



COMMUNITY UPDATES

The Leadville Lake County Economic Development Corporation (LLCEDC), the City of Leadville and other organizations are serving as key partners supporting the effort of Vero Broadband to build a broadband fiber network in Leadville.

"Community-wide access to high-speed broadband won't automatically unlock better job opportunities or spur business growth, but better jobs and growing businesses can't happen without an affordable and reliable internet connection," said Jason Hall, LLCEDC board president.

Vero is building the network to serve the entire community, building on the fiber already installed for Lake County School District and the Railyard development. The company's long-term plans are to construct a network providing services to other communities in the county.

John Wharton, market development manager at Vero, said there is more at stake than just fast internet. "Our goal is for the community and Vero to work together to create resilient infrastructure to maintain critical health and safety services no matter what comes our way. We must be prepared for fires, storms, flooding and other potential disasters."

One feature of the new system will be a second redundant fiber connection running north from Leadville to complement the existing line running south. "Fiber is faster and more reliable than internet access through copper networks designed for telephones or coaxial cable designed for cable TV," explained Wharton, "and by investing in equipment that will switch automatically from a severed to an undamaged fiber line running north, we'll be much better prepared for whatever we face."

The new fiber network is a two-year project. Engineering and design are already underway for the first year's portion. Construction could start in August or September if all the required approvals and permits are received in time, and customers could begin accessing broadband services in November. Internet prices are expected to start in the \$60 range for speeds of 100 Mbps.

Vero Broadband is self-funding the project, and the project does not involve support from city or county governments or from federal broadband grants.