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Service outages, fires demonstrate importance of resiliency

ALBUQUERQUE – Verizon's multiple fiber cuts that disrupted data, voice, texting and home internet service across Albuquerque, Santa Fe and other parts of New Mexico yesterday show the vital need for more resilient broadband networks, something the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) has advocated for as part of its critical mission.

The Verizon outage affected thousands of customers yesterday with downed broadband, phones stuck in emergency SOS mode, dropped calls and loss of signals. Broadband resiliency, or fiber redundancy, would protect from outages by creating multiple fiber paths, meaning that if one connection fails, internet traffic can switch to another path.

"When broadband and other telecommunication services are impacted by cuts, floods, fires or any other source, there must always be a seamless communication," said **Jeff Lopez**, director of OBAE. "There must never be a break in service, particularly when an emergency happens, and this incident reveals how critical it is to build and maintain such infrastructure."

The Verizon outage is just the latest case of broadband disruptions interrupting lives in New Mexico communities.

OBAE addressed resiliency after the 2024 Lincoln County wildfires and floods, creating a disaster grant program to help recovery efforts and to prevent future broadband service disruptions. In 2025 OBAE provided more than $1 million to two internet service providers that replaced broadband networks and connections and built redundant fiber lines in the county. An alternate route ensures that certain communities won't see service cuts should disasters there strike again.

"Our mission is more than deploying broadband and addressing affordability; we also want to make sure broadband is reliable and sustainable, providing redundant lines when needed and alternate fiber routes," said Lopez.

OBAE also acted to resolve a recurring broadband outage problem in Gallup last year. After years of broadband blackouts in the city, OBAE committed $500,000 to establish a resilient network, contracting with Ethos Broadband to construct redundant connectivity via an alternate route.

The project's completion is the result of a partnership between OBAE, Lumen Technologies and Ethos Broadband, which resulted in tens of thousands of residents in Gallup and McKinley County no longer experiencing frequent high-speed internet blackouts. The completed work means the region has a secondary connection, so service will not be affected should the main line be cut.

OBAE remains committed to helping communities that may be vulnerable to service disruptions.

"Our job is to serve New Mexicans as best we can when it comes to broadband efficiency and reliability, and this latest incident with Verizon exemplifies the need for backup routes and reliable fiber connections," said Lopez.

Verizon says its engineers are making progress on the issue. The provider says voice calling has been restored and 911 services were not impacted. Data sessions may still experience some delays.

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The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion is dedicated to serving New Mexico with a commitment to make high-speed broadband accessible to all New Mexicans. OBAE's mission is to expand and improve high-speed internet service with passionate leadership that drives bold, equitable, affordable and inclusive broadband solutions. OBAE seeks results that honor the state's rich heritage and elevate quality of life for all.

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