



## Local Internet Speeds Explained

### Town Hall Connect

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Lake Lure has made it a top priority to see that fast internet options are available throughout the area. However, achieving this objective has been a slow going, complicated process.

We all know that in today's world, access to a high-speed internet connection is an essential utility for homes and businesses, much like electricity and water.

- Students need access to the internet to complete their assignments
- Businesses of all kinds need a fast connection
- People are increasingly streaming their entertainment from the internet
- Vacationers expect tourism destinations to have high-speed, wireless internet

To remain competitive, communities must ensure that high-speed internet (broadband) is available and widespread.

The internet situation in Lake Lure and Chimney Rock Village was actually better a decade ago when AT&T brought the first DSL phone lines to town. Since then, few other providers have joined them. AT&T has increasingly concentrated on wireless and cellular technologies, pushing their UVerse service instead of DSL. There have been many mixed reviews about the quality and speed of UVerse, and as a company, we still routinely hear that AT&T is notoriously unresponsive to requests to better serve rural communities.

### So, what internet services are available here?

**AT&T** now primarily offers UVerse instead of DSL. The only way to determine if a location can get UVerse is to call, provide an address and ask lots of questions. Some Lake Lure residents have reported switching to UVerse only to have technicians make upwards of 5-6 trips to a home before it actually works. In larger cities, DSL still comes in several speeds, but the highest speeds are not offered in Lake Lure.

**Northland Cable** offers a broadband service for television, phone, and/or internet, but it is currently only available in portions of Rumbling Bald Resort.

**Pangaea** is a not-for-profit firm that operates a fiber optic backbone that connects all of the fire stations along Memorial Highway, Highway 9, Bill's Creek Road and Buffalo Creek Road. If you have a business along this corridor with a need for a high-capacity, fast internet connection, Pangaea can provide you a monthly service. They're not really providing last-mile connectivity to homes.

**Satellite internet** services are available through companies like HughesNet and Exede. The speeds are pretty fast for downloads, pretty slow for uploads and the service can be disrupted by bad weather.

**Skyrunner of Asheville** is expanding their service whereby they beam high-speed wireless connections directly to your home via a small radio transmitter. You need a clear view to one of the transmission locations. These are at Chimney Rock State Park, the Lake Lure water tower and at the residences of other Skyrunner customers. As more customers sign on, the better the service will be.

### What is the Town Doing to Improve the Situation?

Since all of these options are being provided by private companies, the Town is working to help them succeed and encouraging competition. This may mean providing transmission space on town assets or it may mean helping customers make contact with service providers.

### When Are We Going To Get Better Cell Phone Service In Lake Lure?

The cell service challenges are similar to our local internet challenges whereby companies remain hesitant to invest (or not) in our service area. The best way to influence those decisions is to contact the companies and request improvements. The squeaky wheel may get the new cell tower.