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Accord Creates Statewide Fiber Network in Indiana

21 Electric and Telephone Cooperatives form Accord Telecommunications Collaborative, LLC

Indianapolis, IN - Accord Telecommunications Collaborative, LLC, a consortium of electric and telephone cooperatives, announced its formation today. By leveraging the vast fiber assets of its electric and telephone cooperative member-owners, Accord will be able to propel Indiana to be the most connected state in the nation.

Through Accord's unique collaboration, it will create one of the largest contiguous, fiber-based networks in the state. The company's formation comes at a critical time for Indiana as various state and federal agencies prepare to distribute billions of dollars toward middle-mile and fiber-to-the-home deployments.

"Our vast footprint means we can bring reliable data services to both residents and businesses of Indiana, especially those in and surrounding rural communities," said Scott Schroeder, Accord Vice-Chair and Chief Technology Officer of RTC Communications.

Accord is owned by 21 electric and telephone cooperative service providers who offer communications, and in many cases, electric services to roughly 75 percent of Indiana's land mass. In total, Accord's member-owners currently own 20,000 miles of fiber optic infrastructure valued at more than \$1 billion. Additionally, the companies providing electric services have approximately 40,000 miles of electric lines, which broadens opportunities to expand data service coverage throughout the state.

Collectively, Accord's member-owners serve more than 300,000 Hoosier homes and businesses.

"Our goal is to work with fellow providers of all kinds to bring world-class fiber connectivity and services to residents, providers and businesses throughout Indiana and beyond," said James Tanneberger, Accord Chair and President and CEO of South Central Indiana REMC.

Accord features vast geographic and financial diversity with a mix of electric and telephone cooperatives and an even split of ownership between northern and southern Indiana. This span creates a regional network of owned fiber assets, placing Accord in a unique financial position to support Indiana's communications needs. In most cases, Accord will use the owned assets of its member-owners rather than lease or purchase fiber from others. This advantage gives Accord a strong financial foundation for success.

“Accord stands ready to coordinate with other networks and providers to greatly improve access throughout the state of Indiana, all while increasing economic growth and helping bridge the digital divide,” said Tony Clark, Accord Board Member and CEO and General Manager of SEI Communications.

From its Martinsville base in central Indiana, Accord will bring a new level of collaboration to the state and the nation, representing a willing mix of non-traditional partners coming together for a greater good.

“While Accord is starting with a base of cooperatives, we are in no way meant to be exclusive. We simply wanted to set up the company in a way that fits our business model; a model that can work for any other potential partners as well. Having accomplished that, we are ready to partner with providers of all kinds,” said Tanneberger.

“Our electric cooperative member-owners have built massive fiber networks for purposes of improving electric reliability through implementation of smart grid technologies,” said John Sturm, Accord Secretary-Treasurer, CEO of JCREMC and President of JCFiber. “We have also brought high speed internet to our members in some of the least populated parts of the state. Add to that the impressive networks that our telephone cooperative member-owners built to bring broadband to their footprints, and you have quite a large inventory of assets. Now we have an opportunity to leverage those assets and take things to the next level to create something special for the state of Indiana.”

“The strength of Accord is that it represents a collaboration of 21 local, non-profit cooperatives that are focused on bringing a community-based solution for connectivity. This will ensure our state is not dependent on out-of-state, for-profit investors to improve the quality of life and place across rural Indiana,” said Mike Burrow, Accord Board Member and CEO of NineStar Connect.

Accord expects to be a part of several more announcements in the coming weeks as it partners with various other providers around the state in the shared vision of “Making Indiana the Most Connected State.”

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About Accord Telecommunications Collaborative, LLC

Accord is owned by 21 service providers who provide critical and life-enhancing services to their communities. Accord and its owners maintain thousands of miles of fiber, ready to provide access to telecom providers and robust services to business customers. Visit www.accordtelcom.com, email jerryh@accordtelcom.com, or call (765) 343-3910 for additional information.