



iGo Technology to use First-of-its-Kind Method to Bring Broadband to Southwest Virginia

iGo Technology, Inc. has been serving southwest Virginia for twenty years, providing fixed-wireless broadband to citizens and businesses in Buchanan, Russell, Tazewell and Washington counties. Through the years Steve VanDyke, owner of iGo Technology, has become very familiar with the unique challenges of delivering broadband services to the region, which is not only geographically-challenged with valleys, mountains, and a sparse population, but also contains some of the most distressed counties in the commonwealth.

Due to the many challenges of the region many residences and businesses have gone unserved because broadband providers simply could not reach them, iGo included. VanDyke created a database to track those he couldn't serve - which now contains more than 300 residences and businesses – and began to see where there were major holes which led him to think about alternative ways of delivering broadband.

Currently there are many areas in southwest Virginia, as well as the rest of the state, where middle-mile fiber exists but the citizens around the fiber are unserved as the last-mile wired build is the most costly. iGo Technology plans to leverage this fiber as well as American Electric Power's (AEP) utility poles to bring a hybrid fiber -fixed-wireless broadband service directly to the homes of citizens that have never had a home Internet connection. Fixed-wireless equipment will be mounted on a utility pole which will provide better line-of-sight to the customer than if it were mounted on a tower, therefore allowing iGo to serve more remote customers.

Typically utility poles are used by broadband providers to transport broadband, not deliver it, and in fact iGo's project will be the first time this method has been used anywhere. Other fixed wireless providers have used utility poles to wirelessly "hop" their service into an area but did not include a fiber connection. This project will not only benefit citizens with service and iGo with more customers but will also benefit the fiber provider who will be able to tap into additional markets.

iGo Technology is currently applying for a Community Connect grant from the USDA to assist in this project, however, VanDyke says the company will move forward with this project even without the grant, although most likely on a smaller scale. This project is set to start as soon as iGo receives word about the grant.

Quick Facts

iGo's service is called iGo Clear™.

iGo Clear™ typically offers speeds of up to 5Mbps but with this new project it will be capable of **up to 20Mbps**.

iGo has targeted the Bristol Virginia Utilities (BVU) middle-mile footprint for deployment but is open to expanding into other parts of Virginia.

It took nearly 3 years for iGo to receive access to AEP utility poles.

All 4 counties within the project's potential footprint are considered economically distressed.

For more information visit their websites: <http://www.igotechnology.com/>
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