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Sertex Broadband Completes Construction of Municipally-Owned Broadband Network 10 Miles Off Rhode Island Coast

Connecticut-based fiber optic deployment expert planned, designed, and installed built-to-last, ecologically-sound network in 24 months

Plainfield, CT – February 9, 2023... On rural and remote Block Island, located 10 miles off the Rhode Island coast, [Sertex Broadband Solutions](#) has completed construction of [BroadbandBI](#), the Ocean State's first publicly-owned, privately-operated fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) broadband network. A regional fiber infrastructure deployment expert, Sertex planned, designed and built the BroadbandBI network over the last two years after constructing the island's Community Anchor Institution (CAI) network in 2018.

Sertex aerial and underground crews and equipment have left the island after reaching the end of construction. Remaining network crews are continuing to connect properties to the backbone and installing fiber drops from multiport service terminals to service locations. Subscriptions are expected to open to end users in the first fiber service area (FSA) in March.

"Block Island is accessible only by boat or plane and is a coastal community, so this deployment was particularly complex," explained Michael Solitro, CEO and Founder of Sertex. "Environmental preservation is a significant concern for the community, and the permitting process with local and state environmental authorities was extensive. We worked closely with Rhode Island's Department of Environmental Management and Coastal Resources Management Council to design the least disruptive path for fiber and to secure the necessary permitting. Shipments travelled exclusively by ferry and had to be planned weeks in advance so supplies, equipment and crews were on island to meet deadlines."

The BroadbandBI project was approved by taxpayers in July 2020, with a budget of \$8 million.

Connected to the mainland through four strands of submarine fiber optic cable, the network includes:

- 53 miles of fiber optic cable plant,
- 62 miles of underground drop footage to premises,
- 1,800 property connections,
- Headend transport capacity up to 100 GB,
- All Corning products, providing the manufacturer's 25-year warranty on installed equipment.

Block Islanders have struggled for decades with poor telecommunications service. Historically, homes and businesses have been either underserved — struggling with download speeds as low as 5 Mbps — or unserved with no internet connection at all. While residents desired and demanded better connectivity, traditional providers had no interest in serving the small community of 1,000 year-round residents, even though the population swells to 20,000 and more during the summer season.

“Our teams completed this buildout in a short 24 months, working around and through weather conditions including rough seas, blizzards and hurricanes, not to mention the influx of summer tourism, which slowed our efforts dramatically for three months each year,” continued Solitro. “Add to that staffing and supply issues tied to the pandemic, and it becomes an even more remarkable achievement. We’re so pleased to complete this buildout, bringing universally accessible, reliable, affordable, and sustainable internet service to Block Island. The network’s future-proof technology will meet the island’s bandwidth requirements for decades.”

For more information, call Sertex Broadband at 860.317.1006 x 115 or email getconnectedbi@sertexbroadband.com.

About Sertex Broadband

Sertex is an expert in fiber optic infrastructure deployment in the Northeast. For over three decades, we have provided leading-edge services to telecommunication, utility, and municipal customers. The vision of Sertex Broadband Solutions is to deploy fiber-to-the-home networks in unserved and underserved areas and deliver gigabit-speed internet access to every home and business. Our model of publicly owned/privately operated networks is affordable and scalable with future-proof fiber technology. For more information visit www.sertexbroadband.com.