

Thanks to the island residents who took the time to discuss IAH broadband needs and wants after the Tuesday's Table meal and Wednesday at the library. A few common themes emerged. Primarily there is concern about the basic reliability of the internet service that falls into two categories. First there are times when failures cause the connections to be unavailable at all. In these instances it was noted that customer service was poor in that it took up to several days to get faults addressed. Second, a common problem is that the available data speed is very variable and regularly drops to such a slow point that it might just as well be completely down. In addition there seems to be no pattern as to when these slowdowns will occur. One person noted that sometimes even at 2 AM the link speed was unusable. Some thought general service got worse concurrent with the changes that were put in place to support the MSLN contracted speeds for the school and library. Regardless of whether it is no connection or an unusably slow connection the impacts to businesses who lose sales or individuals who cannot work remotely or conduct personal communications are significant.

Some comment was made about the maximum internet speeds available but more was made of the great speed inconsistency noted above and the perception that customers are not getting what is being paid for in many cases.

Several people commented on the general lack of information or transparency from the internet provider TDS service work or planned outages.

As a next step the broadband working group is finalizing an IAH specific broadband survey. A few attendees took preliminary copies of the survey to review and comment on to help refine it. When complete the survey will be made available for all residents, both permanent and seasonal, to register their thoughts and needs. This information will help inform decisions on the direction our broadband efforts might take.

The Island Institute has been working on these broadband issues for us and other islands and two Institute representatives were in attendance. They have been facilitating communications with TDS for the IAH broadband working group and will help communicate our concerns upward. In addition they are helping us actively monitor the final stages of TDS/Fairpoint contracted improvements which may help some of the speed problems over the next few months.