

Newbury REDI.net 2020 Annual Report

In 2019 Newbury REDInet received three grants and in 2020 we put them to work. Using the USDA grant, we contracted with Consolidated Communication for an Engineering Feasibility Study. The study showed that the project was NOT feasible as proposed by Consolidated. We then tried to hire Tilson Technology to evaluate the Consolidated study looking for ways that we could modify the Consolidated proposal. Tilson decided that it was not interested in such a contract.

Our next step was to work with Matrix Design Group. We hired Matrix to do an Executive Feasibility Study to finalize their proposal. The proposal was based on a business plan where Matrix would design, build, and operate the fiber based internet for Newbury and REDInet would cover the make-ready costs. REDInet would have to sign up about 500 customers and borrow about \$1.3 million to cover the make-ready costs. The matrix completion date was fall of 2022.

REDInet also conducted another survey of residents to analyze residential interest and to collect the information on how to meet the 500 subscribers required by Matrix.

In July the Town of Newbury applied for membership in East Central Vermont Telecommunications District, ECFiber. In August we received a presentation by F.X. Flinn, board chair of ECFiber. Then in September, the REDInet board evaluated the Matrix proposal and the ECFiber proposal and chose ECFiber. Both proposals anticipated service to all of Newbury and would be complete in the fall of 2022, but the ECFiber network would cost the customer about 30% less.

At the December 28, 2020 Special Meeting, the Newbury REDInet District was dissolved in favor of ECFiber to provide internet to all of Newbury.

For additional information or any questions, please contact Claude Phipps, chair, here4now2@myfairpoint.net, or 866-9008.

ECFiber and the Town of Newbury

Newbury is a member of the East Central Vermont Telecommunications District, a Vermont municipality whose mission is to provide internet service to homes and businesses in its area. During the past year ECFiber added almost 1,200 new customers and now serves over 5,300 premises in 23 towns via 1,200 miles of fiber-optic cable. In recent months, the district approved applications from eight municipalities, and now consists of 31 member towns. Taken together, there are about 31,500 premises in the district located on almost 2,000 miles of roads.

In Newbury, ECFiber is working on the design of the network and hopes to begin construction next year. Presently ECFiber and WEC are in discussion about a joint project to construct the network here in 2021, but no plans have been finalized.

The global pandemic has, of course, proven beyond any doubt that rural Vermonters need access to world-class broadband. ECFiber is funded entirely by customer revenues, which in turn back tax-free municipal bonds issued by the district that provide capital to build our infrastructure. We invite you to visit our website to learn more about ECFiber, and encourage you to “sign-up”. You won’t be charged anything until we start service.

Claude O. Phipps, Brad Vietje, and Ron Enos are Newbury’s delegates to the ECFiber Governing Board. Contact us thru this address: Newbury@ECFiber.net

