



President  
DOUGLAS J. WENZLAFF

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JAMES COSTELLO

Executive Director  
WILLIAM ESBECK

## NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: **Bill Esbeck, Executive Director** or **Chris LaRowe, Manager of External Affairs**  
Phone: 608/256-8866 Email: [bill.esbeck@wsta.info](mailto:bill.esbeck@wsta.info) or [clarowe@wsta.info](mailto:clarowe@wsta.info)

### **Bloomer: Communications at the Speed of Light**

#### *Bloomer Telephone Company Introduces New Fiber Optic Network*

MADISON – On Tuesday, November 13, 2007, the Bloomer Telephone Company introduced its new fiber optic network with an ultra high-speed Internet demonstration and ribbon cutting ceremony attended by customers, Board members, local officials and state legislators. With the recently completed installation of fiber optic cable to every home and business within the Bloomer city limits, Bloomer Telephone Company customers will be able to download videos, music, pictures, and other large files faster than ever before.

“It’s going to open a whole new world of convenience and efficiency for our customers,” said Jim Smart, Bloomer Telephone Company General Manager. “The new fiber infrastructure will deliver speeds more than fifty times faster than typical high-speed Internet services. No other city in Wisconsin offers a gigabit Ethernet connection to every home and business.”

“WSTA salutes the hard work, dedication and commitment the Bloomer Telephone Company and its employees have made in serving north-central Wisconsin for more than 100 years, providing the most advanced communications technology at the best possible prices,” said Bill Esbeck, Executive Director. “We especially applaud this unique and innovative project and the \$5.2 million financial investment they have made to their network, which will provide state-of-the-art technology and offer the highest quality telecommunication services to the citizens of Bloomer. WSTA member companies continue to provide the infrastructure needed to keep the Wisconsin economy and job market competitive in a global economy.”

## **Bloomer Fiber Optic Ribbon Cutting**

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As a thank you to its Internet customers for their cooperation during the construction of the network, Bloomer Telephone Company is offering existing high-speed Internet customers within the city of Bloomer six months of their new 15 megabit service at no additional charge.

“I want to congratulate everyone at Bloomer Telephone Company and their partners who helped complete this state-of-the-art project” said state Senator Pat Kreitlow (D-Chippewa Falls), who attended the event. Senator Kreitlow continued, “I congratulate them not just for completing such a large construction program, but for having the foresight to upgrade their system in such a groundbreaking manner. They have truly made Bloomer a global player in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy by giving businesses and people the opportunities to do business literally anywhere. To those who say rural parts of Wisconsin will be left behind in voice, data and video commerce, I tell them to visit my district where entrepreneurs and community leaders are leading the way forward.”

Also, in early 2008, and pending government approval, Bloomer Telephone Company will use the new fiber optic network to offer customers digital TV with more than 150 channels including high-definition channels. Once the video product is launched, Bloomer residents will finally be able to choose a single, locally-based, provider for all their communication and entertainment needs: phone, high-speed Internet and digital TV.

“A big reason rural areas can be at a disadvantage in competing to bring in new businesses is that often they lack infrastructure available in more urban areas,” said state Representative Jeff Wood (R-Chippewa Falls), who also attended the event. “This project will put Bloomer on a strong footing to compete for high tech businesses in the future.”

WSTA is a Madison-based trade organization representing 70 Wisconsin local telephone companies, 25 of the state’s Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and 9 of the state’s wireless carriers.