

Wireless Internet Service is Rapidly Expanding

By Randy Olson

High-speed Internet connections are no longer a luxury in today's world, they have become a necessity as more day-to-day work activities, researching and communication is done online than ever before. Jerry Gill at Gill's Sales & Service in Fairfield realized this need in southern Illinois about four years ago and became an Internet service provider with the launch of "Fairfield Wireless" in May of 2002.

"Our first installation was on top of the Fairfield high-rise building," said Jerry. We now have nine access points in the immediate Fairfield area which gives us good high-speed wireless connections throughout most of the city limits and fringe areas."

But the growth of his wireless network is not limited to just Fairfield. Gill and his staff have expanded high-speed Internet service into many rural areas and smaller communities such as Golden Gate, Albion, Grayville, Mill Shoals, Geff, Jasper, Calvin and Springerton, with more on the way.

As technology continues to move forward, Gill is ready to keep people online at home or at their place of business. He points out that a lot of things have changed in the past 3 1/2 years since the first tower went up. "Equipment cost and average monthly fees have dropped while competition, public awareness and demand have increased," said Jerry. "People who have high-speed connectivity at work can no longer put up with an old fashioned dial-up connection at home."

Anyone who has used a high-speed (broadband) Internet connection knows that there are a lot of common tasks that are very difficult, if not impossible, to do on dial-up. For example, watching movies or live sporting events, downloading photos, music, interactive Web sites and playing online games all require a high-speed connection. Even checking e-mail is much faster and smoother with



a high-speed Internet connection, not to mention doing research for school.

Being an Internet service provider has now become the biggest priority and largest part of the business model at Gill's Sales & Service. The business was founded in 1951 by Jerry's father, Gene Gill, who you can still often see at the store. But times have changed. "We are no longer in the TV sales or service business," explained Jerry. "Televisions are now throw away items when they malfunction, and there is no profit in selling them due to lower prices at the many chain stores and online outlets that market them."

Gill's Sales and Service is in the appliance business as a dealer for Frigidaire, Whirlpool and Crosley. They stock a showroom with dishwashers, refrigerators, freezers, washers and dryers. They are also a local dealer for Dish Network satellite service and First Cellular phone service. Gill's will also provide service work on computers including virus cleanup and "at your door" tech support if needed. "Some businesses are simply out of business without their high-speed Internet connection," said Jerry. "We try to be there when they need us." Other employees at the business include Aaron

Musgrave, Sandy Carter, John Smith and Robert Thomason.

Prices for wireless high-speed Internet service from Gill starts at \$29.95 a month and up. There is a \$100 installation fee, but no equipment purchase requirements with a two-year agreement. Service includes virus e-mail protection and spam blocker. Fairfield Wireless inside Gill's Sales & Service can also provide computer users with custom cat 5 network cables and specialty cables such as firewire for use with digital video cameras.

Gills Sales & Service receives their electricity from Wayne-White Counties Electric Cooperative. "We have a lot of meters running through the cooperative from the many towers and equipment installations we have done throughout the region," said Jerry. "Wayne-White has always been very dependable and helpful to us."

For more information about high-speed Internet service, call Gill's Sales & Service at 847-7066. You can also visit their booth at the upcoming Wayne-White Annual Meeting in Albion on March 17. There is also information on the Wayne-White Web site about other suppliers of high-speed Internet service in our 11-county cooperative service area. Just visit www.WWCEC.com.



Wayne-White Counties Electric Cooperative