

My husband and I live 2 miles outside of Bourbon, MO (population of 1,300) on a gravel road. Our situation is typical of most of Crawford County. Sixty percent of Crawford County is gravel roads. Some of the county is very hilly and remote. Our small town lifestyle comes at a high price for communication. Some of the services we receive are not available to other folks just a quarter of a mile from us, due to over-loaded DSL lines. With so many gravel roads, options decrease the farther in the country you live. Here are our typical bills.

1.5 M High speed internet through Centurytel before taxes is \$59.90. Because we are at the limits of DSL coverage on an over-loaded line, we are getting a rate of about half of the 1.5 M we pay for. Again, our neighbor in a nearly new home within walking distance of us cannot even get DSL. He just moved from St Louis and planned to work a tech type job from his home. He would have thought twice about buying on this beautiful road if he had known.

Unlimited calling through Centurytel before taxes is \$27.11. After taxes our bill for internet and phone runs around \$80. We have no other source of internet or landline phone. Everything outside of a 5 mile radius of us is long-distance. Fidelity surrounds the county. Since there is not a local number for online phone services such as Omnia, friends in Bourbon would have to call us long distance if we chose this option.

TV service is out of line. We have a choice of Directv or Dish. We have had both. Our bill increases each month. We have the XTRA package that includes the most watched channels. Our bill is now at \$103 a month.

If you total this, we are paying monthly \$180 or more for phone, internet and TV monthly. We are blessed to afford these higher rates. There are many families in this economically depressed county that cannot afford this even if it was available. In the little towns of Sullivan and Cuba, just down the road from us, there are more options and cheaper rates.

We live within 1/2 mile of Crawford Electric Coop. At this time they do not offer any communication services. We read about the possibilities for improved communication services in our June Rural Missouri.

Thank-you for considering our situation.

Tom and Mary Buhrkuhl

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