



**For Immediate Release**  
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**MBC Expands Network Reach with \$10 million award from NTIA Broadband Stimulus Program**

*Continues the growth of MBC's successful open-access network to key markets in Southeastern Virginia.*

The Mid-Atlantic Broadband Cooperative (MBC), a successful open access fiber optic backbone provider, is pleased to announce the award of a \$10 million Federal Broadband Stimulus Program grant from the US Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).

Old Dominion University provided \$1.2 million in additional matching funds to MBC and will be a partner in the project. "This strategic partnership will extend ODU's research, education and development activities via the new fiber network," said ODU President John R. Broderick. "This initiative supports our recent launch of Business Gateway, a business-friendly entry point to the intellectual capital, innovative technologies and world-class infrastructure of the university."

The grant award will build 170 miles of new, open-access fiber backbone from MBC's existing network connection points in Emporia and Wakefield, Virginia. Over 60 community anchor institutions will be connected to the open-access network. Those institutions can then purchase new telecom services from MBC's members, who are private sector telecom providers. MBC will deploy Infinera's Digital Optical Network to extend the reach of MBC's highly scalable, open-access transport network into the Norfolk, Virginia market. This will enable diverse access to other MBC member networks in the region, including Intellifiber, Level3, Verizon and Qwest Communications.

"This project is the lynchpin of the entire broadband and economic development strategy formulated by the Virginia Tobacco Commission, Old Dominion Electric Cooperative and Virginia Tech almost ten years ago, to have an open-access network that stretches from Virginia Beach to the Cumberland Gap in Virginia", says Tad Deriso, President & CEO of MBC. "Extending to the Hampton roads region is a critical piece of MBC's expansion plans to bring more connectivity to the network, which benefits our communities in southern Virginia."

MBC has created a unique ecosystem of private sector telecommunications providers, key points of interconnection with carriers and an efficient staffing model that is returning jobs and capital investments to rural Virginia. Using the latest generation of Optical Transport Networks has enabled MBC to provide carrier-class transport services to

telecom providers and has leveled the playing field for broadband connectivity and pricing in rural Virginia.

MBC was featured as an example of a successful middle mile system in the President's, National Economic Council's report released in December 2009. MBC's public/private partnership business model has gained national and international recognition, leading to invitations for MBC to speak at a number of worldwide conferences on solving the rural challenge of telecommunications infrastructure for economic development.

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#### *About MBC*

The Mid-Atlantic Broadband Cooperative (MBC) owns and operates an advanced open-access fiber optic backbone network that provides wholesale optical transport services, collocation, dark fiber, and tower construction/leasing. Over 60 private sector telecom providers are members of MBC. They use MBC's open access network to expand their network reach, reduce their transport costs, enable new services and applications and drive advanced broadband services in Southern Virginia. MBC's mission is economic development, job creation and private sector investment in Southern Virginia. For more information about MBC, visit [www.mbc-va.com](http://www.mbc-va.com).

#### *About Old Dominion University*

Old Dominion University, with a main campus in Norfolk, is Virginia's forward-focused, public doctoral research university. It has a student body numbering more than 24,000 and offers innovative and engaging teaching in 70 bachelor's, 60 master's and 36 doctoral degree programs. As a major metropolitan research university, ODU possesses a determined entrepreneurial approach to problem-solving, which drives cutting-edge research and strategic partnerships with government, business, industry, organizations, and the arts.