GigE+
NETWORK NEWS

The GigE Plus Fiber Optic Network operates as a high capacity, backhaul network for providing high availability service to interconnected local Broadband Providers and Carriers. The backhaul network, also, facilitates the delivery of new and improved broadband services to rural and underserved communities in Ohio, Michigan and Indiana. The GigE Plus Fiber Optic Network was established through Independents Fiber Network, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Com Net, Inc. (CNI), that provides improved Ethernet connectivity for powering next generation voice, video and data services to its interconnected Broadband Service Providers.

GigE+ Deployment Updates

During the second quarter of 2013, CNI has continued to turn-up the following city-pair cut-overs. The list includes:

3035 Moffat St. Toledo, Ohio and 1946 N. 13th St. Toledo, Ohio; 11941 Township Rd. 108 Findlay, Ohio and 5990 W. Tiffin St. Bascom, Ohio; 115 S Main St. Waldron, Michigan and 6525 Sand Creek Hwy. Sand Creek, Michigan; 105 E. Holland St. Archbold, Ohio and S732 County Rd. 20B Ridgeville Corners, Ohio; 5707 N. West St. Lima, Ohio and 1250 S. Washington St. Van Wert, Ohio; 5990 W. Tiffin St. Bascom, Ohio and 104 E. 7th St. Sycamore, Ohio; 5707 N. West St. Lima, Ohio and 13883 County Rd. 80 Kenton, Ohio; 4170 Allium Ct. Springfield, Ohio and 126 Scioto St. Urbana, Ohio; County Hwy. 204 Antwerp, Ohio and 21980 St. Rt 637 Defiance, Ohio; 245 W. Third St. Ottoville, Ohio and 2010 E. Gypsy Lave Rd. Bowling Green, Ohio; 535 Scherers Ct. Columbus, Ohio and 4787 Township Rd. 191 Marengo, Ohio.

Independents Fiber Network established PoP in Chicago

Independents Fiber Network recently announced that it has established a PoP in the Equinix data center that is located at 350 E. Cermak St. in Chicago, IL. Equinix is the leading Global Interconnection platform with over 95 data centers located in 31 strategic markets. By Independents Fiber Network placing this PoP in Equinix, it provides them a redundant connection back to their network

In Western Ohio. Independents Fiber Network has installed Cyan DWDM equipment on the 6th floor and will, additionally, be connecting to multiple carriers within that location.

Independents Fiber Network is a member of INDATEL and has a peering relationship with them in order to receive better access to streaming content and member network services. The connection through INDATEL gives Independents Fiber Network the ability to extend their fiber optic network nationwide through the networks of INDATEL member companies.

Independents Fiber Network will be bringing the connections from the Equinix data center back to two Ohio PoP sites for redundancy. One will be hauled back to their Lima, Ohio PoP located at 5707 N West St. and the other connection will be connecting at their Worthington, Ohio PoP located at 535 Scherer's Court. These PoP connections are core sites on its backbone network that connects the majority of Northwest and Western Ohio.

Randy Plaisier, CIO of CNI and Independents Fiber Network, commented on the connection. "This project will provide us better connectivity to more than 70 of the largest carriers in the United States. In addition, the connection allows us to expand the nationwide reach of Ethernet services we provide to our Ohio customers. The INDATEL member companies tend to serve rural areas that the larger carriers generally do not serve with native Ethernet."

Ohio Nears 100% Broadband Availability

In June, Connect Ohio reported that 97.62% of Ohio had broadband availability. In the last report, from October 2012, the number of homes without access to broadband totaled out to 64,800, compared to the current amount of 59,200 homes.

Connect Ohio began in 2008 under Governor Ted Strickland and operates as a non-profit in the state of Ohio. They work to cover all of Ohio with Broadband Internet access and have a goal of improving the use of technology. Their main focus of starting the initiative was to narrow the Broadband gap across geographic boundaries.

In 2009, Ohio was awarded $1.8 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that was to be used to research and improve Ohio connectivity. At the time, Govenor Strickland stated that the lack of Broadband infrastructure was not only slowing our educational opportunities, but it was also putting a strain on attracting employers coming into Ohio.

In 2011, the total of Ohio homes with a computer had grown to 80% with the broadband usage totaling 66%. At the time, the total U.S. average was 63%. Also in 2011, Ohio started the initiative of offering training courses on high-speed Internet access through the project called "Every Citizen Online".

Now in 2013, the report given in June led the Connect Ohio Executive Direct, Stu Johnson, to comment on the statewide project. "Over the past six months the concentration of investments has been to upgrade existing networks while expansion remained stagnant". He also went on to say, "Ohioans can be proud of the continued network upgrade investment in telecommunications, cable and wireless Internet service providers. Connect Ohio continues to work towards reaching the goal of Broadband access for all Ohioans".

USDA Grant Program Announcement

During the last week in June, the United States Department of Rural Utilities Service announced funding would be made available through the Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) grant program. Eligible applicants must serve in rural areas, demonstrate economic needs and provide 15% in matching funds. Eligibility also includes entities providing education and/or medical care via telecommunications that include corporations/partnerships, tribal organizations, private for profit and non-profit.

Deadline for grants during the 2013 Fiscal Year is Monday, August 12, 2013. Applications will only be accepted for projects that promote rural economic development and job creation. Applications must also be compliant with all statues and regulations before any grants are approved. For further information, visit http://rurdev.usda.gov/upt_dlt.html.

Connect Ed Initiative Announcement

In June, President Obama announced an initiative called Connect Ed. The initiative is expected to call for a massive upgrade to data connections serving the nation's schools. The goal is to bring high-speed broadband to nearly all of the nation's schools within five years.

It was noted in a *Telecompetitor* article that "If this program actually comes to pass it could be good news for network operators, including those in rural areas that have lagged behind metro areas in broadband availability because the cost of deploying broadband is higher than urban areas. And as the "middle mile" broadband stimulus program demonstrated, once a community gets high-speed connectivity to the rest of the world via an anchor institution, it's a lot easier for network operators to find a business case for bringing broadband to individual homes and businesses".

There are several concerns about how funding will be made available, but the ultimate decision will be up to the FCC. For President Obama's full plan, visit http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/connected_fact_sheet.pdf.

NTIA Begins the Planning Phases of the FirstNet Initiative

The NTIA has started the first phases of the FirstNet initiative project. This initiative, once implemented, will provide emergency responders access to the first high-speed, nationwide network that is dedicated to public safety.

FirstNet's focus is to improve the communication among local, state, regional, tribal and national emergency services personnel. The initiative is fulfilling a fundamental need of the public safety community by creating a mission-critical communications system and creating a process to help save lives and protect the health and safety of all Americans.

For more information on the First Net Initiative, visit www.firstnet.gov.