

Fiber Optic Line Proposed for Rural Alaska

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

It turns out the company that brought high speed fiber optic telecommunications to Kodiak was just warming up. KMXT's Jay Barrett has more on the company's plan to extend its fiber optic service to Southwest, Western and Arctic Alaska.

Kodiak-Kenai
Cable Company , jointly owned by the Old Harbor and Ouzinkie Native corporations, now plans to run a fiber optic cable from Kodiak, to Dutch Harbor, and then back up to Bristol Bay and along the coast, ultimately ending in Prudhoe Bay.

Ik (Ike)
Icard, with the Great Pacific Cable Company, is designing the project for KKCC. He says the line will stretch over 34-hundred miles, and make landfall at the larger communities along the way, such as Cold Bay, Naknek, Dillingham, Bethel, Nome, Kotzebue and Barrow. He says a submarine cable is far more feasible than trying to bring the same bandwidth overland:

-- (Fiber 1 15 sec "It really doesn't make ... from those cable heads.")

KKCC
proposes to fund the Northern Fiber Link by using a National Telecommunications and Information Administration Broadband Grant authorized under the federal stimulus program. In return, the company says it will offer, at no charge other than maintenance, bandwidth to the University of Alaska, National Science Foundation, Homeland Security, health corporations and other nonprofits.

Icard

designed the Kodiak Kenai Cable Company's first project, which strung two fiber optic lines from Kodiak to the mainland. The company is now building a microwave relay system to bring that same high speed access to the villages around Kodiak Island.

While

stringing cable to Kodiak was no small feat, Icard said it went extremely smoothly, and expects the Northern Fiber Link to be the same, despite a different set of unique design challenges all along the route.

-- (Fiber 2 32 sec "We're
dealing with ... up the river.")

Icard says

the first phase, from Kodiak to Nome, is expected to be laid next summer, with phase two, from Nome to Deadhorse, done in 2011. The line will have an initial capacity of 160 billion bits per second, almost the equivalent of 3-million dial-up modems.

I'm Jay
Barrett.

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