



News Release

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TAKE ME TO FIBERTOWN: HOLLAND BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS ANNOUNCES RESPONSE TO GOOGLE'S FIBER FOR COMMUNITIES RFI

Holland, MI—The Holland Board of Public Works (HBPW) announced today that it will submit a response to Google's "Fiber for Communities" Request for Information (RFI) in hopes of making the Holland area one of the first locations to receive this new cutting-edge fiber optic technology.

On February 10th, Google announced that they plan "to build and test ultra high-speed broadband networks in a small number of trial locations across the United States," delivering Internet "more than 100 times faster than what most Americans have access to today." Google plans to offer the service to between 50,000 and 500,000 people nationwide.

"Our community has already been named one of the happiest, most contented places in the country," said Holland Mayor Kurt Dykstra. "Now we're trying to become one of the best connected."

In order to be named a test area, Google requires that nominees are heavily backed by their communities. To this end, the HBPW has launched its Holland-Google "FiberTown" Initiative, which aims to encourage residents to go online to learn more about the benefits of fiber-to-the-home technology and to show their support by nominating Holland as a potential candidate. The campaign will harness the power of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, email communications with people throughout the community and traditional communications such as posters for school and workplace bulletin boards and shop windows.

The Holland-area community has plenty of momentum. The community last week was ranked second in the nation in health and happiness by the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index. The Holland area is emerging as the North American center of lithium ion battery technologies for the next generation electric powered cars. It's been named one of America's most livable cities by *Money* magazine and even has garnered recognition as having one of America's "Great American Mainstreets."

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If Holland is named as one of the test areas, residents will enjoy lightening-speed Internet access. What will Google learn from the experiment? As outlined in their RFI, Google's interests are threefold:

- **Next generation apps:** *We want to see what developers and users can do with ultra high-speeds, whether it's creating new bandwidth-intensive "killer apps" and services, or other uses we can't yet imagine.*
- **New deployment techniques:** *We'll test new ways to build fiber networks, and to help inform and support deployments elsewhere, we'll share key lessons learned with the world.*
- **Openness and choice:** *We'll operate an "open access" network, giving users the choice of multiple service providers. And consistent with our past advocacy, we'll manage our network in an open, non-discriminatory and transparent way.*

With more than 15 years of experience in fiber optics and continued interest in new technologies, Holland is a perfect candidate. Holland's existing fiber network was started in 1992 to better facilitate communications between substations.

Today, on top of serving the HBPW's communications needs, that same network is able to provide limited broadband access to the local community. The HBPW already has METRO Act permits in place for the Greater Holland area. Its broadband staff has extensive experience with distribution of overhead and underground fiber as well as comprehensive knowledge of local, state, and federal laws pertaining to fiber distribution.

The Holland-area's spirit of innovation is a trademark of the community. In 1988, Holland was the first in the nation to implement a universal snowmelt system. Three years later, Holland became the first utility in Michigan to implement Geographic Information Systems (GIS). And while much of the country is just now catching up, HBPW is already making plans to upgrade to a new Smart Metering system that will benefit customers by providing information about the cost of electricity for various blocks of time and allowing participation on any level, from passive to active. The HBPW is also currently running a pilot program that integrates Smart Metering with the existing fiber network.

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“With all of these strengths, we believe that Google’s *Fiber to Communities* initiative is a perfect fit with the fiber optics initiatives the HBPW has implemented in the past 15 years and our strategic plan initiatives that focus on innovation in the community we serve.” said HBPW General Manager, Loren Howard

The Holland Board of Public Works provides essential, economical, and innovative utility services for the Holland community, including energy, water, wastewater, and infrastructure for communications. We operate socially and environmentally responsible utility enterprises that are able to expand and sustain a highly functional, reliable, and efficient local infrastructure.

For more information on the Holland-Google Fibertown Initiative, visit us online www.takemetofibertown.com or visit our main site at www.hollandbpw.com.

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