



*From the Office of the President & CEO*

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**Fiber Broadband Association**  
3050 K Street NW, Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20007, USA

October 4, 2021

Dear FBA Members,

As we enter the fourth quarter, we remain bullish on the CapEx investment environment and the strong momentum behind market-driven fiber broadband deployments. While politics have delayed the vote on the highly anticipated bipartisan Infrastructure bill, we fully expect this bill to pass before the end of the year with its \$65 billion investment for broadband. The Fiber Broadband Association has been active on behalf of our industry to engage with and influence a wide variety of federal and state-sponsored programs. On the Federal front, our team played an instrumental role in ensuring the guidance from the U.S. Department of the Treasury issued with the \$10 billion Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund encourages recipients to “prioritize investments in fiber-optic infrastructure where feasible, as such advanced technology better supports future needs.” On the state level, FBA’s advocacy was successful in California where \$6 billion in their state surplus is being invested in broadband. State and local governments across the country are investing in broadband at an unprecedented level. In addition, the FCC has begun to trickle out its Rural Digital Opportunity Funds (RDOF) for fiber broadband projects. These investments in fiber broadband will not only greatly improve nearly every aspect of our lives today, but will help ensure digital equity for generations to come.

As we enter into a very exciting time for our industry, I wanted to take a moment to provide an update on the Fiber Broadband Association’s performance in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of 2021.

### **Health of the Organization**

I am pleased to report that our Association is extremely healthy and growing. We have added 43 new member companies and 31 new public officials and Women in Fiber members in the past nine months. Our annual conference in July was sold out prior to the event and the attendance was 42% above our previous record. Our committee and membership engagement is at an all-time high. This momentum will carry into 2022 as the exhibit space inventory for next year’s annual conference is already close to being sold out. Fiber Connect has become an anchor event for the telecommunications industry and as we plan for Fiber Connect 2022, we have increased our attendance cap by 25% to accommodate the increased awareness and interest in our event.

### **Fiber Investment**

While this pandemic has been horrible in so many ways, it has illuminated the critical need for fiber broadband and for all Americans to be connected. For those of you that were able to attend our conference in Nashville in July, you experienced the energy and excitement growing as communities around the country look to deploy fiber to ensure their residents can fully engage in the digital economy. These same leaders are looking to fiber broadband as a mechanism to drive economic development, job growth and the ability to attract new companies, as well as support work-from-home, remote education and telehealth services for their communities. They also see the immediate benefit fiber brings in supporting emerging applications and services that will impact their communities, such as smart grid modernization and future services such as 5G.

It is particularly exciting to see so much attention and investment on so many different fronts as traditional, emerging and community operators have reached out to the unserved and underserved communities with public/private partnership models.

### **Workforce Development**

Given that we are entering into a historic fiber broadband CapEx investment cycle, we will need to make certain that we have the workforce to ensure that fiber is deployed across every community. As a result, the Fiber Broadband Association has developed an accredited Fiber Optic Technician training program (OpTIC) with 144 hours of instruction and 2,000 hours of apprenticeship. The U.S. Department of Labor has recognized the Fiber Broadband Association as a national apprenticeship sponsor, and we held a signing ceremony during our conference in July. The nationwide interest and demand for our training program has been tremendous and we are working with community colleges, veterans programs, State broadband and workforce development offices across the country to help scale this training as communities and operators move from planning to deployment. The course work is comprehensive and provides in-depth instruction materials that include classroom and “hands-on” laboratory training. We will be holding the pilot program at the Wilson Community College in Wilson, North Carolina beginning late 2021/early 2022. Following this, the program will be rolled out to community colleges, training institutions and with veterans.



### **Membership Engagement**

We have increased our audience by 70% year-over-year with stronger registrations, attendance rates and more events in 2021. Our committees are also growing rapidly in attendance and engagement. For example, the Public Officials Roundtable now has more than 150 members, representing communities in over 30 states.

### **Research**

During the quarter, we issued five new whitepapers:

- The Rural Digital Divide
- The Market Has Spoken
- Fiber vs. FWA
- Fiber vs. LEO Satellites
- The Future of Work

### **LATAM**

Our Latin America chapter is back in the black. The success of its June virtual conference has put the chapter on pace for positive financials for 2021. Under the leadership of 2021 Chair, Nelson Saito of Furukawa Electric, the chapter is leveraging the strong momentum from its June virtual conference with a second edition Fiber Broadband LATAM virtual conference scheduled for October 26-27. This second event will include new topics on Passive Optical LAN, 5G Optical Networks, and Convergence and Neural Networks, as well as PON and SDN/NFV Evolution. In addition, the LATAM chapter will be launching its new training programs, offering 6 different fiber optic certifications.

### **Execution Against 3Q Goals**

Last quarter, I outlined the following key focus areas for 3Q:

- ✓ Execute a record 2021 Fiber Connect event
  - Achieved 42% growth over our previous record for attendance
- ✓ Secure 70% of 2022 Fiber Connect exhibit commitments
  - Exhibit space commitments for 2022 have already exceeded 2021 by 10%
- ✓ Drive bipartisan support for President Biden's Broadband Infrastructure package
  - Infrastructure bill passed the Senate and is anticipated to pass the House later this month



- ✓ Launch OpTIC accredited Fiber Optic Technician program
  - Program is fully accredited by DoL and pilot is planned for 1Q22
- ✓ Publish global WFH study and execute corresponding webinars on the study across the world
  - Published and webinars held in regions around the globe
- ✓ Continue to diversify FBA's revenue streams to expand our members' services
  - Webinar and Fiber for Breakfast attendance is up 70% year-over-year
  - 3Q sponsorships exceed our target by 10%
- ✓ Research and secure a new Association Management System (AMS) platform and website
  - We have narrowed our shortlist for AMS platforms, but we have extended our current AMS contract for 12 months to allow for a smooth integration and migration process

### **Next Steps**

Our key focus areas for 4Q are the following:

- Finalize strategy to help accelerate and maximize the benefits of the Broadband Infrastructure subsidies for communities across the nation
- Kick off the content development and planning for Fiber Connect 2022
- Prepare our accredited Fiber Optic Technician (OpTIC) program for pilot and continue to work with State broadband and workforce development offices across the country
- Execute FBA's LATAM virtual conference scheduled for October 26-27
- Publish FBA's annual Fiber Study
- Complete FBA's strategic planning process for 2022
- Prepare and execute our Premier Members meeting in December

As we head into the final quarter of 2021, the Fiber Broadband Association is hitting its stride in leading our industry. We have the wind at our back, and the opportunities in front of us could not be more exciting. This position comes from two decades of "sharpening our axe" and it is now time to realize the fruits of our labors. I want to thank our outstanding committee leaders and all of you that contribute your time and efforts in moving our industry forward. I also want to thank our outstanding FBA staff and strategic partners for all your heavy lifting throughout the quarter and the year. The Fiber Broadband Association continues to gain mindshare, national and global visibility as the voice of fiber broadband. We will continue to work with the Administration, Congress, ISPs, and communities across the nation to accelerate the deployment of fiber broadband networks to



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ensure digital equity and enable every community to leverage economic and societal benefits that only fiber can deliver.

Sincerely,



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