



Tech Valley Communications Rebrands to FirstLight Fiber



many others have tried and failed, FirstLight succeeded in growing into a regional telecom powerhouse,” said Kevin. “As a founder, employee and shareholder, it is gratifying to see how far we have come and know that now is the right time for me to make this change. I have every confidence that Kurt Van Wagenen (New CEO) is the right guy to take FirstLight to the next level. His industry experience, local ties and business acumen make him the perfect successor and next leader of the Company.”

“Our new brand is an integral step in the continued advancement of our Company, and adopting the name of our fiber network is a significant way to highlight all of FirstLight’s capabilities,” stated Kevin O’Connor, former Chief Executive Officer of FirstLight Fiber.

“The name FirstLight has strong positive brand recognition and reflects one of our key strengths – our fiber optic network. The name also better reflects our Company’s rapidly expanding fiber network as well as the customers we serve throughout the northeastern U.S. and Canada – in addition to the Tech Valley region. While we remain committed to serving and investing in the Tech Valley region, our new name reflects the entirety of our network and our plans for future growth.”

FirstLight Fiber (formerly known as Tech Valley Communications) announced the formal rebranding of Tech Valley Communications to FirstLight Fiber. Adopting the name it used for its fiber optic network, this announcement reflects the ongoing geographic expansion of FirstLight and its enhanced set of capabilities, which include Data, Internet Access, Data Center Colocation and Voice services to carriers and enterprise customers.

Telecom Review recently visited with Kevin O’Connor, a founder and recently retired CEO, and Patrick Coughlin, SVP of Marketing, to give our readers an overview of the changes at this fiber carrier.

After 13 years successfully leading the organization, Kevin O’Connor, co-founder and former CEO, has chosen to retire and will transition to a role of strategic advisor to the Board.

Operating one of the largest and most dense fiber-based networks throughout Upstate New York, Northern New England and up to Canada, FirstLight has consistently grown both organically and strategically. In 2011, FirstLight acquired segTEL and most recently, it acquired the assets of TelJet.

The latest acquisition was made possible by a recent debt financing led by GE

Capital with Webster Bank as a co-lender. These transactions have expanded FirstLight’s geographic reach and strengthened its core capabilities by adding new customer segments, new services, and additional talent to its team.

“I am proud of what the employees and Board have accomplished since we started the Company over 13 years ago. Where



The FirstLight network has been built and operated by the Company for nearly 15 years, and boasts more than 190,000 fiber miles, serving 1,300 lit buildings in five states (NY, NH, ME, VT & MA) with connectivity to Montreal. Because FirstLight owns and operates its own fiber optic network, it is better able to provide a higher quality of service translating to a positive customer experience for its clients.

"We were among the first providers to offer competitively priced, fiber-based data, Internet and voice services in the markets we serve, and our high capacity, low latency network is exactly what our clients need to maintain their competitive edge. With this rebrand, our strong local presence within the Tech

Valley region, along with the other positive attributes that set FirstLight apart from our competitors will remain unchanged," said Patrick.

"Our customers can expect to continue to work with the same dedicated account teams and to have access to the full complement of high quality, cost-effective, scalable telecommunications services they have enjoyed."

Ethernet Certification for Wireless Backhaul

FirstLight has also successfully completed Ethernet certification with another major U.S. based wireless carrier. Under the terms of the agreement, FirstLight will provide wholesale backbone infrastructure and Ethernet-based, cell site backhaul

solutions to support the carrier's 4G rollout throughout northern New England. The additional capacity will assist the carrier with meeting the growing demand for mobile data, rich media and video on its network throughout the region. Leveraging its dense fiber footprint in New England and New York, FirstLight is able to provide wireless carriers with cost effective and scalable Ethernet connections in areas that are difficult to reach.

"The insatiable demand for bandwidth from wireless carriers is increasing," stated Patrick. "FirstLight's innovative technology provides major wireless carriers with reliable and scalable solutions required to help their businesses thrive, and for their customers to

receive a mobile experience that is fast, reliable, and content-rich.

FirstLight is now Ethernet certified with all of the major U.S. wireless carriers. The rigorous certification process can take nearly a year to complete and assesses a number of factors including the carrier's SLA performance as well as the ability to quickly turn up service. This certification is an important milestone and sets the stage for FirstLight to begin providing services to this carrier.

Moving Forward

FirstLight Fiber's Board of Directors has appointed Kurt Van Wagenen as its new President and Chief Executive Officer, and that he will also become a member of FirstLight's Board. "We are very pleased to have Kurt leading the team," said Steven F. Kaplan, General Partner at Riverside Partners and Chairman of FirstLight's Board of Directors.

"Kurt was selected after a very rigorous recruitment process. He is an experienced, growth oriented telecom executive with strong leadership skills and an especially relevant track record leading fiber-based companies in the New York and New England regions. Kurt's mission is to accelerate FirstLight's growth while emphasizing continued outstanding customer service to our carrier, wholesale and enterprise customers." 