



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Com Net, Inc. now burying fiber as part of \$43 million broadband project**

*Haviland, Ohio* — June 16, 2011 — Com Net, Inc. announced today that they have begun to bury fiber as part of their \$43 million broadband project. In 2010 they were awarded \$30 million in federal stimulus funding for their GigE Plus project. The project will add almost 700 new miles of fiber to its high capacity network in order to expand existing broadband services through the GigE Plus Availability Coalition (GigEPAC) partners to rural and underserved communities in 28 Western Ohio Counties.

A ceremony to mark the beginning of the construction phase of the project was held on today at 1:00pm at Wayne Trace High School located at 4915 US Route 127 in Haviland, OH.

Com Net's CEO Tim Berelsman stated, "After successfully completing a study to ensure Com Net's GigE Plus Project is deployed in an environmentally friendly manner and weathering one of the rainiest springs in years, Com Net is excited to enter the construction phase with its project, join in the national broadband rollout and accelerate the deployment of reliable high-speed services to rural western and central Ohio."

"Today's celebration marks the beginning of construction on 700 miles of fiber optic plant that will connect with existing facilities of Com Net and its partners to create the backbone of a new, highly survivable, broadband infrastructure that will serve as an enabler for economic development throughout the region," Berelsman said.

Com Net, in partnership with OARnet, Zayo Bandwidth and 33 last mile service providers, came together for the federal stimulus application to fulfill the vision for the GigE Plus project. The project proposes to:

- Provide Connectivity for community anchor institutions through the partners high capacity fiber network including K-12, state and local government, public safety, libraries and community support organization facilities
- Spur affordable broadband access for local consumers and businesses by enabling local service providers to connect to the GigE Plus project's open network
- Encourage investment in economically distressed counties served by the project, many of which have unemployment rates higher than the state average

The benefits and reach of the GigEPAC high capacity fiber network can be extended throughout the State of Ohio thanks to the coordination efforts of the State of Ohio and GigEPAC partner, OARnet. Com Net, along with other Ohio Middle Mile Consortium (OMMC) partners Horizon Telecom, OneCommunity and OARnet, formed a public-private partnership to create a comprehensive statewide plan to expand broadband infrastructure to the underserved and unserved areas of the state.

In March 2010, Com Net and the other OMMC partners submitted applications to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) for the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) to develop a Comprehensive Community Infrastructure (CCI). BTOP funding was established as part of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA), better known as the federal stimulus package.

"High-speed broadband access is critical for economic development and job growth," Senator Sherrod Brown said. "Thanks to economic recovery funds, this broadband access platform will help bring jobs and business investment to western Ohio. This project is a model example for broadband development, and today's groundbreaking ceremony is proof positive that the Recovery Act is helping to bring 21st-century opportunities to all corners of our state."

While the environmental study was being conducted, Com Net utilized the time to meet with many Community Anchor Institutions to determine how best to maximize the effects of the fiber routes since making the broadband available is only the first step...being able to sustain it is key to meeting the requirements of the award.

"We are pleased to be chosen as the fiber optic cable supplier for Com Net's GigEPAC project through our distribution partner, Power & Telephone Supply," states Greg Williams, Director of Marketing at Draka Communications Americas. "The national broadband rollout is well underway and is accelerating the deployment of high speed broadband services to rural America."

"Today's kickoff celebration represents a significant milestone in the economic development of Western Ohio communities," said Michael D'Angelo, General Manager of Northeast Region, Zayo Networks. "Zayo is pleased to partner with Com Net to bring bandwidth to the underserved businesses and organizations in rural Ohio."

Com Net maintains an open access policy in association with the project, which means that any provider will be able to access the network at reasonable rates and terms. For more information on Com Net's GigE Plus project coverage in Western and Central Ohio, visit [www.cniteam.com](http://www.cniteam.com).

**About Com Net:** Com Net, Inc. has 18 years of experience working with independent rural telecom operators in the region to provide broadband, advanced voice, video and data services. Com Net is a managing member of various shared networks, including Broadband Network Group, Independents Fiber Network and Tier 2 Communications. Fiber facilities under Com Net's management in northwestern Ohio currently span over 600 miles and serve over 20 independent last mile providers, both wireless and wireline. Com Net is a member of the Independent Alliances Telecom Group (INDATELgroup™), an organization composed of Network Operators covering over 20 states that are owned by Independent Telephone Companies from their home states. Com Net is a partner in the Ohio Middle Mile Consortium (OMMC), which includes fellow BTOP recipient, OneCommunity in northeastern Ohio; fellow BTOP recipient, Horizon Telecom serving Southeast Ohio; Ohio's Office of Information Technology, Department of Administrative Services; and OARnet, the State's Academic and Research network. The OMMC partners have come together to integrate their service platform across 82 Ohio counties. For more information, please visit [www.cniteam.com](http://www.cniteam.com) or call 419-739-3100.

**About OARnet:** The Ohio Academic Resources Network (OARnet) was established by the Ohio Board of Regents in 1987 to provide researchers with access to the computational resources of the Ohio Supercomputer Center. Today, OARnet provides Ohio's colleges and universities and their research partners with an integrated technology infrastructure that includes unrivaled intrastate network connectivity and shared services. [www.oar.net](http://www.oar.net).

**About Zayo Bandwidth:** Zayo Bandwidth, a wholly owned subsidiary of Zayo Group, owns and operates fiber optic networks totaling over 20,000 fiber route miles. Zayo Bandwidth ([www.zayo.com/bandwidth](http://www.zayo.com/bandwidth)) offers services in 141 markets spanning 23 states. Zayo Bandwidth's mission is to provide responsive bandwidth infrastructure solutions and a strong and growing network. [www.zayo.com](http://www.zayo.com)