etc. Both Mediacom and Comcast offer internet-only service that would allow OPA members to stream digital content, e.g., Netflix, Hulu, etc. Other internet Service Providers (ISPs) offer sufficient bandwidth to allow digital streaming of content, e.g., Cellular, Fixed Wireless, Satellite, or DSL.

Follow the links below for more information on available internet services:

Residential (wired):

- www.mediacomcable.com/products/internet
- www.xfinity.com/learn/internet-service
- www.verizon.com/info/dsl-services

Satellite:

- www.viasatspecials.com/lp/internet
- www.satelliteinternet.com/providers/hughesnet

Fixed Wireless:

- www.bloosurf.com/residential/internet

Cellular (major USA carriers):

- www.verizon.com/plans
- www.att.com/plans/unlimited-data-plans
- www.t-mobile.com/cell-phone-plans

7. What is Satellite-based television and what are the requirements for service?

Satellite television is a service that delivers television programming to viewers by relaying it from a communications satellite orbiting the Earth directly to the viewer's location. The signals are received via an outdoor parabolic antenna commonly referred to as a satellite dish and a low-noise block downconverter. Residents interested in switching from land-based TV providers, e.g., Mediacom, to a satellite-based provider must be advised that somewhere on their property, an unrestricted view of the southwestern sky is needed. Satellite service providers will perform a site survey of each residence to confirm adequate reception of the satellite signal and offer possible physical locations for the dish antenna.

8. Can I receive local channels from a satellite provider?

As of November 2020, both DirecTV and the Dish Network supply Salisbury local channels as part of their normal channel line-up. Residents selecting a satellite vendor do not have to depend solely on an over-the-air antenna for the reception of the local TV stations.

9. Are there differences in the local channel line up between the two satellite providers?

DirecTV and the Dish Network now distribute the Salisbury TV stations to customers in the Delmarva market. The local stations are affiliated with the CBS, ABC, NBC, Fox, CW, and PBS national networks. The CBS affiliate, WBOC channel 16, carries Fox21 as a digital sub-channel. The ABC affiliate, WMDT

channel 47, transmits the CW network as a digital sub-channel. WCPB is the local PBS station carrying Maryland Public TV. WRDE in Salisbury carries NBC.

10. What are the individual services offered by each satellite vendor?

DirecTV and the Dish Network both offer tiered TV programming packages including a wide selection of HD, Sports, and premium channels.

11. Are there differences in the channel line ups between our two cable TV providers?

Both Mediacom and Comcast offer similar channel lineups including available local stations, HD channels, sports and premium content. Be sure to review available channel lineups on their respective web sites to ensure your favorites are included.

12. What is FiOS and is it available in Ocean Pines?

FiOS is an acronym for "Fiber Optic Service." Verizon uses the term commercially to describe its broadband telecommunications service offering. This fiber optic-based network is presently offered in many areas of the United States. Other service providers, such as Mediacom, currently use fiber optic cable on their primary network infrastructure while utilizing copper wire-based segments for "the last mile," from network nodes to residential and business customers.

FiOS is not currently available in the Ocean Pines area. A Nov. 2020 update from a Verizon representative indicated that technicians are currently working on building out FiOS service. However, they did not supply a timeline for service availability and FiOS is not expected to be available in Ocean Pines any time soon. For the interim period, residents can continue to rely on the current provisioning of the Verizon copper wire infrastructure for land line phone and DSL internet services.

13. How can I find out if satellite reception is available at my address?

DirecTV has performed a cursory survey of Ocean Pines neighborhoods. Given your address, they may already know if your location is suitable for satellite reception. The Dish Network has not performed a pre-survey. However, when contracting for either satellite service, the vendor will perform a site survey prior to installation to ensure adequate field signal strength from the satellites.

14. What are the local TV channels based in Salisbury?

The major digital TV channels from Salisbury include the following:

- WBOC-16 (CBS) Salisbury
- WBOC-21 (FOX) Salisbury
- WCPB-28 (PBS) Salisbury
- WMDT-47 (ABC) Salisbury
- WMDT-53 (CW) Salisbury
- WRDE (NBC) Salisbury

The website www.tvfool.com/index.php?option=com_wrapper&Itemid=90 lists the estimated signal strengths of these transmitters and the probability of detecting them with an indoor or outdoor antenna. The map will also give you azimuth orientation from your home to each transmitter. This information is useful for calculating a link management guide and antenna orientation/pointing data.

Please be advised, most OPA sectional Declaration of Restrictions (DRs) do not permit the installation of exterior tv or radio antennas.

If you are considering OTA TV reception, here are links to two recent reviews of indoor antennas:

- www.techradar.com/news/best-indoor-tv-antennas
- www.cnet.com/news/cut-the-cord-for-10-best-indoor-tv-antenna-to-buy-in-2020

15. Are there any general recommendations for services that can be made to community residents?

For high-speed broadband internet service, Mediacom and Comcast offer the fastest internet speeds.

For those members who wish to enjoy the most available choices for TV channels, sports, and entertainment, should consider cable providers Mediacom and Comcast. If your property has clear view of the southwestern sky, consider satellite providers DirectTV or Dish Network to get the right combo of content and price.

For members who wish to consolidate TV, land-line phone, and internet services, Mediacom and Comcast offer bundled packages that include those options at various service levels and costs.

For basic e-mail and web surfing without long-term contracts or cable installation, consider DSL service over plain old telephone service (POTS) lines.

Mobile cellular service providers can provide the right combination of bandwidth, content, and convenience for those members who are always on the go.