

# Fiber-optic line a high-tech draw

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*The News Guard*

A newly installed fiber-optic line running through central Lincoln City could boost efforts to attract high-tech jobs to the area, according to line provider CoastCom, Inc.

Fiber optic lines offer a number of advantages over their copper counterparts by allowing transfer of much larger amounts of voice and data traffic at higher speed.

"High-tech businesses, they are the great ones to have," CoastCom co-owner Greg Palser said, adding: "They won't even consider moving to a community where they can't get a huge amount of bandwidth and connections."

So far, the development of the CoastCom network has been driven by partnerships with government, education and health care clients.

Last September, the company installed a fiber-optic line running from the campuses of Oregon Coast Community College and Taft High 7-12 to City Hall.

This September, CoastCom extended the line another 29 blocks north from City Hall to

## Large-scale clients pleased with service

CoastCom's fiber-optic service has been quick to find fans among its current, large-scale clients.

Lincoln City Manager David Hawker said the fiber-optic connection between City Hall and the community center will allow the City to give up the T1 copper line it currently rents from Embarq for \$400 per month.

He said the Embarq line suffers from "reliability and capacity problems" and that City Hall has already seen the benefit of fiber-optic connections with the police department and the street shop.

Rich Belloni, director of

support services for Lincoln County School District, said the district paid \$15,000 for CoastCom to extend its network to Oceanlake Elementary School and Toledo High School.

He said the annual fee is \$20,000 less than what the district used to pay Charter for its fiber-optic service.

"It's costing us less money and we are able to do it more efficiently and quicker," he said.

Pat O'Connor, president of Oregon Coast Community College said the network is a great improvement over the college's previous fiber-optic line, provided by the Oregon

Department of Administrative Services.

He said the increased bandwidth allows the college to use a Voice Over Internet Protocol phone system and make greater use of videoconferencing as a teaching tool.

"Way back in the golden days, they used to have the blurry images that would morph as you move," he said. "It's much better now."

The fiber-optic network also serves Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital, whose CEO Marty Cahill said the technology is very useful for transferring the very large computer files associated with X-rays and CAT scans.

the Lincoln City Community Center, creating a fiber-optic backbone running almost 60 blocks through town.

The \$85,000 extension was the result of a partnership with the City, which paid \$35,000 toward the project.

City Manager David Hawker said extending the line north would also offer affordable broadband services to a

larger area of the city.

Ed Parker, of Gleneden Beach-based Parker Telecommunications, said the increased bandwidth on offer would be an advantage for any business that wants to offer a wireless Internet field, businesses that want to buy and sell online and businesses that want to embark on "cloud computing," making use of online applications

rather than programs stored on local servers.

Parker said good fiber-optic links could also help extend the Portland area's "silicon forest" out to the Coast, allowing high-tech workers to telecommute and enjoy Lincoln County's natural surroundings.

"It's the kinds of jobs that are not dirty, industrial jobs," he said. "They are high-paying,

high-tech, green jobs. Exactly the kind we want to attract for our economy on the coast."

Mike Holden, executive director of the Lincoln City Chamber of Commerce, said the technology could be a draw for some industries.

"I still maintain this would be a nice spot to have a call center rather than in the metro area," he said. "The more things like this we have that we can offer to them, the more sense it makes for them to relocate here."

Palser said connections to the backbone will cost a minimum of \$5,000, making them cost-effective only to businesses that have very heavy communication needs.

"Anybody that needs either a data connection between their business and another business located in another city or anybody that needs quite a bit of Internet bandwidth would be the customers that could typically afford to have fiber built into their premises," he said.

Parker said the connection cost would be offset by lower monthly fees and that a fiber-optic link would also add to the resale value of any commercial property.