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## **New Microwave Pathway Expands Communication Options Along McCarthy Road and in McCarthy and Kennecott**

Copper Valley Telecom opened the communications pathway along its new microwave system this week and announced that customers in McCarthy and Kennecott now have access to faster Internet speeds, improved call quality, and increased phone and Internet reliability.

“We have extended wireless service along the McCarthy Road and enhanced service in the McCarthy and Kennecott areas. With the completion of this project, all of Copper Valley’s exchanges now have terrestrial connectivity by either fiber optic cable or microwave. This helps us provide advanced services to all of our customers,” said Dave Dengel, CEO of Copper Valley Telecom.

The system consists of several new towers and microwave radios at Gilahina Butte, Lakina, Sourdough Ridge, and McCarthy installed during the 2011 summer season. “The system actually begins in Chitina where the microwave equipment is interconnected with our fiber optic network,” said the company’s COO, Jim Gifford. “Several years ago, we ran fiber optic lines all the way from the Richardson Highway to Chitina. That project improved communications in Chitina similar to the way this new microwave path will benefit McCarthy and Kennecott residents.”

McCarthy and Kennecott residents who use CVW’s cellular phones will experience an immediate improvement in call quality and reliability for local and outgoing long distance calls as these calls will be routed over the new microwave path. Gifford continued, “Because AT&T continues to use satellite connections for all long distance service to and from McCarthy, all CVTC fixed telephone service toll calls will continue to experience the voice delay and service issues related to satellite based services.”

Up until now, residents in McCarthy and Kennecott have been limited to slow Internet speeds due to the limits of satellite connections. With CVT's new microwave system, 3G EVDO wireless data with speeds in excess of 1.5 MBPS is now available in McCarthy and Kennecott, along the McCarthy Road, and in the May Creek and Dan Creek areas. "The 3G speeds we now provide are equivalent to those our DSL customers enjoy." Dengel said.

In addition to home- or business-based services such as telephone and Internet, Copper Valley has installed other enhancements to the communication network that will benefit McCarthy area residents and visitors.

A new public WIFI hotspot has been turned on in downtown McCarthy. Individuals with a WIFI-equipped device (such as a smart phone, tablet, or laptop computer) may access the Internet using this hotspot by logging on and paying a daily, weekly, or monthly fee. "We think this WIFI expands the options a person who is living or visiting McCarthy has for getting on-line to do business, stay in touch with family and friends, or just surf the web," Dengel emphasized.

Two new cell sites have also been added to Copper Valley's extensive network of Prince William Sound and Copper Valley region cell towers. These towers, located at Cannon Hill above Chitina and Gilahina Butte (about half way between Chitina & McCarthy), provide additional coverage for people living on and traveling along the McCarthy Road.

CVT installed new weather cameras at each of the cell sites. Pictures are updated every 15 minutes and members of the public may see the images on line at CVT's website, [www.cvtc.org](http://www.cvtc.org). New web cams are located at Chitina's Cannon Hill, Gilahina Butte, Lakina, and Sourdough Ridge.

Dengel noted, "Our customer service staff is contacting residents now to inform them about their options and will be making several trips to McCarthy this spring to provide additional assistance and education for seasonal residents."

Copper Valley's microwave system was funded by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act's Broadband Initiatives Program.

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