**Widespread cell internet service outage across county**

Story by [Cathy Cook | El Defensor Chieftain Editor](https://dchieftain.com/author/ccook/) | May 18, 2023

Due to a damaged fiber optic cable, much of Socorro County had limited cell and internet services over the weekend.

The damage caused disruptions in 911 services in Socorro County, along with cell and internet services, according to a New Mexico State Police release. The outage also disrupted services in Belen and the Rio communities.

Verizon’s tower sites were back up as of 1:30 a.m. Sunday, said Socorro County Emergency Manager Gail Tripp.

One company, Lumen Technologies, owns the last mile of fiber approaching the cell tower that was impacted, so the incident disrupted services from a variety of providers including CenturyLink, AT&T, T-Mobile and Verizon. A fiber optic line was cut at Povladera. A different line was cut on Garfield Street in the City of Socorro, Tripp said.

Socorro County’s 911 service was having issues due to the outage, but Tripp is not aware of any incidents from people not being able to reach 911.

Tripp had to ask ham radio operators to disseminate some information during the outage. The county’s emergency management also worked with the state Emergency Office of Communications Coordination.

“Everybody adjusted as quickly as they could,” said Tripp, and law enforcement were able to communicate via radios.

In her time as emergency manager, Tripp has never seen an outage this bad that took out so much of the cell service.

Socorro Librarian Chelsea Jones told the Socorro City Council on Tuesday that the library had internet service through the outage and saw a lot of patrons Saturday.  The library’s internet is fed by a line from Silver City.