



NEWS RELEASE

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SPRUCE KNOB SENECA ROCKS TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE IN WV

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Need:

Area residents in Spruce Knob Seneca Rocks, one of the most mountainous, remote areas of West Virginia, have received basic telephone service from Spruce Knob Seneca Rocks Telephone Cooperative (SKSRT), which was founded in 1972 through several Rural Development Telecommunications Program loans. SKSRT realized that the residents of this 250 square mile rural area also needed access to broadband services so that they could improve the economic and social conditions of the area.

How Rural Development Helped:

After the installation of its first network, SKSRT quickly expanded to include more than 1,200 subscriber lines. Improvements and service expansion to the area was made possible with Rural Utilities Service (RUS) infrastructure loans in 1995 for \$1.5 million and in 2008 for \$7.8 million. The 2008 loan provided funding for Fiber to the Home (FTTH) broadband services in the SKSRT service area. SKSRT increased their staff by 4 people as a result of the 2008 loan for FTTH.

In 2010, the company received a Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP) award under the Recovery Act, which is expected to add 125 jobs to the community. This \$8.5 million grant will provide FTTH broadband to un-served and underserved areas outside its traditional service area.

Results:

As a result of USDA funding, SKSRT was one of the first telephone companies in the state to offer FTTH to all of its subscribers. The build out of this network provides residents access to enhanced telephone, Internet, and video. SKSRT has installed a fiber optic plant in place of its copper plant to enhance the quantity and quality of data transmission for telephone, Internet and video services. The adoption of digital technology and now fiber has allowed the cooperative and consumers to connect and compete with major cities throughout the U.S.

In addition SKSRT is very interested in economic development and works closely with local county economic development associations. High speed Internet access and data transmission available through fiber are prerequisites for many businesses. SKSRT management hopes that fiber technology will encourage more businesses to relocate to West Virginia. Recently a graduate school educational institution decided to expand to this area and will be renting the top-half of a local office building. Many home businesses have expanded in the area. General Manager Vickie Colaw said, "RUS has assisted SKSRT in taking the company from 3rd to the last in the nation with ring down phone service to the first West Virginia Company to provide all of its customers with FTTH. SKSRT is a classic example of a company RUS was created to serve."

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