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BROADBAND
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MAPLE BROADBAND AND WAITSFIELD AND CHAMPLAIN VALLEY TELECOM SIGN AGREEMENT TO MANAGE AND DELIVER SERVICES TO MAPLE BROADBAND'S FIBER NETWORK

Agreement Sets the Stage for Fiber Optic Build Out to Unserved and Underserved Addison County Communities

Addison County, Vermont — On August 26, two organizations that exist to serve Addison County residents joined forces, with the shared goal of delivering fiber optic broadband internet access to every address in Maple Broadband's member towns.

Funds needed to pay for the fiber network will come from grants and loans. Because of Maple Broadband's structure as a tax-free municipal entity, it will ultimately be able to secure funding from the municipal bond market at attractive interest rates.

"This was a critical foundational move for Maple Broadband," said Steve Huffaker, Maple Broadband's Chair. "A first step in deploying our fiber network was to identify a qualified organization to manage and deliver services over the network."

"When seeking an agreement with a potential term of 30 years, proper alignment of goals was critical to identifying the right partner. We found a perfect match in Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT); a local Vermont telecommunications operator that has extensive experience in building and operating a rural broadband network."

“Even before this Network Management Agreement was signed, WCVT has been an invaluable resource in support of Maple Broadband’s efforts. Through our collaboration, we will be able to leverage the deep well of experience and the many operational assets that WCVT already has in place,” said Huffaker.

This project will extend a fiber-to-the-home network capable of delivering high-speed broadband service to unserved and underserved addresses that are among some of the hardest to reach and hardest to serve in the state of Vermont.

According to Eric Haskin, President and CEO of Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom, “We are very pleased to be working with Maple Broadband to continue to expand fiber-optic connectivity to Addison County communities. This partnership will go a long way toward making next generation, high-speed Internet services available to many communities that don’t have access to adequate service today.”

As a precursor to network construction, Maple Broadband is engaged in pre-construction. It is presently conducting a high-level network design, pole surveys, and detailed network design while working through the state and federal grant processes. For more information about the timeline and progress, visit www.maplebroadband.net.

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About Maple Broadband:

Maple Broadband began operation in October 2020 under the name of Addison County Communications Union District. It spent the balance of 2020 developing operational structures and procedures and supporting the state’s work to help its citizens cope with the telecommunications challenges related to COVID-19. In February 2021, its website, and the name “Maple Broadband” was launched.

Maple Broadband is one of nine tax-exempt Communications Union Districts (CUDs) serving the state of Vermont. CUDs are non-profit, municipal entities formed with the single goal of delivering high-speed fiber broadband service to every unserved and underserved address in their member towns. CUDs cannot tax their member towns or the residents of those towns. A CUD must fund its operations by grants, debt, and donations.

To date Maple Broadband has identified and engaged a network engineering firm that is currently creating a network design that will serve as the basis for the ensuing network build. After pre-construction steps are complete, network construction can begin. At Maple Broadband’s current pace, construction may begin as early as 2022.

About Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom:

Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom is a third generation, family-owned telephone company serving the Mad River and central Champlain Valley regions of Vermont and has been providing telephone service to the Mad River Valley since 1904. As a locally owned Vermont company, WCVT is committed to its local communities, and recognizes the extreme value in deploying the most advanced communications services to ensure its rural communities are connected to their urban counterparts with similar quality service. WCVT makes significant capital investment in its network on an annual basis, continuing its network evolution in bringing higher broadband speeds and greater reliability to a larger number of our extremely rural and high-cost locations in our service area. As a 117-year-old, family owned, local Vermont Company, WCVT is uniquely positioned to bring a 100% gigabyte capable fiber-optic network to Vermont’s rural communities.