

From: Sandoval, Catherine J.K.
Sent: 8/3/2011 4:46:25 PM
To: Cherry, Brian K (/O=PG&E/OU=CORPORATE/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=BKC7);
Slawson, Melissa C. (melissa.slawson@cpuc.ca.gov); Katague, Ditas
(ditas.katague@cpuc.ca.gov)
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: Kudos on Humboldt Broadband partnership

Brian, I just read about PG&E's key role in facilitating access for installation of fiber optic lines to bring new broadband service to Humboldt County. Kudos to PG&E for its role in this project. Thanks for helping to bring broadband service to one of the areas of California with the lowest levels of broadband access. Congratulations, Commissioner Sandoval

Humboldt Beacon - Fiber optic line installation begins on Highway 36; 'everything is going according to plan'

By [Mary Bullwinkel](#), August 1

After completing attachment and anchoring work to existing utility poles, the first piece of a second fiber optic line to serve the North Coast was installed this week.

Ground crews hooked the line onto a Pacific Gas and Electric utility pole along the Freshwater/Kneeland Road. This is the fiber optic line that will serve the remote areas along the Highway 36 corridor. Installation is expected to be complete by the end of the year. PG&E was first approached in the Fall of 2007. Greg Foster, Executive Director of Redwood Region Economic Development Commission, was at that time working for Lost Coast Communications. He called it a "Hail Mary pass" and was pleasantly surprised when PG&E was receptive to the idea of using the utility's right of way for installation of a fiber line.

Line installation will continue up and over Kneeland Road, and will join Highway 36 in the community of Bridgeville. The new fiber optic line will then run east along Highway 36 to the Low Gap substation at Mad River, Forest Glen Meter Station, Wildwood Substation, and end at the Cottonwood Substation. It is a total of 121 miles of fiber optic line, and is anticipated to serve more than 200 square miles of territory, including more than 500 rural households.

Ground crews will be doing some of the line installation, and in the more remote areas, helicopters will fly the line from pole to pole. The fiber optic line will be installed 100 percent on existing PG&E utility poles.

"Everything is going according to plan, and we are so excited," said Mary-Lou Smulders of IP Networks,

the lead company involved in the private/public partnership project.

Smulders described the project as a “wonderful marriage fulfilling two goals. Firstly, delivering broadband connectivity to rural communities in California and secondly, to ensure redundant connectivity to Eureka and surrounding areas.”

Humboldt County-based 101Netlink is a partner in the project, and will offer high speed Internet and voice (telephone, fax) services to the remote communities along the fiber optic line route.

“The fiber line is like an Interstate,” said Seth Johannesen, owner of 101Netlink, “We are the off ramps and on ramps to the customers.” His company will deliver services wirelessly from Bridgeville east along the Highway 36 corridor to South Fork Mountain, since the fiber optic line will not be hooked directly to individual customers. In addition, at least two other service providers will have access to the fiber line.

Johannesen said, “Since we were willing to provide the Internet access to areas along the fiber route, the project was eligible to receive the (more than) \$4 million grant.” The grant comes from the California Advanced Services Found (CASF), established by the Public Utilities Commission in December 2007. The total cost of the project is anticipated to be \$10.5 million, so the grant will cover 40 percent of that cost.

In April of this year, a joint letter of support for the new fiber optic line project was signed by both chairs of the Humboldt and Trinity County Boards of Supervisors. “This is a priority project for our two counties,” the letter said, “as the current lack of reliable broadband infrastructure puts our communities as a severe economic disadvantage.”

“It has taken a lot of strong people working on this and pushing it forward,” Foster said, “especially with the logistics of construction, including National Forest property, private property, and rights of way. It's been quite the community effort,” he added, “and made possible by a group of people who believe in this project.”

Humboldt County has been served by one fiber optic line running up Highway 101 since 2003. The Highway 36 line could serve as a redundant connection should problems arise with the original line.

From: Cherry, Brian K [mailto:BKC7@pge.com]
Sent: Thu 7/28/2011 5:11 PM
To: Sandoval, Catherine J.K.
Subject: FW: Fitch press release attached

Attached for your information is the press release of Fitch Ratings, affirming PG&E's rating but revising the ratings outlook from stable to negative.