

ANCHORAGE, Alaska, Sept. 16, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- GCI's (NASDAQ: [GNCMA](#)) TERRA broadband network is being honored by the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA) as the 2013 Community Broadband Wireless Network of the Year. In particular, TERRA is being recognized for extending broadband to some of the most remote areas of Alaska and providing affordable service to some of the state's least served regions and citizens.

This distinction is part of NATOA's Community Broadband Awards, a series of honors that spotlights exceptional leaders and innovative programs that champion community interests and broadband deployment in local communities nationwide. The award will be made at the Awards Luncheon at NATOA's Annual Conference in Orlando, Fla. on September 18.

"GCI's TERRA project has distinguished itself in its extraordinary efforts, achievements and innovation in the rural communities of Alaska, displaying how broadband can revolutionize communities with improved access to healthcare, education and business services that improve overall quality of life," NATOA President Joanne Hovis said.

Historically, Alaskans have relied on bandwidth constrained and high-latency satellite connections to receive their communications services (e.g. phone, television and Internet). In 2009, GCI and its wholly owned subsidiary, United Utilities, Inc. (UUI), envisioned taking Alaska off satellite and building a next-generation communications network that would provide all Alaskans with equitable access to low-latency broadband service. With this level of broadband, Alaskans will be able to participate in the global economy and have access to telemedicine and distance learning that drastically help improve quality of life. With TERRA, GCI is delivering on this vision in 69 communities in Western Alaska, with a population of more than 32,000 residents.

TERRA Southwest, completed in 2012, brought 400 miles of new fiber optic cable between Homer and Levelock, and 13 new microwave towers connecting Levelock to Bethel, providing the first terrestrial broadband network and Internet to homes in 65 communities in Southwest Alaska. TERRA Northwest will make broadband available to households and businesses in Northwest Alaska through a direct, land-based connection to Anchorage, the global fiber optic backbone and the Internet. Phase 1 was completed in 2012, connecting Grayling to Unalakleet and Unalakleet to Shaktoolik. Phase 2, to connect Shaktoolik to Nome, is underway and expected to be completed this year. Phase 3, extending the network to Kotzebue, will be completed January 2015.

"GCI's network of voice, video and broadband services now reaches 80 percent of Alaska households," GCI president and CEO Ron Duncan said. "GCI believes in connecting with and making a lasting impact in the communities it serves. These investments directly support programs and education that preserve Alaska's rich culture. We are honored to be recognized for this work by such a prestigious national organization."

TERRA represents the significant investment GCI has made to improve the future of rural Alaska

Once Phase 3 is completed in 2014, GCI will have invested more than \$200 million

to bring terrestrial broadband services to rural Alaska

, supported by over \$50 million

in grant funding awarded by the Rural Utilities Service and the Regulatory Commission of Alaska

About GCI GCI is the largest telecommunications company in Alaska. The company's cable plant, which provides voice, video, and broadband data services, passes 80 percent of Alaska

households. GCI operates

Alaska's

most extensive terrestrial/subsea fiber optic network, which connects not only

Anchorage

but also

Fairbanks

, and

Juneau

/Southeast to the lower 48 states with a diversely routed, protected fiber network. The

company's satellite network provides communications services to small towns and villages throughout rural

Alaska

. GCI is in the process of constructing

Alaska's

first truly statewide mobile wireless network, which will seamlessly link urban and rural

Alaska

for the first time in the state's history. More information about the company can be found at

www.gci.com

About NATOA NATOA is a national trade association representing local government jurisdictions and consortiums, including elected and appointed officials and staff, who oversee communications policies and services in local governments throughout the country. For more information on the award recipients, the NATOA Community Broadband Awards, and NATOA's efforts to bring about a national broadband strategy that recognizes the vital and integral role of local governments, visit www.natoa.org.

TERRA Honored with National Broadband Award

Written by Australian Business

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