

FROM THE MAIN GATE

March 2018

By May 2018, Hershey's Mill will fully transition to Verizon Fios as its community-wide provider of cable television, internet, and phone services. While this type of digital communication is quickly replacing the much older, slower analog communication delivered by copper telephone/DSL lines, one area of the transition to Fios to which all Hershey's Mill residents must take note is in regards to the reliability of voice over internet phone service (VOIP), including Verizon Fios and Comcast Digital Voice, as it relates to monitored alarm equipment.

Many alarm panels, including Hershey's Mill monitored alarm panels, are considered by their manufacturer to be incompatible with VOIP due to potential reliability issues. In most cases, the alarm panel can communicate using VOIP service; but there have been instances where VOIP service has been linked to communication delays or failures between the alarm panel and the monitoring station. In response to these reliability issues, the alarm industry introduced a solution known as a cellular communicator, which allows the alarm panel to communicate using a compatible cellular signal. While no method of telephone communication is fully guaranteed, the cellular communicator is considered "compatible" with alarm systems and more reliable than VOIP service.

Residents who have VOIP reliability concerns regarding their Hershey's Mill monitored alarm system are encouraged to consider the installation of a cellular communicator for their alarm panel. Currently, the cost to purchase and install a cellular communicator is \$199; and the monthly fee for the cellular service is \$15 per month (paid annually).

Additionally, residents who utilize any non-Hershey's Mill alarm monitoring companies (Life Alert, ADT, Vector, Protection Bureau....etc) for medical, burglar or additional fire safety alarm systems, must contact that company in order to inform them that the residence will be utilizing Verizon Fios phone service. This will allow the company to make any necessary equipment modifications in order to ensure system compatibility.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Director of Security Marc Fraser at 610-431-4006. Thank you.