

FiberCo Facilitates Creation of an Advanced Optical Network for Florida

Nine Florida Universities Leverage FiberCo Dark Fiber As Foundation for A Next-Generation Regional Optical Research and Education Network

ANN ARBOR, MI OCTOBER 27, 2004 FiberCo(TM), a fiber holding company supporting U.S. research and higher education, today announced that Florida LambdaRail LLC (FLR), a consortium of nine public and private Florida universities has purchased the rights to 1,540 route miles of dark fiber and colocation services from FiberCo, under an agreement with Level 3 Communications, Inc. (Nasdaq:LVLT). Utilizing FiberCo's national-scale wholesale pricing structure and streamlined fiber acquisition process, FLR, LLC, acquired the dark fiber at a significantly discounted rate and will use the network facilities to create an advanced optical network to connect campuses and institutions across the state.

The network, Florida LambdaRail (FLR), once complete, will enable collaboration, advanced communication, and research among these universities in ways not possible using existing networks by providing enhanced network performance and bandwidth capabilities. The new FLR network will also enable consortium members to have direct connectivity to a wide range of domestic and international research networks including: Internet2's Abilene Network as well as the National Lambda Rail of which the FLR will be a regional connecting network.

The consortium is made up of nine major Florida universities, including Florida Atlantic University (FAU), Florida Institute of Technology (FIT), Florida International University (FIU), Florida State University (FSU), Nova Southeastern University (NSU), University of Central Florida (UCF), University of Florida (UF), University of Miami (UM), and University of West Florida (UWF). These top universities recognize the benefits of advanced networking and its ability to facilitate new and innovative research and instruction across a broad range of studies and disciplines.

"High-speed optical networking is a critical tool for achieving sophisticated learning, research, and collaboration as well a key differentiator for recruiting and retaining talented researchers, faculty, students and education professionals to the state of Florida," said Larry Conrad chairman, FLR, LLC. and Florida State University CIO. "The dark fiber and colocation services acquired through FiberCo serve as a foundation for the FLR, enabling us to build a regional backbone network for the future. The network promises to provide our researchers, students and faculty a test-bed for innovation and we are excited for the possibilities that this network may help them to achieve. It will essentially eliminate the issue of 'place' for collaboration with our colleagues across the country and indeed around the world."

Established last year by Internet2(R), a consortium led by 207 universities working with government and industry to develop and deploy advanced networking technologies, FiberCo provides a means for acquiring, holding, and assigning dark fiber assets on both the national and the regional scales and on behalf of the higher education community.

"FiberCo's goal is to assist the Internet2 membership in acquiring critical optical networking assets to facilitate the development of advanced fiber infrastructure in the regions. This fiber assignment represents a key step towards FLR's plans to deploy leading-edge optical capabilities throughout Florida and is our largest placement of fiber with a regional network to date," said Steve Corbató, director of network initiatives for Internet2. "This highly collaborative effort by private and public Florida research

universities highlights the leadership of these institutions in providing advanced Internet technology to its constituents and serves as a model for other institutions around the country."

Under the agreement with Level 3 Communications, Inc. FiberCo has the ability to provision both from an initial allocation of more than 2,600 route miles and from future acquisitions of dark fiber on Level 3's national footprint.

About FLR, LLC

Florida LambdaRail LLC (FLR) is a Florida limited liability company formed by member higher education institutions to advance optical research and education networking within Florida. Florida LambdaRail is constructing a high-bandwidth optical network infrastructure, capable of supporting up to 32 separate high-speed networks, that will link Florida's research institutions and provide a next-generation network to support large-scale research, education outreach, public/private partnerships, and Florida's economic development and high tech plans. For more information, visit: www.flrnet.org.

About FiberCo(TM)

FiberCo™ provides a means for acquiring, holding, and assigning fiber optic network assets in support of the Internet2 community's goals of developing and deploying advanced network applications and technologies. FiberCo facilitates the ongoing development of regional optical networking initiatives around the country to complement existing Internet2 network infrastructure while providing a strategic fiber acquisition capability on the national scale. For more information, visit: www.fiberco.org.

About Level 3 Communications

Level 3 (Nasdaq:LVLT) is an international communications and information services company. The company operates one of the largest Internet backbones in the world, is one of the largest providers of wholesale dial-up service to ISPs in North America and is the primary provider of Internet connectivity for millions of broadband subscribers, through its cable and DSL partners. The company offers a wide range of communications services over its 23,000-mile broadband fiber optic network including Internet Protocol (IP) services, broadband transport and infrastructure services, collocation services, and patented Softswitch managed modem and voice services. Its Web address is www.Level3.com.

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