



Citizens NEWS

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CITIZENS – FIRST IN VIRGINIA TO OFFER DIGITAL IPTV

Citizens, a regional full-service communications and entertainment service provider in Southwest Virginia, announced today the availability of digital IP- (Internet protocol) Television in Floyd, Franklin, and Patrick counties. Citizens is the first communication provider in Virginia to offer the digital IP-Television technology—television delivered over copper and fiber optic cable facilities.

“Digital IP-Television is an exciting journey,” stated Danny Vaughn, Network Manager. Vaughn, a 27-year veteran with Citizens, chaired the development of the project and reflected on the two-year progression of the project. “The company has been exploring the technology, expanding fiber facilities, and deploying equipment over the past several years.” Through research and collaboration with international technology companies, Citizens is one of the first independent providers to supply the innovative technology to communities on the east coast of the United States.

“The introduction of the new digital IP-Television will allow Citizens to offer bundles consisting of television, telephone, wireless services, and high-speed Internet all on one statement,” stated Robert Weeks, Citizens’ Marketing Manager, referring to “Citizens’ Paks,” which give customers discounts for having multiple service relationships with the company. “Customers will be delighted in the fact that they can make one call and receive all their communications and entertainment services from a company that is located in their community.”

Citizens’ digital IP-Television carries 200 of the nations most requested channels including local Roanoke and Lynchburg channels, plus a wide assortment of specialty

and premium programming. Furthermore, the system has a user-friendly on-screen guide, pay per view capability, and comes equipped for future video on demand.

"It's a huge undertaking requiring monumental testing periods to meet internal quality demands," said Gerald Gallimore, General Manager of Citizens. The company's focus is to meet the demands of their mission: to provide quality service, excellent support, and advanced technology.

"One big advantage for Citizens' customers is that we can deploy digital IP-Television to customers without building miles of copper and fiber optic cables to the customer's home, it already exists," says Benny Gallimore, Plant Manager. "This leading-edge service integrates technologies from multiple vendors to create a service called digital IP-Television over broadband -- meaning that its digital-quality video delivered over the existing (copper) telephone lines."

"We are very proud that our hometown company is now a major player in providing the latest video, voice, and data technologies to area residents. Citizens is a marvelous example of a company with a vision for the future and talented employees who make things happen," said Floyd County Administrator, George Nester. "They have a proven track record for providing the latest advances in communication technology to our community as well as great customer service."

The first deployment of digital IP-Television will begin in the proximity of the Citizens' office in Floyd. An estimated 92% of households in Floyd County are passed by facilities to provide broadband, and 60% are capable of receiving video service. "As we finish one area, we'll move on to the next until we have covered the entire county," says Weeks. Such a segmented rollout will allow Citizens to keep pace with demand and better control of equipment inventory. Citizens is currently taking orders and creating an installation schedule. "When we get to their area, customers on our list will be notified and will have first priority for an installation date."

Construction continues to expand Citizens' coverage area. Facilities for serving Franklin County and the Blue Ridge District in Patrick County are underway. To date, construction of fiber optic cable is complete from the Parkway in Floyd County to Claudville in Patrick County. By yearend, Citizens plans to expand the video signal from Floyd, Franklin, and Patrick counties, to Carroll and Wythe counties. This allows the company to serve the markets where Citizens opened a second retail office in Fort Chiswell.