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Civitium Helps North Georgia Network Cooperative Land \$33 Million Broadband Stimulus Award with Vice President Biden Making the Award Personally

Fiber optic project becomes flagship and home base for one of the first awards in the \$7.2B Stimulus Program

ALPHARETTA, Ga., (Dec. 17, 2009) – Vice President Joseph Biden presented a \$33 million federal grant award to the North Georgia Network Cooperative (NGN) today. Under the direction of the Development Authority of Lumpkin County, Ga., Civitium led the development of the project from inception through feasibility, network design, organizational structure, financial planning and grant preparation.

Civitium, a specialized consulting firm focused on the planning and management of next-generation broadband networks, worked with leaders throughout north Georgia since early 2008 to develop and mature the project. The firm also supported NGN during an intense due diligence phase with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).

“This project has the potential to transform north Georgia’s economic development potential,” said Greg Richardson, founder and managing partner for Civitium. “We are honored to have played a part in helping NGN reach this important milestone.”

Civitium’s skill in the public, private and nonprofit broadband sectors helped produce a collaborative model that leverages the strengths of numerous stakeholders. The network relies on the resources of local electric utilities for customer service and network operations and incorporates an advisory board of economic development and public benefit organizations. The project is highly efficient, making use of existing fiber where available.

Bruce Abraham, executive director of the Development Authority of Lumpkin County, the lead public agency for the project, stated, “We couldn’t have reached this point without the advice and assistance of the Civitium team. Their passion, commitment, expertise and problem-solving ability is unparalleled in my 20 plus years of experience.”

The NGN network will traverse twelve counties in north Georgia, providing a backbone that directly connects to the southeast’s largest Internet exchange in Atlanta. The network will serve dozens of anchor institutions along this backbone, including public

schools, local governments, technical colleges, large businesses, healthcare providers and other organizations with high-bandwidth needs. In addition, it will offer advanced fiber-to-the-home services in key underserved areas. Finally, the network will adhere to so-called open access principles, insuring that any cable, DSL, or wireless operator will be able to interconnect and extend their own services throughout the region.

About Civitium – Civitium provides in-depth consulting for planning, deploying, and managing next generation fiber optic and wireless broadband networks. Civitium's clients – which include local exchange carriers, cellular operators, government agencies, public safety agencies, electric utilities, cooperatives, and not for profits -- look to the firm for its unique ability to provide innovative business and technology solutions. For more information, see www.civitium.com.