Local firm to guide 'middle mile'

FOR THE JOURNAL

SENECA — Technology Solutions of SC, Inc. has been awarded the system operator contract for the Oconee County FOCUS Fiber Optic Project.

Technology Solutions will be responsible for the installation of fiber broadband services in 170 anchor institutions including three Network Operations Centers. The $622,500, two-year contract is part of a $15 million federally funded plan to bring broadband access to rural areas.

"This project has been years in the making and will be a game changer for Oconee County economic development," said Richard Ellison, co-founder and CEO of Technology Solutions. "Already, 31 jobs have been created between the utilities installer and Technology Solutions. We are proud to be selected and are confident of success in bringing broadband access to the county."

Oconee was awarded a $9.6 million federal grant last year to help establish a middle-mile broadband network. A Greer firm is receiving almost $2.7 million to install fiber on the first 95 miles of the proposed 270-mile network. County officials expect the first phase of the project to be completed by February, but said they needed a system operator immediately. The middle-mile project will enable Internet service providers to complete last-mile connections and provide needed services to homes and businesses.

Innova Communications, Inc., which is owned and operated by Technology Solutions, has been the first company to commit to being a last-mile Internet service provider for the fiber project. Founded in 1995, Innova has been serving the Upstate for over 15 years with services such as fiber-to-the-home, DSL, metro-ethernet and dial-up.

"This is a major step in the right direction to bring Oconee County into the future of networking communications and it is an honor to be a part of this project," Ellison said. "Low-cost, high-speed Internet via fiber, once available to just a few metropolitan areas, is now going to be available to more rural areas such as Oconee County."

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