



NEWS RELEASE

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Com Net, Inc. is awarded broadband stimulus grant

WPAKONETA, Ohio — July 2, 2010 — Com Net, Inc. announced today that they have been 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.

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 as many as 880 community anchor institutions to its 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, 20 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 Telcom, 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.

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Com Net’s CEO Tim Berelsman stated, “Com Net was founded in the early 90s by 22 of Ohio’s rural independent operating companies to provide collectively what could not be accomplished individually. Com Net pooled its assets with those of its owner–partners to deliver advanced services to the rural communities that they served.

“Our history of cooperation and open communications allowed us to quickly identify with the vision of the OMMC and to understand the benefit for not only Northwest Ohio, but all of Ohio, by bringing our existing partners with us in collaborating with Zayo Bandwidth, OARnet, Horizon and OneCommunity in the spirit of the ARRA BTOP application process,” Berelsman said.

“This is a great day for Ohio. Comprehensive broadband services for the state are vital to enhancing education, retraining our displaced workforce and preparing our future workforce to drive Ohio economic development,” said Ohio Board of Regents Chancellor Eric D. Fingerhut, who had called on the Ohio Academic Resources Network (OARnet), the technology operations arm of the University System of Ohio, to coordinate a unified approach for federal stimulus broadband applications.

“This infrastructure will support new initiatives for reaching Ohioans and promoting the retention and creation of jobs in economically distressed areas of the state,” said Pankaj Shah, executive director, OARnet.

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About Com Net: Com Net, Inc. has 17 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 applicant, OneCommunity in northeastern Ohio, who has a pending BTOP application; fellow BTOP applicant, Horizon Telcom serving Southeast Ohio, who has a pending BTOP application; 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 or call 419-739-3100.

About Horizon Telcom: With corporate offices in Chillicothe, Ohio, Horizon Telcom is a leading broadband provider of advanced data services in thirteen southern Ohio counties. Utilizing its more than 1,100-mile network of fiber optic cable, Horizon delivers reliable phone, digital cable TV, high-speed Internet, home and business security and monitoring to its business and residential customers. Horizon's entrepreneurial heritage and long-standing commitment to remarkable customer care ensures its devotion to connecting the people and businesses of southern Ohio to their worlds through the delivery of cutting-edge broadband technology and proven telecommunication systems. For more information about Horizon, visit the company's website at www.horizontel.com.

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.

About OneCommunity: OneCommunity is an Ohio-based nonprofit dedicated to accelerating the adoption of information technologies to drive economic development in Northern Ohio. OneCommunity connects more than 1,000 public and nonprofit institutions via its regional fiber-optic broadband network, one of the fastest in the world. The organization collaborates with public and private sector partners to lead innovative 21st-century programs in health care, education, government and economic development. www.onecommunity.org

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) 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