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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **ASTAC launches first fiber to the premise in North Slope villages**

Utqiagvik, Alaska – Arctic Slope Telephone Association Cooperative (ASTAC) has completed the installation of fiber optic cabling in the villages of Nuiqsut, Wainwright and Point Hope. Beginning in 2016, ASTAC technicians installed fiber to the premise (or home) to each and every building in these communities. The new distribution fiber creates an end-to-end fiber optic broadband connection when coupled with Quintillion’s recently activated Subsea fiber network.

“Fiber becoming the last mile is an evolutionary step in improving our networks across the North Slope and enhancing our membership’s experience,” said Jens Laipenieks, ASTAC CEO/General Manager.

Fiber optic networks make up the backbone of the modern Internet and can support the ever growing bandwidth demand that’s required today and far into the future. Evolving from the susceptible satellite and copper networks of the past, ASTAC is excited to offer high quality Internet service at faster speeds with lower latency. All of ASTAC’s wireline and 4G wireless customers in Wainwright, Point Hope, Nuiqsut and Utqiagvik are now enjoying the benefits of the fiber-fed networks and are presently migrating customers in all fiber-fed markets to our new Home Internet<sup>10</sup> service. Although many homes in Utqiagvik are connected to our network via copper cables (last mile) they will still be able to enjoy the new Home Internet<sup>10</sup> service. Over the next one to two years we will continue building out fiber to the home in Utqiagvik in preparation for the future.

ASTAC and other Alaska telecommunications companies worked collaboratively with the FCC to create the “Alaska Plan,” tailored to the unique funding requirements to provide service in the state. Creating sustainable and predictable universal service funding through the Alaska Plan provided ASTAC the stability needed to acquire funding and build these transformational capital projects.

Additionally, a portion of the fiber build costs in Point Hope were covered by a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Community-Oriented Connectivity Broadband Grant which was instrumental in accelerating the overall build schedule. Since 2009, USDA-Rural Development has invested over \$1.5 billion in more than 220 rural Alaskan communities. These investments in housing, community facilities, business, energy, water and sewer, telecom and electric have helped to grow rural Alaska’s economy and enhance the quality of life for its residents.

ASTAC will be adding more bandwidth during the first quarter of 2018 in all villages connecting via satellite transport resulting in a better experience for all ASTAC members.



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ASTAC provides Broadband Ethernet and Internet, 4G wireless as well as local and long distance services across the North Slope. Additionally, ASTAC offers a Nomadic WAN and Internet service using the North Slope's only private LTE network covering the oil fields. For more information, visit [www.astac.net](http://www.astac.net).

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