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**MAINE FIBER COMPANY'S THREE-RING BINDER RURAL BROADBAND PROJECT
MOVES FORWARD WITH SUPPORT FROM MAINE GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE**

AUGUSTA, MAINE – Maine Fiber Company's (MFC) Three Ring Binder rural broadband project took a giant step forward with the signing by Governor John Baldacci of LD 1778 late yesterday, a bill that clears the way for the 1,100 mile high-capacity, open access fiber network to move ahead. The bill passed unanimously in the Maine House and Senate last Friday and was signed into law by the Governor Tuesday.

“As a Maine-based company, we are thankful for the broad, bipartisan and nonpartisan support we received from the Maine Legislature, the Governor's Office and the broad coalition of other public and private sector people who helped us reach this point,” said Maine Fiber Company CEO Dwight Allison. “We plan to move forward honoring the letter and spirit of the hard work that went into LD1778 by this group and focus on building a network that will provide critical infrastructure for economic growth in Maine for years to come.”

Maine Fiber Company, an unaffiliated Maine-owned and operated private company that will oversee the construction, maintenance and leasing of the new fiber network, was created after the U.S. Department of Commerce awarded \$25.4 million to the Three Ring Binder Project in December 2009.

LD 1778 has two main provisions. First, it establishes a new category of utility called a “dark fiber provider” and secondly, it creates a Broadband Sustainability Fund to support “last mile” high-speed Internet expansion to unserved areas.

“We believe the central reason Maine Fiber Company's Three Ring Binder Project won federal funding in the first round of broadband expansion grants was because of the open-access, non-discriminatory model created in the application,” said MFC partner and investor Robert CS Monks. “This legislation turns that model into law. We believe increased competition and open access to high-speed fiber will benefit Maine businesses and consumers alike - and create economic opportunity for parts of our state that need it most.”

Both Allison and Monks thanked many members of the broad group who worked to bring LD 1778 to passage and signing by Governor Baldacci today. Among the many important contributors, the MFC partners cited: the Governor and Dick Thompson the State's Chief Technology Officer; Representative Cynthia Dill (D-Cape Elizabeth) who sponsored the bill; the members of the Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Energy and Utilities, including its leaders Senators Barry Hobbins (D-York), Ken Fletcher (R-Winslow) and Representative John Hink (D-Portland); Richard Davies and the Maine Office of the Public Advocate; Fletcher Kitteredge and GWI, who lead the original federal grant application process; members and leaders of IBEW; the Telephone Association of Maine (TAM); and Mike Reed and his team at Fairpoint Communications.

“Reaching this point took a lot of time and effort by a broad coalition of people with different viewpoints,” said MFC President Joshua Broder. “We didn’t all start in the same place, but with the Governor’s leadership and a lot of hard work by all the parties, we reached an agreement that should allow the Three Ring Binder to move forward without delay. We plan to move forward and meet the letter and spirit of this agreement – and the strict federal requirements and timelines associated with bringing this important investment to Maine.”

About Maine Fiber Company

Maine Fiber Company was formed as a result of discussions with a group of stakeholders including State officials, representatives from the University of Maine and Maine telecommunications companies. The answer from those stakeholders was to pursue a federal stimulus grant intentionally creating a private company (Maine Fiber Company) to oversee the construction, maintenance and leasing of a high capacity network – and then make it available to *all* qualified telecom companies requesting access on behalf of customers on a nondiscriminatory basis. The resulting Three Ring Binder proposal won a \$25.4 million Department of Commerce grant. Maine Fiber Company’s investors are providing a private match of approximately \$7 million (20%) to complete project funding.

Work on the Three Ring Binder has already begun, and full-scale construction of the project will get underway this spring. The federal grant requires the project be complete within three years, however, portions of the network could be operational by the end of 2010.

Dwight Allison, a partner and investor in Maine Fiber Company (MFC), will also serve as CEO. He is joined as partner by **Robert CS Monks**, a real estate developer, entrepreneur, and private equity investor. Monks and Allison have been partners for over 25 years. Each was a part owner and board member of Institutional Shareholder Services, the leading proxy services company in the world, until it was sold in 2007. In 1991, Monks founded, and both served as, Directors of Atlantic Bank which was purchased by People’s Heritage Bank in 1997. Monks and Allison have also been partners in successful Maine-based real estate development companies such as Dirigo Management Company and The Eagle Point Companies.

About the Three Ring Binder Project

To see more details about the 1,100 mile high-capacity, open-access fiber network, please see go to the Maine Fiber Company website (www.mainefiberco.com) or the following link: <http://www.mainefiberco.com/press100209.html>.

For more information or to speak with MFC President Joshua Broder, please contact Tom Janenda at tjanenda@elevate-cc.com or 207/590-8815.