

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Introducing Blue Fibre

An innovative solution for rural communities

Calgary, Alberta – November 22, 2022 - [Blue Fibre](#), a digital infrastructure company focused on meeting the needs of rural communities interested in taking advantage of the 21st-century information technology economy, was officially launched at the Rural Municipal Association convention in Edmonton on November 8, 2022. Blue Fibre is a joint venture owned by Utility Network & Partners Inc. ("[UTILITYnet](#)") and [5D Networks Inc.](#)

Nick Clark, one of the founders of UTILITYnet and a director of Blue Fibre, said, "Blue Fibre is a natural extension of our core utility business focused on providing energy and Internet retail services to small communities across Alberta. It also opens the door to expanding into British Columbia," added Clark.

UTILITYnet, founded in 1978, provides energy management reporting services to Alberta's Oil & Gas industry and expanded into the residential retail business in 2008. As a private and local Alberta utility company, UTILITYnet built an extensive community retail network over the last decade, providing electricity, natural gas, Internet, and microgeneration solar services to customers in over 450 Alberta communities. There are currently [30 retailers](#) under the UTILITYnet umbrella, with expansion plans to increase that number to 50 by 2028.

In 2019, UTILITYnet was licensed by CRTC as an ISP to offer DSL and Cable Internet services under the [Q Wave](#). Q Wave is available in over 70 Alberta and British Columbia communities.

Darren Chu, President of Blue Fibre, will focus on installing high-speed fibre infrastructure networks in rural community markets across Alberta and B.C. He commented, "this was the first step on an ambitious path. UTILITYnet is self-financing the venture, investing from cash reserves, and expanding the company into high-speed fibre. This will allow us to focus on providing a unique bundled service to small rural communities."

The first community-based infrastructure to be installed is at a holiday resort in B.C.'s Okanagan Valley, connecting 850 accounts (homes, rentals, a hotel, offices, and community facilities) onto a high-speed network that Q Wave will service. The first customer site, including high-speed Internet, T.V., and phone services, went live on November 17. "The balance of the community will be converted to Blue Fibre services during December and onwards." said Athena Molina, Blue Fibre CEO.

Ms. Molina added, "throughout 2023, we will promote high-speed fibre to rural Alberta & rural British Columbia, Indigenous, and Metis communities. This path follows the provincial and federal government initiatives and intentions to provide improved high-speed Internet services to rural communities."

Blue Fibre will promote the 'bundling' of UTILITYnet's community retail energy and solar services in each community. As a bundled service, residents in remote communities will have access to Fibre Internet, T.V., and phone, in addition to lower retail prices for electricity and natural gas. Community members



will also have access to the Solar Club (a green solution offered by [Green Alberta Energy](#), a division of UTILITYnet). UTILITYnet will manage all retailing and customer care services.

5D Networks, under the direction of Ed Clunn, CTO of Blue Fibre, will address the hardware network requirements, the design, and the infrastructure networking structure, customized to meet each community and town's specific needs.

Rural communities will not only gain access to high-speed Internet services but also, as a community retailer of utilities, will be able to plug into UTILITYnet's cloud-based data center. They will be able to leverage established and trusted customer care and utility systems, plus create a new revenue stream for their local community. Moreover, they can offer homeowners and small businesses in their community lower retail prices for electricity and natural gas and opt into the benefits of promoting solar. "As we move towards net zero, promoting rooftop solar as an alternative energy source is a smart move, as it is one of the important pieces of the puzzle in building a sustainable community plan. In our opinion, it is just as important as installing a high-speed fibre network," commented Chu.

This is a unique and innovative opportunity for rural Alberta community leaders.

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