

CoastCom acquires underground cable

Purchase to benefit Pacific City, Lincoln City

Lincoln County-based telecom provider CoastCom, Inc. has acquired a 105-mile stretch of underground fiber-optic cable that runs from Pacific City to Beaverton and plans to install advanced electronics in both Pacific City and Lincoln City.

The cable was acquired for Tillamook Lightwave, a broadband telecommunications consortium in Tillamook County for which CoastCom serves as the contract operator.

Tillamook Lightwave President Paul Levesque said the acquisition is a major milestone.

"Internet connections to the main hub of communications in the Willamette Valley are critical for coastal communities," he said. "With this acquisition, we will have the potential for the most robust inter-connectivity on the coast,

which positions our region at the front of the line for major business development."

Greg Palser, president of CoastCom, Inc., said the new line will tie into an existing fiber optic ring in Newport, which will allow for an almost unlimited amount of bandwidth for CoastCom customers in Lincoln County.

Levesque said the 105 miles of cable and concrete conduit — named the Nestucca Fiber Route — was purchased for just \$50,000 from a receiver for the now bankrupt Pacific Telecom.

"If we had to construct that line today, it would cost about \$15 million," he said.

Palser said the Nestucca Fiber Route was installed as part of a trans-Pacific under-sea cable that Pacific Telecom landed in Pacific City in 1990. That 5,200-mile-long cable was the first trans-Pacific fiber-optic cable placed in Oregon's territorial sea and linked both the continental United States

and Alaska with Japan.

He said the under-sea portion of the cable was quickly out of date. Pacific Telecom eventually went bankrupt and abandoned it. He said the land-based cable, however, is of a different design and can be easily integrated into Lightwave's system.

Palser noted that the line will need some repairs before it can be operational.

"We are aware of breaks at five different locations," he said, adding that he hopes the line will be fully operational by next fall.

Levesque said CoastCom plans to recoup its investment through future revenue from the line.

"It is a great testament to their belief in the viability and potential profitability of this acquisition," he said.