

Southern Vermont CUD becomes one of the first to universal service coverage

Region already seeing benefits of symmetrical, multi-gig, all fiber network from Fidium

BENNINGTON, Vt. — December 13, 2023 — The [Southern Vermont Communications Union District](#) (SoVT CUD) has become one of the first CUD's in the state to reach universal service coverage.

Through a partnership with [Fidium](#), SoVT CUD will reach universal service coverage just 13 months after receiving a grant from the Vermont Community Broadband Board in October 2022. Multi-gigabit service is now available to every home and business in its 14-town service area: Arlington, Bennington, Dorset, Landgrove, Londonderry, Manchester, Peru, Pownal, Rupert, Sandgate, Shaftsbury, Sunderland, Winhall and Woodford. In total, more than 33,000 residents, including 2,400 previously unserved, now have access to multi-gig fiber service.

“It really is pretty astonishing, and I’m just very excited to be here because we’ve been working on broadband forever,” said Senator Peter Welch at a [celebration event earlier this fall](#). “There’s a democratic value in making certain that the things all of us need in red states and blue states, in rural America and urban America, are available. That is the glue that is going to keep us together and help us resolve our problems.”

Eric Hatch, chair of the SoVT CUD, said, “Today is an important day to celebrate a very important milestone for our 14 towns in Southern Vermont CUD. Today’s milestone is an important one relative to the lasting social and economic impact it will have for our region. Likened to rural electrification, universal rural broadband will allow Bennington County and the CUD member towns to not only compete with cities in the U.S., but across the globe. Our area will have its natural beauty, a caring and talent community, and also the technology to provide the services and infrastructure for today and tomorrow’s digital age requirements.”

“They said it couldn’t be done, and you have done this,” said Rob Fish, deputy director of the Vermont Community Broadband Board. “I want to be sure that you own this moment, that you own this celebration, and that you own the future, that you own what this can do for your community. This is an equity issue, we talk a lot about digital equity, but this is an equity issue that goes beyond that. This is about access to healthcare, access to education, but it’s also about building thriving communities, it’s about resiliency, it’s about accessing renewable energy or energy efficiency. It’s about opportunity, and you have brought that to your community.”

Matt Harrington, of the Southwestern Vermont Chamber of Commerce said, “Last year in our State of the Commerce survey...we asked our members what’s holding you back? 41 percent [said] ‘we need better internet, improved internet and Wi-Fi to help us grow.’ We recently conducted that survey again, one year later. Only 18 percent this year indicated WIFI capability as a barrier to growth for them. That is because of the CUD and Fidium Fiber... It’s not merely about faster internet, it’s about possibilities. It’s about making sure our healthcare, education and employment opportunities are accessible to all. It’s about enriching lives and fostering creativity, entrepreneurialism and innovation right here in our very own communities.”

Jeffrey Austin, senior director of fiber build strategy for Consolidated Communications said, “This all-fiber network will allow these 14 towns to grow and thrive in ways you may not have imagined. With this new network, generations of residents can enjoy the beauty and quality of life afforded by this area without having to miss out on the myriad opportunities that come with the best internet.”

Research shows that better internet [increases home values, drives business innovations, allows growing businesses to stay in the community, and expands employment opportunities for the growing remote workforce.](#)

[Fidium Fiber](#) for the home delivers reliable symmetrical, fiber internet without contracts, data caps, installation fees, or hassles. Fidium offers plans from 50 Mbps to 2 Gigs (2000 Mbps) starting at \$35 per month, as well as VoIP phone service and a variety of [streaming options for TV and entertainment.](#)

[Fidium@Work](#) delivers the same reliability, symmetrical speeds and ease of use our residential customers love, with the addition of more robust features entrepreneurs need to keep their business connected. Interested business owners can learn more at FidiumFiber.com/business-fiber-internet.

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About Southern Vermont Communication Union District

Southern Vermont Communication Union District (SoVT CUD) is a municipality formed according to Vermont statute 30 VSA chapter 82. We are run by [volunteers](#) in our local communities. Our purpose is to bring high-speed Internet service (broadband) to under-served areas of southern Vermont. If you are interested in helping, have questions about eligibility or would like to learn more, visit <https://sovtcud.net>.

About Fidium Fiber

[Fidium Fiber](#) is a customer-centered, consumer fiber broadband service offering symmetrical multi-gig speeds and exceptional service. Fidium is available in California, Illinois, Maine, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Texas and Vermont with new locations available daily. Fidium is a brand from [Consolidated Communications Holdings, Inc.](#) (NASDAQ: CNSL). Consolidated is a leading broadband and business communications provider serving consumers, businesses, and wireless and wireline carriers across a 20-plus state service area. Learn more at FidiumFiber.com.