



Overview:

In 2016, the Port of Lewiston began constructing dark fiber optic infrastructure within the Port District to establish an open access telecommunications network for economic development purposes.

What is the Port's plan?

- The Port's plan is a phased approach in constructing an open access dark fiber network within the City of Lewiston and Nez Perce County.
- This network provides a fiber optic highway that is accessible to all service providers on an equal basis. The open access infrastructure encourages free market access to all service providers desiring to offer competitive services. The Port will not offer end user services.
- Future direction and growth of the network will be determined by the demand within the marketplace based on telecommunications services purchased by local businesses.

Why can't service providers use existing fiber?

- They do. Existing privately owned fiber networks offer access to other providers. However, access is at a higher rate which discourages competition and creates an uneven playing field for service providers desiring to enter the Lewiston area market.

Why should the Port get involved in fiber?

- The private sector has a higher and better use of investing their capital in urban areas, which provides a higher rate of return. Investment by the private sector in rural Idaho is minimal and offers only a small percentage of services and bandwidth compared to urban areas.
- This project is an effort to "bridge the digital divide" and provide an open access highway to any and all interested services providers. A successful example? The Port of Whitman has been highly successful providing dark fiber in Whitman County, Washington.
- Constructing public infrastructure is what municipal government and ports do. Building open access fiber optic infrastructure is no different than constructing a public road; instead of moving vehicles, you are moving data.

What are the project benefits to the public and private sectors?

Private sector:

- Creates an even playing field to all service providers; no need to capitalize systems as public infrastructure will already be in place.
- Existing local business will benefit from open competition in the marketplace allowing for more choices, redundancy and more bandwidth.
- A community wide fiber optic network will be a great retention and recruitment tool to encourage companies to locate or expand in Lewiston.

Public Sector:

- Enhanced availability of services, redundancy and bandwidth to city and county government, K-12 system, colleges, hospitals, libraries and medical clinics. Possible uses: Long distance learning, online meetings, tele-medicine and enhanced library services and internet access.