



*Groundbreaking ceremony in Scottsbluff Nov. 19 kicked off construction of panhandle-wide medical network with nine hospitals and several clinics.*

By Jan Rahn

Managing Editor

After two years in the planning stage, a ceremonial groundbreaking was held on a fiber network that will connect nine hospitals and related clinics in a 12-county area of western Nebraska.

The Rural Nebraska Healthcare Network (RNHN) broke ground Nov. 19 for construction of the new \$18 million fiberoptic medical network in the panhandle.

According to Lisa Bewley, chief information officer for Regional West Medical Center in Scottsbluff where the groundbreaking took place, federal funding used under the Rural Health Care Pilot Program of the Federal Communications Commission, in conjunction with funding provided by Zayo Group LLC will enable the RNHN to connect the nine primary care hospitals and dozens of affiliated clinics creating one of the most advanced and robust medical technology networks in Nebraska.

“This fiber network will facilitate the deployment of advanced medical technologies, and vastly improve patient care and physician communication,” said Bewley.

Others cooperating in the project besides Regional West Foundation and Zayo include Fiberutilities Group and Adesta, LLC.

The network of 750 miles of fiber spanning western Nebraska will connect to national research networks such as National Lambda Rail and Internet 2 in Denver.

A local Nebraska company, Adesta LLC, is ready to begin construction of the network.

“We are excited to be here today to celebrate and commemorate this amazing network that will undoubtedly revolutionize health care in the panhandle of Nebraska,” said Bob Sommerfeld, president of Adesta, who was present for the groundbreaking ceremony. “Adesta is going to hit the ground running, and we are looking forward to a timely completion. We are very honored to be a part of this.”

Zayo Group is a Colorado-based provider of Bandwidth Infrastructure and Network Neutral Colocation Services, who partnered with Rural Nebraska Healthcare Network to construct the fiberoptic network that will enable additional commercial telecommunications products to be offered in an area of rural Nebraska that is under served.

Zayo is pleased to be a part of constructing the network that will enable communities in western Nebraska access to advanced medical care,” said Glenn Russo, president, Zayo Networks. “We will also be significantly advancing the overall communication capabilities within these communities by offering high bandwidth services over this new fiber network to businesses, government agencies and communications companies throughout western Nebraska.”

Almost two years in the planning, the RNHN has utilized Fiberutilities Group LLC, an Iowa based technology and management firm, to handle the planning, financing, operational and government coordination functions necessary to make the project a reality. “This network represents the power of people working together,” said Kent Van Metre, vice president with Fiberutilities Group. “With tremendous support from the FCC, and by partnering with community-oriented organizations like Zayo and Adesta, the RNHN is poised to have a truly state-of-the-art, advanced health care network.”

## About RNHN

The Rural Nebraska Healthcare Network (RNHN), is a not-for-profit consortium including: Box Butte General Hospital, Alliance; Chadron Community Hospital, Chadron; Garden County Health Services, Oshkosh; Gordon Memorial Hospital, Gordon; Kimball Health Services, Kimball; Memorial Health Center, Sidney; Morrill County Community Hospital, Bridgeport; Perkins County Health Services, Grant; and Regional West Medical Center, Scottsbluff.

The RNHN's mission is a regional system of care provided locally. Since 1996, RNHN members have achieved a unique collaborative effort in order to coordinate a unified health care system that serves all people in western Nebraska.

## More About Contributors

- Zayo Group is a privately owned company based in Louisville, Colo., providing bandwidth infrastructure services.