

West Plains Internet FAQ

What types of internet are available in West Plains?

Currently there are 3 main types, or categories, of internet in the West Plains area.

- Residential
- Business/Commercial
- Dedicated business

What is Residential Internet?

Commonly referred to as cable internet or DSL, these services are primarily offered by the local cable or phone company. The service is considered shared and 'best-effort' in terms of speed and reliability.

What is Small Business/Commercial Internet?

These services are essentially the same as residential. The largest difference comes in the fact that it's a step above 'best-effort' speed and reliability and includes services like a static IP, service level agreement and less oversubscribed nature of its availability.

What is Dedicated Business Internet?

Dedicated Internet Access (DIA) is a direct connection to the Internet Service Provider (ISP) you purchase from. Your internet access is not oversubscribed like Residential or Small Business services and comes with a 99.99%+ reliability. Reliability and response is a priority for dedicated connections. Speeds are typically the same speed in both directions (Up and down), also known as symmetrical.

Why is Dedicated Business Internet so much more expensive than the other types?

There are several factors that drive up the price of the Dedicated internet connection. Some of the more impactful reasons are:

- You are not sharing the connection with any other users, so the cost of the connection is more expensive for the Internet Service Provider (or ISP) to provide.
- The type of cabling and hardware used within the facility are more expensive to install and maintain.
- The higher price pays for a speedier response during outages.

Why has the City of West Plains started offering internet service?

Most towns that have begun to offer Fiber Optic Internet services have done so because they can "piggy back" on their existing infrastructure investments. Cities that began installing fiber optic networks in the 80's and 90's are today readily capitalizing on that investment by extending those networks to businesses for internet access.

What started out in 2016 as a means of securely connecting electric utility locations across West Plains has been recognized as a potential source of an alternative internet service in the West Plains area. As the City's fiber optic network grows, so does the potential to offer Dedicated Business Class Internet across town.

A City-provided internet service that is both affordable and reliable also could be an asset when trying to recruit businesses and industry to West Plains.

Is the City of West Plains offering Dedicated Business Internet to businesses city wide?

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Dedicated internet relies on a redundant connection of fiber to insure maximum reliability. This redundant connection is created with a fiber optic ring network that spans portions of the city. The first ring around the outer edges of West Plains was completed in January 2017, with final equipment installations being completed in April of 2017. Once this is completed, businesses with close proximity of this outer ring can be extended service as they will have the redundancy required for Dedicated Business Internet service. Additional rings will be installed to create the network for other business connections to use. As these rings are completed, the city will notify businesses that the service is available.

Who is installing the fiber optic network for the City of West Plains?

In 2016 the Electric department of the City of West Plains completed a 21-mile installation of fiber optic cable around the outer edges of the city. Additional fiber rings will be installed by the City's Electric department in calendar years 2017 and 2018. That will allow more businesses to be extended Dedicated Internet service. Internet offerings will only be offered to businesses once a ring within close proximity of a business is complete.

Is the City of West Plains offering any internet connections other than Dedicated Business Class internet?

In the summer of 2017 the City of West Plains is carrying out a pilot program to test the viability of lower cost, non-dedicated internet offerings (more in line with Residential and Commercial Class internet offerings).

The pilot will test connections for businesses and residential locations. Upon completion of the pilot, the City of West Plains, in conjunction with the West Plains City Council, will review the viability of such a program and determine if the project can move forward with a city wide deployment. A decision will be made in early 2018 as to whether additional investments will be made in non-Dedicated internet offerings.

Are Wi-Fi and internet the same thing?

In short – No. Wi-Fi is merely the replacement of physical cables in a business or home to connect computers to other computers or services (like printers or the internet). You can have a Wi-Fi network that never touches the internet.

As a general rule, a Wi-Fi network will be slower than its hardwired counterparts. Given the proliferation of wireless devices, many users experiencing “slow internet” are actually experiencing poor Wi-Fi coverage, or Wi-Fi interference issues.

Can I test my internet speed?

“Speed Tests” are popular among internet users. Speed tests are a means of testing the internet speed (up and down) for your current network configuration. This means that testing the “internet” speed over a Wi-Fi network will not be testing the true internet speed – but rather the internet speed through the Wi-Fi network (as mentioned above, Wi-Fi networks are typically slower than wired networks so the speed value returned can be slower than the actual speed of the internet). Remember that speed tests are an approximation of the speed you are receiving and have many variables that can affect the results.

Who should I contact if I am interested in City of West Plains internet?

People may call City Hall at 417-256-7176.