

## **Thetford Town Report ECFiber**

Thetford is a member of ECFiber, the East Central Vermont Telecommunications District, Vermont's first Communications Union District. The District commenced operations on January 1, 2016, replacing the 24-town inter-local contract that Thetford originally approved at Town Meeting in 2008. ECFiber is owned by its 24 member towns, and is self-sustaining. Local taxpayer funds cannot be used to subsidize the District's operations.

In April 2016 the District completed a \$9 million offering of Series 2016A Bonds to refinance a portion of its original debt, cover 2016 capital expenditures, and complete the design and make ready for 250 miles of construction in 2017. As of Dec 1 2016, 326 miles of fiber-optic network had been built and "lit" in parts of 18 member towns, serving about 1550 customers including approximately 200 in Thetford. 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" as offered by other providers
- Simple, stable pricing with no contracts, fine print, or data caps. Over the last 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 - 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 (schools, town facilities, and libraries) 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).

Fortunately for us, Thetford is one of the six towns selected for construction in 2017, extending the network to nearly every premise served by utility poles.

Jim Masland and Fred Thomas – your Thetford Governing Board Members

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