

Not Another Vanilla Triple Play Plan: Century Village, West Palm Beach, Florida

Century Village, a 55-plus condominium community in West Palm Beach, Florida, has employed Atlantic Broadband as its primary provider of voice, video and data services. Our thanks to Regan Anderson, vice president of select communities for Atlantic Broadband, and David Israel, president of the United Civic Organization, Century Village's governing board, for helping gather information for this profile.

By Sean Buckley / *Broadband Communities*

Century Village, a large condominium development for people 55 and older in West Palm Beach, Florida, found that Atlantic Broadband was the ideal service provider for its thousands of retirement community residents. It not only gives the best bang for the buck but also allows residents to choose pricing packages without worrying about losing a discount.

Regan Anderson, vice president of select communities for Atlantic Broadband, says flexibility differentiates the company from other providers that serve communities similar to Century Village. "With us, it's not just vanilla," he says. "We have a lot of different flavors to choose from, whereas the other providers offer only a vanilla plan."

In January, Atlantic Broadband announced it would provide video services to 14,000 residents in nearly 8,000 homes in the Century Village community. Atlantic Broadband designed, constructed and installed a fiber and coax-based network to serve the property, and activated services in individual units throughout the spring.

Century Village established a bulk video deal with Atlantic Broadband with a twist: It includes broadband for residents who want it. "We negotiated the bulk video component, but the agreement includes optional internet," says David Israel, president of the United Civic Organization (UCO), Century Village's governing board.

Residents can get access to 300 video channels, broadband speeds up to 1 Gbps, voice service, and in-home Wi-Fi. These services are supported and complemented with a wire maintenance plan and 24/7 support. Atlantic Broadband provides a dedicated community account manager for Century Village's residents, and Atlantic Broadband representatives are on-site to ensure residents have access to services information.

Comcast still provides service to Century Village, but nearly all residents have switched to Atlantic Broadband.

Israel says Atlantic Broadband rose to the top after he considered alternative cable suppliers.

"I was thinking about looking at other providers five to six years ago," Israel says. "We



Residents at Century Village can access up to 1 Gbps broadband, in-home Wi-Fi and TiVo video services from Atlantic Broadband.

had the standard 10-year contract with Comcast, but I did a lot of research and I liked Atlantic Broadband.”

Although the transition to Atlantic Broadband required large network construction efforts, the experience has been positive.

“A project this size is a big deal here and it takes time to get electronics up and running properly, but the complaints have been minimal,” he says.

Later this year, Atlantic Broadband plans to open a new 3,000-square-foot customer center at Pine Trail Square Plaza on North Military Trail, to serve Century Village and the surrounding West Palm Beach community.

Atlantic Broadband’s Century Village contract came as the cable multiple system operator (MSO) bolstered its fiber holdings by acquiring FiberLight’s South Florida assets. This purchase added 350 route miles to Atlantic Broadband’s South Florida footprint, doubling its existing fiber footprint while expanding its capacity by 30 percent.

Anderson says the FiberLight purchase and the Century Village contract are part of a broader buildout effort.

“Century Village is part of a big expansion plan we began three years ago,” he says. “We signed the property

to build and we ended up buying [a portion of] FiberLight’s network, which took our reach to North Palm Beach and gave us a broader backbone.”

There were a few elements that made the Century Village project unique. With 7,854 condominiums on 704 acres, Century Village’s community is quite large.

“Size was one of the biggest issues,” Anderson says. “We talked with Century Village during its board meetings about the network layout and where equipment would be placed.”

Another challenge was to not disrupt the look of the community’s existing buildings.

“Because Century Village has outside molding, they wanted to make sure we

would match their buildings,” Anderson says. “Also, we wanted to make sure we were not disrupting their day-to-day operations and the residents.”

Century Village offers condominium owners what it calls a distinct Century Village “way of life” and recreational facilities. A 92,000-square-foot clubhouse offers a party room and a 1,221-seat theater featuring well-known entertainers, shows and recently released movies throughout the year. The clubhouse also has numerous meeting rooms that host classes, hobby groups, clubs, card games, an extensive library, billiards, bingo, music and other creative activities.

Additionally, Century Village residents can access a popular health

PROPERTY OF THE MONTH HIGHLIGHTS ~ Century Village, West Palm Beach, Florida ~

- 1,221-seat theater
- 24/7 manned security
- Onsite medical building and pharmacy
- Broadband internet (with speeds up to 1 Gbps)
- Advanced home Wi-Fi
- TiVo and a variety of phone plans



Atlantic Broadband built out a fiber and coax network to support 14,000 residents.

club that offers personal training and modern exercise equipment. Residents can take aerobics, yoga, pilates and dance classes.

VITAL STATISTICS

Property Description: 55-plus retirement community located in West Palm Beach, Florida

Greenfield or retrofit? Brownfield. Century Village was previously served by Comcast.

Number of units: 7,854 units

Style: Mid-rise condos

Time to deploy? It took Atlantic Broadband nine months to build the network and three months to install services in each condominium unit.

Date services began: Following the installation process that started on April 15, 2019, services went live on July 1.

Special requirements: In order to provide on-site customer care, Atlantic Broadband is leasing a 1,200-square-foot building on the premises.

SERVICES

Services offered or planned on the network: Atlantic Broadband offers high-speed broadband, telephone and video services to Century Village residents. Residents have the option to subscribe individually to Atlantic Broadband internet (with downstream speeds up to 1 Gbps) and phone services, with unlimited calling in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico.

Customers can sign up for advanced home Wi-Fi as well as access common-area Wi-Fi services at the clubhouse, pool and gym. An array of video services, including 300 channels and TiVo, are available to every resident. Customized

upgrade packages allow residents who choose Atlantic Broadband's internet services the option to get an upgraded TiVo DVR at no additional cost. Atlantic Broadband's broadband and video services are supported by a wire maintenance plan and 24/7 support. Additional services include concierge services and access control.

Providers: Century Village residents may choose to stay with their previous provider – Comcast – but they still are responsible for paying the homeowners association charge that covers some of Atlantic Broadband's services in addition to paying for the Comcast services they wish to retain.

Do additional service providers operate separate broadband networks on the same property?

The previous provider, Comcast, will continue to have its network on the property. The two networks are separated, and Atlantic Broadband has worked with residents who wish to keep Comcast.

On the network described, can residents choose among multiple service providers? No.

Technical support: Atlantic Broadband provides technical support. Atlantic Broadband includes the wire maintenance feature within the agreement, which means there is no charge for any service calls.

BUSINESS

Which parts of the network are owned by the service provider, and which parts are owned by the property owner? The distribution network, including on-premises fiber and connection to the pedestals, is owned by Atlantic Broadband. The drop from the pedestal to the telco room and the telco connection to the individual unit are owned by Century Village's master association, UCO. The in-unit wiring is owned by the individual unit owner.

Is there a marketing agreement with the property owner? Yes, there is

a marketing agreement in which Atlantic Broadband has exclusive rights to provide bulk services and to market additional services.

Does the agreement include an incentive such as a door fee or revenue share? The agreement with UCO does include a door fee payment. A master association is an organization that is authorized to exercise some or all of the powers of one or more associations on behalf of one or more common interest communities or for the benefit of the unit owners of one or more common interest communities.

How do the service provider and owner work together to market the services? What marketing approaches have been particularly successful? Atlantic Broadband has worked to keep residents informed, including running advertisements within the local newspaper. These ads have been both promotional and educational. The UCO also has worked to keep residents informed of progress throughout the process.

Is there a bulk-service agreement? If so, what services are included? Can residents upgrade from the bulk services? Yes. The bulk services include Value and MoreTV programming with more than 300 channels, one HD DVR, and two HD DTA (three boxes total). Additional premium content includes Starz, Starz/Encore, Epix and HBO. Additional coverage of wire protection eliminates the charge for service calls.

Network benefits: A fiber-rich network is attractive to residents and the condominium association because it allows them to have advanced products, including gigabit internet, with high levels of performance and reliability.

TECHNOLOGY

Architecture: Fiber deep. Fiber runs to nodes on the property that use EPON and RFoG access technologies. From the fiber node,

Atlantic Broadband offers high-speed broadband, telephone and video services to Century Village residents.

the signal is sent via coax to deliver DOCSIS 3.1 services to each unit.

Where is the fiber terminated? Fiber is terminated at the fiber optic node location.

Technology/medium used to deliver signals to each unit: Signals are delivered to each unit via a mix of coax-based DOCSIS 3.1 and Wi-Fi.

Methods for running cables between buildings, vertically within buildings, horizontally within buildings: In most cases molding is used to both secure and hide the cable when attaching to buildings. Atlantic Broadband uses various types and shapes of molding – plastic, aluminum, round, square – depending on the required application.

Vendors/products:

- ARRIS, Hitron (cable modems/routers)
- CCI Systems (design partner)
- Cisco (headend, outside plant platforms)
- TiVo (digital video recorders)

LESSONS LEARNED

What was the biggest challenge? Installation and education. Because the property is so large, we had to do multiple training sessions with smaller groups. Installation by zones was challenging because some residents were not available at their time slot, so we had to do multiple dates within each association or zone.

What was the biggest success? The relationship that we built with Century Village leadership as well as the various associations and residents of the community. Also, the seamless introduction

of the new Atlantic Broadband service offering without disruption to the community. We also were able to offer computer classes, including special French-Canadian customized training. We had the ability to sell additional services to residents at specialized discounts to allow them the flexibility to move in and out of pricing packages without fear of losing a discount.

If the building was already occupied at the time of the deployment, what was done to limit disruption? Atlantic Broadband did a fantastic job of minimizing confusion and disruptions and making it easy for residents to activate their services. It also installed additional wiring at its own cost to support customers who wanted the dual provider option.

What feedback does the sales office get from residents? Atlantic Broadband conducts a variety of customer care surveys to monitor performance and ensure customer satisfaction. Feedback has been positive, and some suggestions have been incorporated for the property.

What should other owners consider before they get started on a similar deployment? In larger developments it is a good strategy to allow ample time. It's time-consuming to choose a provider, sign the contract, and start installation. More time means more opportunities to inform residents about what is happening, the choice of services available, and any steps required to activate services. ❖

Sean Buckley is the associate editor of BROADBAND COMMUNITIES. Reach him at sean@bbcmag.com.