

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP BRINGS SUPER HIGH SPEED INTERNET CONNECTIVITY TO THE TOWN OF ROCKPORT, MAINE IN 'HIGH TECH HARBOR' PROJECT

For Immediate Release
ROCKPORT, ME –

The Town of Rockport, Maine Media Workshops + College, Network Maine (part of the UMaine System), and internet service provider GWI worked together to bring ultra-fast fiber optic internet infrastructure to the Rockport village area. The “High Tech Harbor” project, now in its final phases, delivers internet up to 100 times faster than a regular broadband connection to homes and businesses nearby.

“It is widely recognized that Maine’s economic future is bound up with our internet infrastructure,” says Rockport Town Manager Richard Bates, “whether you are a small business looking to sell Maine goods world wide, or a technologically-focused company working with the newest media-based technologies.”

This community owned ultra-high-speed network infrastructure is a first for Maine. The public/private partnership that made it possible is made up of municipal government, private industry, and educational institutions, and is also unique in the state. This kind of local level partnership is key to paving Maine’s economic path forward, allowing smaller, more rural communities to access technology that is becoming increasingly essential to economic success.

“We are devoted to education in the media arts and this project is essential to our success,” says Meg Weston, President of Maine Media Workshops + College. “We are teaching the newest media-based technologies in photography, filmmaking, and electronic publishing. This high-speed network allows our students unlimited access to content through their mobile devices and will enable us to deliver educational content online from our campus in Rockport all around the world. ”

All four of the organizations involved were essential to the success of this project. The impetus came from Maine Media who provided some of the initial funding along with the Town of Rockport and Network Maine, a unit of the University of Maine System that is committed to providing robust, reliable, high speed internet connection to education and research facilities at an affordable cost. Network Maine connects colleges and libraries to the backbone of fiber optic cable known as the Three Ring Binder. As a result of their effort, the Rockport Town Library will also be part of the network, making super high speed connectivity accessible in this location for all Rockport residents.

The Town of Rockport understood and embraced a vision of municipal ownership and its potential for economic development in the town. Rockport Town Manager Richard Bates said “This public/private partnership is going to make Rockport more attractive to companies looking to increase the quality of life of their employees without giving up anything in terms of connection to the global economy. And it will help the businesses already in Rockport to thrive.”

GWI, the fourth partner, accomplished the construction of the network, running the fiber cable throughout the village, and offering gigabit speed internet connection services to local businesses and residents along the route.

“In today’s world, high-speed Internet is as necessary for success as roads and bridges were one-hundred years ago.” – Maine Senator Angus King