

Three Ring Binder Project Summary

The Three Ring Binder is a \$32 million project that will create an open access fiber optic network that extends into the most rural and disadvantaged areas of the state of Maine; from the Saint John Valley in the north, to the rocky coast line of downeast Maine, to the mountainous regions of western Maine. This project provides some very important benefits;

1. It will make middle mile fiber available for broadband service providers to bring cost effective, high-speed broadband services to areas that do not have access to it today.
2. It will expand the reach of Maine's DWDM based research and education network, MaineREN, to ten (10) campuses and outreach centers of the University of Maine System not currently optically connected to MaineREN and to three (3) of Maine's Community Colleges. In addition, MaineREN will be extended to service 38 government facilities including thirteen (13) of Maine's county courthouses, eleven (11) county jails and fourteen (14) Maine Department of Health and Human Services district offices.
3. It will create the geographically diverse fiber optic routes that are necessary to attract communications dependant businesses to Maine.
4. It will create the 21st century infrastructure necessary to support Maine's existing industries.

The Three Ring Binder project is being executed as a public/private collaborative effort. Multiple levels of service will be provided by the various entities involved. The higher education and government locations will receive 100 Mbit or gigabit level services from NetworkMaine (a collaborative partnership recently created between Maine State Government and the University of Maine System to operate the MaineREN backbone and the Maine School and Library Network).

Commercial broadband providers will be able to gain access to dark fiber optic strands via Indefeasible Right to Use (IRU) agreements or other leasing arrangements. These agreements will be made without bias to any interested party in complete compliance with the nondiscrimination and interconnection obligations outlined in the NOFA.