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Network New Hampshire Now to Break Ground on Statewide High-Speed Broadband Network

*Awards Contract for Phase One "Middle Mile" Fiber Network
to New Hampshire Optical Systems*

DURHAM, N.H., April 15, 2011 -- Network New Hampshire Now ([NNHN](#)) today began the first phase in bringing affordable broadband access to the state's under-served citizens, schools and businesses by awarding a N.H.-based company a contract to construct a middle-mile fiber-optic network.

Nashua, N.H.-based New Hampshire Optical Systems ([NHOS](#)) will soon begin construction of a 500+ mile high-speed network stretching from the seacoast to the southwest region, up to the northwest, the North Country, and through the lakes region. The \$34 million project, one of the largest fiber networks in the country, is expected to bring many new construction and technology jobs to the state. When complete, the middle mile network aims to improve economic development in N.H. communities with little to no access to affordable broadband today.

The middle mile network is the first and largest part of a three-phase initiative resulting from New Hampshire's *Broadband Technology Opportunities Program* ([BTOP](#)) federal grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration ([NTIA](#)), which NNHN spearheaded. NNHN is a collaboration of N.H.-based public and private partners focused on building and interconnecting high-speed broadband networks in all 10 state counties. Additional projects include an enhanced wireless public safety network and public television network, connectivity for an intelligent transportation system, and last mile "fiber to the home" in two pilot communities. As the core component supporting many of these projects, the middle mile network is the recipient of the largest portion of the BTOP grant.

New Hampshire Optical Systems was chosen from among five finalists following an intensive, five-month open bid and evaluation process. "It was a highly competitive process with tough federal grant requirements. NHOS met or exceeded all of the NTIA requirements soundly, while also submitting the lowest cost bid," said Scott Valcourt, who leads New Hampshire's BTOP grant for NNHN. "We believe NHOS will be a strong partner who will complete the project on time and on budget."

NHOS is a for-profit fiber communications firm who is teaming with [Waveguide](#), a Chelmsford, MA company with expertise in engineering, management, construction and maintenance of fiber optic networks. The companies' executive teams have a strong track record of assembling fiber networks

across N.H. and the northeastern U.S., including many of the Fortune 500 network providers, wireless carriers, and municipalities. NHOS is investing \$10 million of its own capital into the project, bringing the total investment in the middle mile initiative to \$34 million. Along with this financial investment, the company plans to invest in N.H. workforce development with the establishment of an apprenticeship program in support of the project to help students in the state gain career training, experience, and jobs in advanced networking technologies.

“We are proud to be part of the effort to expand broadband throughout the state and the country,” said Dave Reusch, general manager of New Hampshire Optical Systems. “We believe our team is uniquely qualified to develop and manage the middle mile network.”

The “middle mile” forms the communications backbone linking a network operator's core network to local systems and their user base – the same way Interstate 93 provides the corridor for traffic to and from other roads and their surrounding communities. The network will be open to any organization wanting to provide Internet services to end-users, including homes, schools, healthcare facilities, businesses and other enterprises. NHOS will build, own, and manage the middle mile fiber network, and will sell wholesale fiber connectivity along the route, as mandated by the BTOP grant requirements.

The NNHN project aims to dramatically increase broadband access throughout the state by creating an open access network, which will increase choice and competition among network providers, making it economically feasible for them deliver service to end-user communities across the state. It will also try to capitalize on as much existing, available fiber network assets in the state as possible.

NNHN has received \$44.5 million in economic stimulus money from the NTIA to fund critically needed broadband expansion across the state. Led by the University of New Hampshire, Network New Hampshire Now was brought together by the N.H. Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED). It was guided by the Governor’s Telecommunications Advisory Board (TAB), and the 2008 New Hampshire Broadband Action Plan. The grant will be matched with nearly \$22 million in private cash and in-kind funding.

About Network New Hampshire Now

New Hampshire Network Now (NNHN) is a collaboration of public and private organizations, led by the University of New Hampshire, to develop a high-speed broadband network throughout the state. Funded by an economic stimulus grant and private funding, the organization is expanding broadband coverage to keep the state vibrant, innovative and relevant for businesses, citizens and educational institutions. For more information, visit <http://networknhnow.org/>

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