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Clearfield Goes North to Alaska

Harsh environmental conditions factor into FTTH deployment

MINNEAPOLIS--(BUSINESS WIRE)--

Matanuska Telephone Association (MTA) has named Clearfield, Inc. (Nasdaq:CLFD) its exclusive provider of outside plant fiber optic cabinets for a large fiber to the home (FTTH) deployment in Southcentral Alaska.

MTA, which began its operations in 1953, has approximately 38,000 customers with a serving area of over 10,000 square miles. The 2008 FTTH deployment, which is located approximately 50 miles north of Anchorage, is a brownfield (overbuild), and will feature Clearfield's FieldSmart Fiber Scalability Center and ruggedized splitter modules. MTA's Outside Plant Network Planner Rod Schultz noted that harsh elements - for which Alaska is notorious - factored heavily in the decision to work with Clearfield.

"We're using Clearfield's ruggedized splitters with the cold weather tails. And because we can get three to four feet of snow in some areas, we've modified the cabinets with 18 inch extension bases to get them out of the snow," he said.

Another unique challenge for MTA is glacial silt. "We have a lot of glacial dust in the air. So, a tight seal on the cabinets is of supreme importance. It's always important to keep the connectors clean during an install and make sure they're good and tight so the glacial silt doesn't work down in there," Schultz explained.

Cost savings also loomed large for MTA. "If we're going to make fiber deployment to the home affordable, it's important that each and every component that we use is economical but still functional," he said.

The deciding factor in Clearfield's favor, however, was "impartiality to size." According to Schultz, "Clearfield was able to take care of us - even though we're not a major player. We didn't have to wait. They listened to what we wanted, and custom-configured the cabinets with stub sizes and types according to our specific applications. That was something that other companies weren't willing to do."

Schultz added, "Before we even bought any cabinets, they worked with us on our test trials. That response and willingness to configure to meet our needs is very important to us."

MTA's first FTTH rollouts were constructed in 2007 using Clearfield cabinets, and consisted of three greenfields and three brownfields, in both rural and urban settings. Their first FTTH customer was turned up in April 2008.

Source: Clearfield, Inc.