

## **2016 STRAFFORD TOWN REPORT**

### **ECFiber**

Strafford is a member of ECFiber, the East Central Vermont Telecommunications District, Vermont's first Communications Union District. This Union District commenced operations on January 1, 2016, replacing the 24-town inter-local contract, originally approved by Strafford at Town Meeting in 2008. ECFiber is still owned by its 24 member towns, and, as was true under the inter-local contract, local taxpayer funds cannot be used to subsidize the District's operations. The district must be self-sustaining and there is no recourse to taxpayers.

On April 15, 2016, the District announced that it had completed a \$9 million offering of Series 2016A Bonds to refinance a portion of its debt, cover 2016 capital expenditures, and complete the design and make ready for 250 miles of construction in 2017. As of December 1, 2016, 326 miles of fiber-optic network had been built and "lit" in portions of 18 member towns, serving about 1550 customers, including, as of November, 149 customers in Strafford. ECFiber plans to continue to raise capital through the municipal bond market in 2017, 2018 and 2019, and to complete 1400 miles of network covering all underserved locations in its 24 towns by 2019. ECFiber is pleased to offer:

- Reliable, high Internet speeds, which are symmetrical (the same in each direction) and are not "up to" (that is, ECFiber strives to actually provide the speeds for which its customers are paying at all times).
- Simple, stable pricing with no contracts, fine print, or data caps. Over the past two years ECFiber has increased its speeds but not its prices.
- Local and personable customer service. Phones are answered by an employee during business hours without an automated queue.
- Local ownership and control, as governing board members meet monthly to set policy and are actively involved in promoting ECFiber within the community.
- Valued community services. For example, ECFiber offers over 25 community anchor institutions (including Newton School, the Town Office and the Morrill Library in Strafford) its highest level of service for its lowest monthly fee.

In 2016, ECFiber continued its practice of raising speeds, but not prices, by announcing that the District's tiers of service would now be set at 10/25/100/500 Mbps (versus the previous 7/20/50/100/400).

Strafford is one of the six towns selected for construction in 2017, meaning that efforts will be made to extend the network to nearly every premise served by utility poles.

For additional information, please visit our website, call or email the office or any of Strafford's 3 delegates to the ECFiber Governing Board.

Website: [www.ECFiber.net](http://www.ECFiber.net) | Office: (802) 763-2262 | Email: [support@ecfiber.net](mailto:support@ecfiber.net)  
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