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New Office Building Boasts Fastest Internet Connection in Region

Would your productivity increase if your office building's Internet connection was four to ten times faster? Gary Baxley is betting it would.

The Columbia developer has decked out his new office-condominium building with the finest fixtures and amenities available. But he says it's the building's IT infrastructure that really sets it apart. Having developed several other condo buildings in the area, Baxley knows the migraine-inducing hassles and pitfalls often associated with technology. That's why his latest building, Stanford Overlook, near the intersection of Rt. 175 and Snowden River Parkway, comes with the IT work already done. Each suite comes fully wired with fiber-optic cable through Verizon FiOS, delivering connectivity far-exceeding speeds at other facilities.

Technology consultant Charlie Muller proclaimed "this is the fastest building in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and D.C. - I have 200-plus clients all over the region and nothing can touch this." To make his point, Muller did some testing at other area buildings to compare to Stanford Overlook's 50 mega-bit per

second (Mbps) download speed and 20 Mbps upload speed. At one of Columbia's landmark buildings near the mall, the connectivity registered a comparatively slow 13 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload, even though the building is also supplied by Verizon FiOS. Muller explained that the slower speed is likely caused by a combination of older infrastructure and a lower-tier subscription. He obtained a similar result in his testing of a Comcast Business Class connection in Ellicott City of 11 Mbps download and 1.9 Mbps upload. Other configurations, such as the popular T-1 connections and Bonded T-1 connections are even slower with static speeds (i.e., upload and download are the same and don't vary) of 1.5 Mbps and 3.0 Mbps, respectively.

Other factors reduce the speed of the Internet connection, including the speed of the server that someone is connected to, the presence of external fire walls designed to prevent unauthorized access to networks, and to a lesser extent, the use of dynamic IP addresses. IP, or Internet Protocol, addresses are addresses assigned by the Internet Service Provider (ISP) to

give computers or other devices access to the Internet. Stanford Overlook provides its suite owners with dedicated, or static, IP addresses unique to those suites. All the wiring is done in advance, including the phone systems bundled with the Internet connectivity, so owners have everything they need in their private mechanical room within their suites. This is a significant improvement over the norm of terminating the wiring in the basement and requiring the suite owner to bring the services into their spaces.

Will all of these amenities make you more productive? Well, if you use your new-found efficiency to surf sports scores and post Facebook comments, then maybe not. But if your company uses technology on a daily basis, particularly if you handle large amounts of data, the added bandwidth will probably reap significant rewards.

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