

Fiber to the Home & Business Aids Economic Development

Baldwin Telecom Continues Fiber Installation in the Town of Troy

Work continues on an important 21st century infrastructure project in the Town of Troy, Wisconsin, (St. Croix County).

Last summer, Baldwin Telecom, Inc. (BTI) learned it was a successful applicant for a \$4,533,949 matching grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Services (USDA RUS) for a broadband deployment project throughout the Town of Troy. The grant was part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Upon completion, Troy's residents and businesses will have a 100 percent fiber-based broadband connection.

"Broadband and high-speed internet connections are the super highways of this century," said William Rubin, executive director of St. Croix Economic Development Corporation. "Fiber-based connections are akin to interstate highways, but more importantly, fiber provides a connection throughout the galaxy, and not just from 'Point A' to 'Point B.' With St. Croix County's inclusion in the Twin Cities metro area, more individuals and businesses are depending on high-speed connections that fiber brings."

BTI's project in Troy is about 25% percent completed, including the installation of the main fiber and the extension of fiber to connection spots at homes, according to Larry Kneendorf, general manager of BTI. "The project is going along smoothly as we have excellent contractors involved with our project," said Kneendorf. "We are targeting the first week of July to start installing customers on the system."

BTI has been providing telephone service since 1900 and added video services in the early 1980s. In 2002, BTI was recognized as the first independent telephone company in Wisconsin to deploy fiber to the home technology in new subdivisions it serves. Fiber optic technology carries data, voice, and video signals over longer distances and at higher speeds than other forms of telecommunication.

"BTI's fiber project in Troy represents a good start," added Rubin. "A big part of St. Croix County is rural, and that should not be misinterpreted as being disconnected. There are growing opportunities for fiber projects that involve tele-medicine, distance learning, and electronic commerce. We want to make sure St. Croix's residents and businesses are well connected."



(above) A plow blade installs the main fiber optic cable line in the ground.

(below) Workers install the main electronics cabinet for the broadband system near the Troy Town Hall. Photos courtesy of Baldwin Telecom, Inc.

