



Mayor's Response to the Appeal of the TDS Lawsuit

NOVEMBER 11, 2008

As your Mayor for the City of Monticello, I feel it is time to lay out the truth regarding the city's decision to install fiber and TDS's lawsuit that attempts to stop us. The city council, staff and myself have been handcuffed in our ability to offer information to the public for fear that TDS would twist the information and add new allegations to their suit, thus extending the litigation.

We (the city) talked with TDS on several occasions to explore options to give the citizens and businesses of Monticello cutting edge technology. We felt that fiber optic technology would attract another level of business and industry that would offer our residents well-paying, local jobs. It has been and continues to be the city council's goal to create a city where you can work, live and raise a family. It was also very important to make sure EVERY resident was given the opportunity to experience this technology.

Councilman Wayne Mayer and I met with TDS at their office. We expressed our concern that every resident and business should be able to access the fiber optic system. We were told that they "could not justify the expense" to their shareholders and they "already had good copper in the ground." Their plan was to continue to offer fiber to new developments, but not address existing homes.

It was clear to Wayne and I that if the citizens of Monticello were to experience this type of technology it would be in their own hands. Therefore, the council decided to put it up to you, the citizens of Monticello. You made your voice heard loud and clear by passing a referendum by 74%. That was after being bombarded with telephone calls and mailings from TDS that were very misleading. Claims were made that this system would cost the citizens of Monticello 25 million dollars, but TDS knows how revenue bonds work. I know that, because I sat in a courtroom and listened to their high priced Chicago attorney explain why we shouldn't be able to use this type of bond to fund the system. They know that these dollars are raised through investors and it is these investors who would be on the hook if this system failed. TDS tries to claim that they are suing us to protect the citizens of Monticello, but the truth is that they want to continue their monopoly for land line telephone in Monticello. If they were really concerned about YOU, they would have taken the many opportunities we offered to work together to lower the overall cost of offering fiber to each and every home in Monticello. If they were really concerned about you, they would have offered lower

prices and huge discounts before the city passed a referendum to bring fiber to EVERY home in Monticello. Why does TDS suddenly have a big heart and lower their rates? I don't know about you, but it makes me mad that I feel I've been overpaying for years!

The TDS lawsuit was dismissed. It came as no surprise to me. I could see it for what it was, an attempt to stall the inevitable; an attempt to once again keep you under their thumb paying some of the highest rates in the country. It is time for all of us to stand up to TDS and say we won't take it any more. TDS had 30 days to appeal and although they continually claim that they want to expedite this suit, they waited 29 days before issuing their Notice to Appeal. Does this reek of another stall tactic? You decide.

Monticelloans should be enjoying fiber to the home. Not from the curb, but to the home. The city is committed to bringing fiber to your home and offering services such as full high definition TV, telephone services (land line, VOIP, cellular) and ultra high-speed Internet (both upload and download).

I have been open and honest with you. I live here and I am accessible. Try calling a decision maker from TDS. Good luck. They don't live here. If TDS is really concerned about you, they will end this lawsuit and find ways to work with the city to put this type of technology in place. They keep saying that they want to work with us, they keep saying they have held their hand out. Really? I have only witnessed TDS turning down our repeated attempts of working with them.

TDS, it is time to stop punishing the citizens of Monticello. We know that the dismissal of this lawsuit will NOT be overturned. We know that the monopoly is over. Why would you keep punishing your customers? If you really want to work with us like you claim, give me a call. I expressed my willingness to sit down with you at a recent council meeting to discuss options. Since there are no decision makers from TDS living in Monticello to witness the meeting, I'll lay it out here in the newspaper. Feel free to contact me on my personal cell phone: 612-810-0840. I look forward to hearing from you. I look forward to putting the citizens of Monticello first. Any good business would do just that.

Clint Herbst

Mayor for the City of Monticello

Submitted as a "Letter to the Editor" to the Monticello Times Newspaper