



Press Release – November 3rd, 2022

Alaska Power & Telephone Completes Installation of the SEALink Submarine Cable System Between Juneau, Prince of Wales Island, and Petersburg

On October 31st, 2022, Alaska Power & Telephone subsidiary AP&T Wireless (AP&T) successfully completed installation of the SEALink submarine fiber optic cable system, providing Prince of Wales Island with its first ever fiber optic link to continental North America, and the world. The submarine cable is a core component of a regional fiber deployment project funded via a \$21.5m grant from the USDA Rural Utilities Service ReConnect program, and approximately \$7m in private investment supplied by AP&T. Beginning in 2023, AP&T will install fiber and turn up service to homes in the Prince of Wales communities of Coffman Cove and Kasaan.

SEALink travels from Coffman Cove to south Mitkof Island, where it makes landfall near a State of Alaska ferry terminal. From there, newly constructed terrestrial transport fiber extends northwards along the Mitkof Highway to the city of Petersburg. There, the cable re-enters the water, running northwards through Frederick Sound and Stephens Passage to land at Lena Point near Juneau, where multiple options exist for transport to the lower 48 states.

“I have consistently worked to spur progress for infrastructure development to help Alaskans, particularly when it comes to connectivity. I have urged USDA to support the installation of the SEALink submarine cable system, which is finally coming to fruition. This new installment will allow Prince of Wales Island a direct cable connection to the continental U.S. for the first time in history—a truly significant milestone,” said Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski. *“Alaskans are versatile and resilient and have found ways to adapt to the lack of basic needs that many Americans may take for granted—but even so, they deserve to have access to quality broadband. I thank the many Alaskans who helped make this project a reality and look forward to seeing the positive impacts this will provide to businesses, education, healthcare, and so much more.”*

“Access to high-speed, reliable internet can be life-changing for a community, enhancing the delivery of health care and education, and opening doors for small businesses and entrepreneurs,” said Senator Dan Sullivan. *“I’ve always said Alaska is a resource-rich, but infrastructure-poor state, and the same is the case for broadband, which is 21st century infrastructure. I’m glad to see the partnership of federal USDA grant dollars coming together with private investment by Alaska Power & Telephone to deliver this historic SEALink fiber project and connect Prince of Wales Island communities. This project will help break down the digital divide and improve the lives and well-being of hundreds of Alaskans across Southeast.”*

The submarine cable was manufactured by Norddeutsche Seekabelwerke of Nordenham, Germany (a subsidiary of Prysmian Group), and installed by International Telecom utilizing its vessel the C.S. IT Intrepid – a highly specialized cable-laying ship. Rock-N-Road Construction - a woman-owned small business from Petersburg, Alaska - constructed beach landing sites in the communities of Coffman Cove and Petersburg, and at the south Mitkof Island landing. AP&T line crews constructed 17 miles of aerial transport fiber. Directional boring contractor Tundra Utility Construction installed over 9 miles of underground fiber. AP&T anticipates SEALink will be fully operational in March 2023, after it installs electronics.

Prince of Wales Island is 2,577 square miles – slightly larger than the state of Delaware. Until now, the island’s approximate 6,000 residents have relied solely upon mountaintop microwave links for backhaul of telecommunication data, which has limited the levels of service possible. Maintaining mountaintop sites depends upon helicopter-based access and refueling operations, and is challenged by severe weather conditions such as high winds and icing. The SEALink cable system will improve local internet speeds, affordability, and reliability for Prince of Wales residents for decades into the future. AP&T will also utilize the network to enhance the services it provides to other communities, and support the activities of other service providers in the region.

“Access to high-speed internet connectivity is crucial, especially in rural Alaska,” said US Representative Mary Peltola. ***“The COVID-19 pandemic reminded us just how important broadband is to our daily lives. From remote employment to telehealth, Alaskans depend on this essential infrastructure to live, work, and play. I’m extremely grateful for the work Alaska Power & Telephone has put in, continuing to strengthen broadband connectivity in our state.”***

AP&T is currently completing detailed engineering designs, undertaking environmental/permitting work, and ordering materials and equipment for fiber build-outs in Craig, Klawock, and Hollis, which is scheduled to occur between 2024 and 2027. AP&T is also applying for additional USDA grant funds to build fiber to premises in Thorne Bay, Whale Pass, and Hydaburg, with a target completion date of 2028. AP&T hopes to know the outcome in the first quarter of 2023.

Alaska Power & Telephone Company (OTC: APTL) is an employee- and investor-owned utility providing diverse utility services in over 40 communities in rural Alaska. Additional information on AP&T can be found at: www.aptalaska.com

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