



Dakota Carrier
Network

Connecting North Dakota ...and Beyond

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Digital Divide No Longer Exists In North Dakota

Bismarck, ND --- In a media conference held on Thursday, January 17 at Dakota Carrier Network's (DCN) Network Operations Center (NOC) in Bismarck, it was announced that completion of the virtual state network has been accomplished. By switching on this second phase of the DCN high-speed, broadband pipeline, it was stated that North Dakota government entities and 171 school districts now have access to voice, data, and video networks at speeds only attainable through a contemporary fiber optic network.

In addition, the local telecommunications companies that own DCN have begun implementing additional broadband services for rural North Dakota customers using wireless and satellite technologies, making it possible for nearly 90% of the state's population to obtain access to networks with high speed capabilities. This latest development reinforces a recent finding by the United State Department of Agriculture that more of North Dakota's farmers (47%) have access to the Internet than farmers in any other state in the Union.

Speakers at the landmark event included North Dakota Governor John Hoeven; North Dakota Chief Information Officer Curt Wolfe; Warren Hight, general manager of SRT telecommunications company in Minot; and Evan Hass, general manager of Dakota Carrier Network which has offices in Fargo and Bismarck. Using maps and graphics to demonstrate the physical location of the DCN network, Evan Hass pointed out that, "Dakota Carrier Network was created to connect North Dakota and the surrounding region. The broadband and ATM networks are in place that we will build on to provide services to existing business customers and support economic development throughout North Dakota."

Adding to Hass' comments, Governor Hoeven noted that, "providing a high quality education to the students across North Dakota is one of our most important priorities. Thanks to the DCN network, the students' access to high speed Internet service and the ability to provide a broad range of classes with interactive video service is one more way we can provide that high quality education throughout our state."

Formed in 1996 by 15 rural telecommunications companies, DCN built and activated a synchronous optical network (SONET) consisting of two rings for redundant protection against outages to users of the system. Overlying the SONET network is an ATM (asynchronous transfer mode) system with connections that again provide for high-speed connections while adding another layer of protection from outages.

DCN was awarded the state contract for building the state-of-the-art system in a July, 2000 announcement that proclaimed DCN "the unanimous first choice" for the construction of a system that would first link together all state

agencies, the state's 11 higher education campuses, and the National Guard. The first phase was completed ahead of schedule, turning up more than 200 broadband circuits with very few technical problems. Phase I connected 64 communities, Phase II added another 131 communities, enabling K-12 schools to access networks for voice, data, and video as well as providing businesses with the opportunity to develop Wide Area Networks (WANs) with exceptional speed and security.

"The local telecommunications companies have made the commitment to bringing advanced technology to North Dakota," said Hight. "Building the network that serves the state and the school is just another example of their technical expertise and ability to provide service that helps their communities grow."

Citing DCN's success in getting the fiber optic network installed, Wolfe proclaimed North Dakota ready to meet the needs of new and expanding businesses: "The network provided by DCN and the North Dakota local telecommunications companies is as good as any across the country. They have demonstrated their ability to quickly install, service, and maintain state-of-the-art equipment."

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