



MID-ATLANTIC BROADBAND COOPERATIVE PROMOTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL SOUTHERN VIRGINIA

The mission of the Mid-Atlantic Broadband Cooperative (MBC) is to promote economic development in rural southern Virginia by deploying a world-class-fiber-optic backbone network. Thanks to ample donations by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration and the Virginia Tobacco Commission, MBC was officially formed in 2003. Today, the MBC network includes over 800 miles of fiber throughout Southern Virginia, providing a state-of-the-art technology incentive for businesses requiring large amounts of broadband access.

As the network designer and installer, Adesta constructed a 700-mile fiber optic network with 48 to 152 strands of dedicated fiber backbone. This is an advanced, open-access, fiber-optic SONET system with an OC-192 backbone and OC-3 connections to approximately 25 endpoints across the southern and northern segments of the network. These end points initially provided an OC-3 (155-Mbit/sec.) connection to industrial parks and other points of interests such as business development centers, community colleges, and hospitals.

The build was an innovative approach because of its open-access advanced broadband network, which provided wholesale dark fiber and managed high-speed bandwidth services to rural Virginia where services had not currently existed. This initiative was proclaimed a national model for rural economic development and one of the most unique uses of funds from the National Tobacco Settlement with the states. The initial multi-million dollar investment, according to the U.S. Economic Development Administration, provided numerous employment and investment opportunities.

The MBC is a non-profit entity formed to manage the project. Largely funded by the Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission using funds made available through the 1998 Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement, the Regional Backbone/Roots of Progress Initiative helps promote economic

development opportunities by attracting technology-based business and industry, providing higher wage jobs, and making high-speed Internet access affordable and available in an areas where such technology does not currently exist.

"Adesta was pleased to expand our relationship with MBC.," said the President of Adesta. "We're sincerely proud to be one of the first companies to recognize the potential in Southside Virginia for economic growth and development."

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