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New Broadband Network Steps in with Fast, Affordable Fiber Internet Connections for Every Home in Medina County

Medina County Fiber gives all residents affordable, lightning-fast internet, with true choice of services and providers.

Medina County, Ohio... April 2, 2019— At a packed press conference this morning, Brian Snider, President of Neighborly’s Broadband Group, announced the launch of Medina County Fiber: a new open access broadband network bringing high-speed fiber internet to every home in Seville, Guilford Township, and Westfield Center in Medina County, Ohio. Nearly 100 people—county commissioners, elected officials, and community members—attended the event to unveil and celebrate the project designed for communities that have long suffered from slow, expensive, or nonexistent internet service.

Neighborly, a venture-backed technology company that connects communities with capital for public infrastructure projects, is financing the network and will oversee engineering and construction in partnership with leading firms. Construction will begin this summer and the first residents will have service in autumn. The fiber will be placed underground and overhead on utility poles, according to a construction plan designed to minimize disruption and maximize efficiency. Within five years, the network will extend to every home in Medina County.

“Fiber broadband networks are the most important underpinning for every future-ready community “ said Snider. “We know affordable and accessible high-speed internet is the key to better educational outcomes, greater economic opportunity and output, and the foundation for all next-generation infrastructure—including 5G technology. We’re so excited to be here in Medina County, connecting people and communities to their future.”

In a clear break from the status quo where incumbent internet service providers (ISPs) own the infrastructure and are the only choice of provider on the closed network—Medina County Fiber is an open access network. In this model, multiple services and service providers can operate on the shared network and residents can choose services from varying providers, according to their needs and budget. With Medina County Fiber, fiber internet connections start at \$49.95 per month on a month-to-month contract. Residents can express their interest in joining this new network at www.medinafiber.com.

The benefits of fiber are many

Positioned midway between Cleveland and Akron, Medina County has a “middle mile” fiber ring which serves businesses with fiber internet. The new network will be built out from this middle mile ring to every home, in what is known as a “fiber-to-the-home”, or “last mile” connection.

Fiber networks, which are replacing copper and coaxial cable, transmit data at near the speed of light, translating to faster load times, smoother streaming, and reduced buffering. Fiber networks also provide symmetrical internet speeds: the same speed for download and upload.

“With Medina County Fiber, our residents will finally be able to enjoy the benefits of high-speed internet at affordable prices,” said Mayor Carol Carter of Seville. “Super fast transmission of data will give students access to the best online resources for research and completing homework assignments; home-based work will have clear, reliable connections; farmers will be able to access essential market data in seconds; and property values for homeowners are likely to rise, too.”

Fiber connectivity is also critical for starting and running a successful business in this digital economy. According to Bethany Dentler, Executive Director, Medina County Economic Development Corporation, the County has seen 1,003 new jobs and \$343,689,375 in capital investment since the middle mile Medina County Fiber Network was completed in 2013. “What do these numbers mean? Nearly half of the total payroll created, half of the capital investment, half of the square footage, and nearly three-quarters of the jobs retained are a direct result of our deploying fiber optic broadband,” she said. “The availability of a fiber connection has positioned Medina County for the future.”

David Corrado, CEO, Medina County Fiber Network noted that “Medina needs modern infrastructure in order to compete in the fast-moving global economy. We know that our fiber network has benefited our commercial and industrial sectors and is responsible for attracting and growing business in Medina County. Until now, we had not found the right partner to serve our residents. This is a great day for Medina County.”

Open access means greater consumer choice and lower prices

“The open access model encourages healthy competition between service providers, so we must fight for customers based on better prices and better service,” said Kelly Ryan, CEO, iFiber Communications, and the founding internet service provider on Medina County Fiber.

iFiber will provide 100/100 megabits per second (Mbps) for \$49.95 per month; 500/500 Mbps for \$79.95 per month; and gigabit speed internet (1000/1000 Mbps) for \$149.95 per month. At present, the average residential internet connection speed in Medina County is 29.5 Mbps.

Ryan noted, “Once incumbents get wind of what we’re doing here, they will hasten to offer sweetheart deals: lowering their prices and locking customers into a two-year contract. The problem is that customers will get the same slow service on old cables. iFiber provides fiber speeds and reliability, with a month-to-month contract.”

In addition to internet, television, and voice services, telehealth services will also be available to residents through Medina County Fiber. Docity will provide this service and is the first and only telemedicine company that partners directly with communities and Internet service providers so that anyone can have access to high-quality medical services.

Commenting on the open access model, Colleen M. Swedyk, Vice President, Medina County Board of Commissioners, said “it encourages innovation and helps drive down costs while boosting customer service,” she says. “Now, our residents will have more choice, especially in areas where they have had no choice at all. Open access is a great way to deliver a plethora of internet-based services, and that’s certainly reason to celebrate. We also celebrate Medina County Fiber: we’re excited to have you call Medina County ‘home.’”

At the end of the formal remarks and just prior to several real-time demonstrations of telehealth services from Docity and a “test drive” of gigabit fiber, Snider commented: “In sum, we are confident that this project will succeed because we have community support and the technical experience and expertise to make your dream of more and better connectivity in Medina County a reality.”

About Neighborly

Neighborly connects communities with capital to fund vital public projects like schools, libraries, and parks, and next-generation infrastructure like fiber-optic broadband networks and solar microgrids. Neighborly has a dedicated broadband infrastructure practice with a full service solution for deploying open access networks in communities across the U.S. A fast-growing, venture-backed startup at the intersection of tech, finance, and government, Neighborly develops technology that makes it easier for communities to reach investors, and easier for investors to direct their dollars towards the world positive projects that matter to them.

About Medina County Fiber

Medina County Fiber is an open access fiber-to-the-home network designed and engineered especially for Medina County residents. As an open access network, multiple services and services providers will be available for customers to access through this shared public infrastructure.

About iFiber

Founded in 2005, iFiber is a successful open access internet, television, and telephone service provider that uses PUD owned fiber-optic networks in open access environments. The company is based in Washington State, where it has been delivering a full triple-play offering of gigabit symmetrical broadband internet access, IPTV packages with over 200 channels, and robust, modern voiceover internet protocol (VOIP) telephone plans throughout the state for over 13 years. iFiber does not own infrastructure and is a strong proponent of net neutrality.

About Docity

Docity connects patients and providers through live virtual visits using a smartphone, tablet, or computer. Docity is the first and only telemedicine company that partners directly with communities and Internet service providers so that anyone can have access to high-quality medical services. A veteran-owned company, Docity's mission is to eliminate 30% of all in-person visits by 2030, at 30% of the cost. For more information, please visit www.docity.com.
