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Digital 395 Gets Go-Ahead To Construct

Project clears environmental reviews and obtains Rights-of-Way

BISHOP, CALIFORNIA – After two years of detailed engineering, environmental studies, and obtaining rights-of-way and permits, the California Broadband Cooperative has been cleared to begin construction on Digital 395. Digital 395 is the 583-mile broadband project, funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and the California Advanced Services Fund, that brings high-speed Internet to the Eastern Sierra region of California, representing almost 15% of the State.

The final word was given this past Friday by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) who funded 80% of the project and serves as the lead federal environmental agency. California had already given its nod this past November, when the project was filed under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The California Public Utilities Commission through its California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) is providing \$19.4 Million in funding for the project.

Speaking on behalf of the Board of Directors, CBC Chief Executive Officer Robert Volker said, “We could not be more delighted to have reached this milestone in the project and move on with the work of building the network.” CBC was awarded the Grants in August 2010 and has until July 31, 2013 to complete the work. As many as 46 different government agencies have been involved in the permitting process due to the size and location of the project.

The project will begin on multiple fronts, with different aspects of construction going on simultaneously along the entire route. “Using local contractors and suppliers we will be installing communications buildings, laying conduit, and connecting to the authorized

government buildings that serve as anchors in the community, indicated Michael Ort, CEO of Praxis Associates, which is leading the effort to build the network. “Our supply depots have 466 miles of fiber cable and over 340 trench-miles of conduit. The pre-fabricated buildings are ready to ship and all the other parts are on hand. As we are approved to begin each section of the network, folks should be seeing lots of stuff moving about.”

Although work will also begin in Barstow and northern sections of the route, the primary concentration will be in Mono County, where Praxis will seek to construct facilities before the onset of winter snow. “Once the first permanent snow hits the ground,” said Ort, “we are pretty much closed out of that area until spring. If we have a repeat of last year’s weather pattern, we’ll be in good shape. If not, we’ll move to the desert and return to the higher altitudes in the spring.” At one point, the network reaches an altitude of nearly 8500 feet.

According to Volker, CBC plans to offer services to more than 237 critical institutions in the Eastern Sierra including schools, hospitals, libraries, public safety, and government buildings. Once the network is in place next year, consumers and businesses should see immediate benefits through local service providers who will be able to acquire plenty of low-cost broadband to boost network capacity and expand into new areas.

About CBC:

CBC - California Broadband Cooperative, Inc. is a not-for-profit California Consumer Cooperative Corporation formed for the purposes of owning and operating the Digital 395 network, which will provide high-speed broadband services to its members on a wholesale, open-access basis. As a cooperative, the organization will be under the direction of a Board of Directors representing key institutions and constituents in the Eastern Sierra.

About Praxis Associates:

Praxis is a fiber optic network development company who specializes in developing complete broadband solutions. Praxis specialties include business case development, grants applications and Administration, Rights-of-Way and Permits, local and long haul engineering, project management and Fiber construction. Praxis clients include large-scale telecommunications firms, companies and communities developing private networks, and governmental entities. Praxis is managing the Digital 395 Project on behalf of CBC. Praxis corporate offices are located in Vallejo, California with several regional offices