

Wood help kick off 10,000-mile statewide broadband network project

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On October 13, Assembly member Jim Wood (D-Healdsburg) joined members of Governor Newsom's administration, legislators, local community representatives and advocates to push the "on" switch to the first leg of an open-access middle-mile network that will allow service providers to provide internet connections to unserved or underserved Californians. The 10,000 mile network, made possible by \$6.5 billion in funding from SB 156, will be the nation's largest when constructed.

Approximately one in five Californians do not have access to reliable high-speed internet.

"I wouldn't have missed this opportunity for the world," said Wood. "This is the biggest investment California has made yet to help get broadband access to all Californians. I've been fighting for this for my Northern California district, which is mostly rural, since being elected and it finally feels like there is progress."

Construction began last week on State Route 67 near Poway in San Diego County, where the first 500 feet of fiber optic cable was installed through conduit in the first segment of a \$3.6 billion statewide project known as the “Middle Mile” broadband network. The San Diego area location was chosen because it will serve a part of the state that has gone without broadband connection, and because it is a “Dig Smart” opportunity, meaning its installation is more economical because it is being paired with an existing highway project.

“Our lives depend on equitable access to a reliable and fast internet connection whether it’s to be able to work, attend school, access health care services, receive important community information or simply to connect with family and friends,” said Wood.

The planned network will eventually cover the entire state to help bring reliable, high-speed internet access to the millions of Californians who do not have it now.

Californians interested in seeing if they qualify for discounted high-speed internet services available now may learn more at the state’s Broadband for All website.