

State's fiber network a rural Iowa asset

10:29 PM, Jan. 24, 2011

The prosperity that most of the country and most of Iowa's metro areas have enjoyed has, for the most part, passed our rural areas by. In many parts of the state, we are rapidly losing basic amenities of life, such as schools, medical care and grocery stores.

To compete in a global economy and recruit 21st century technology-intensive employers and employees, rural Iowa needs access to cost-effective high-speed fiber. We've already got it in the ground. I'm proposing that Iowa change state law to open the Iowa Communications Network to our municipally and independently owned telephone companies.

This will enable us to have another tool in our economic development kit, as well as create a significant number of new jobs in and of itself. Imagine if all the telecom dollars spent in Iowa communities stayed in Iowa communities, instead of going to out-of-state concerns.

We have before us the opportunity to bring another Pacific Railway act into existence today. A fiber railway, connecting every community, from our smallest, to Des Moines, with each other and with the world. An opportunity to bring hi tech employers and white collar jobs that are not dependent on location but on technology, to rural Iowa.

- Nick Graham, Rolfe