

BAINBRIDGE ISLAND REVIEW



NEWS

Kitsap internet customers have service after long outage

Many went to BI library so they could do their work

By Molly Hetherwick and Nancy Treder Kitsap News Group • May 3, 2024 1:30 am



The conference room at the library was filled with people needing internet.

Nearly all of North and East Kitsap County awoke without internet connection the morning of May 3 due to suspected vandalism of cable service lines in Bremerton.

Xfinity reported customer outages in Bainbridge Island, Hansville, Indianola, Kingston, Poulsbo, Silverdale and Suquamish. Officials suspect the line was cut by vandals looking for copper — which the cable lines do not contain.

By 6 p.m. all of the customers had service restored. Earlier it had targeted 3 p.m. Restoration efforts began around 9 a.m.

A Comcast representative said the public can help end such service disruptions by reporting vandals.

“We are hoping residents can help in preventing this in the future. If you see something, say something. Vandalism is a growing concern for network providers, and we can work together to prevent it by reporting any suspicious activity seen around network cables to local law enforcement,” Jack Follman of Comcast said.

The outage was hurting local businesses. Ari Rowe, manager at Marina Market in Poulsbo, said, “We’re not able to take cash, so it’ll definitely be a hit to our business today,” Rowe said.

Without internet, businesses that use Xfinity could not conduct credit and debit card transactions. The Kingston and BI ferry terminals were both without internet, and unable to issue digital tickets. Passengers reported on social media that ticket agents were writing down card information by hand on slips of paper.

The BI library served as an oasis for some affected by the outage. Every workstation, reading booth, study room and conference room was occupied by internet refugees seeking a place to do their work.

Librarian John Fossett said the patronage was unusually high for a Friday. “This morning we had twenty-five people lined up at the door waiting to use the internet. Three to four people are typical. We had sixty people here at 11 a.m. and fifty-five were here for the internet,” Fossett said.

Some people went outside to the library gardens using the publicly accessible internet provided by the Kitsap County Public Library based in Bremerton, which connects all the branches through its fiber network. The library system has a dedicated fiber line that connects the Bremerton hub with the other KRL branches, which is separate from the public internet bundle that was cut. The situation is similar to how the fire department, medical facilities and other critical public services receive their internet service.

Starre Vartan of BI, a freelance science journalist for National Geographic and Scientific American magazines, took advantage of the spring weather and sat in the Haiku Gardens adjacent to Madison Avenue because she was on a writing deadline to finish a book about women’s physical strength.

Fossett, who has worked for the library system for 22 years in the Sylvan, Silverdale and BI libraries and will be retiring soon, was thrilled to see so many using the library’s resources. “We are fortunate to have a community that supports the library,” Fossett said.



Starre Vartan took her laptop into the garden to work.



Xfinity courtesy photo Internet wire damaged in Bremerton.

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