



**For Immediate Release:** 07/16/20

John B. Rhodes, Chair

**Contact:**

James Denn | James.Denn@dps.ny.gov | (518) 474-7080

<http://www.dps.ny.gov>

<http://twitter.com/NYSDPS>

**20060/20-C-0009**

## **Columbia County Telephone Company Gets Funding for Broadband Expansion**

### ***\$4 Million Permanent Loan Improves Broadband for 5,000 Germantown Telephone Customers***

**ALBANY** — The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today approved a \$4 million financing package for Germantown Telephone Company, Inc. that will allow the 115-year-old telephone company to provide broadband service to its largely rural community, a huge benefit at a time when many more people are working from home and attending school remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Approval of the financing will allow the company to permanently finance the project at reasonable terms.

“Today we enable the company to deliver broadband to unserved or underserved customers, by approving this financial transaction,” **said Commission Chair John B. Rhodes.** “New Yorkers need broadband, now more than ever with the current pandemic and the need for high quality, reliable broadband services to allow remote work and schooling.”

Through this network expansion, more than five thousand Columbia County residents will receive high quality, technically advanced broadband services that would likely not be available without this agreement.

Germantown Telephone is a recipient of Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC) grants for a broadband expansion project. The company, and a subsidiary, will jointly borrow up to \$4 million through the Rural Telephone Finance Cooperative, or RTFC. As a result of the ESDC grants, the expansion project is scheduled for competition by August of this year. The project is supported by local community groups, including Connect Columbia, a broadband supporter, and the Columbia Economic Development Corporation.

Germantown provides business and residential telecommunication services. These include local and long-distance telephone, digital TV, broadband Internet, fiber-to-the-home, digital phone systems and data center services, in southern Columbia County amongst rural areas. Germantown has 20 employees, 2,012 access lines in service consisting of approximately 1,614 residential and 398 business lines. Germantown’s subsidiaries include: Hilltop Communications, Inc., a provider of cable television services; Germantown Wireless, Inc., a provider of wireless communications; and Valstar Inc., the co-borrower.

Germantown and Valstar were awarded grants totaling about \$8.7 million by ESDC's Broadband Program Office (BPO) to support expansion projects that deliver broadband access to unserved or underserved customers in New York State. However, absent the funds from RTFC, the companies would have been unable to construct their networks as required by the BPO grants, and thousands of residents and businesses in the companies' service territories would not have received the broadband service they require.

Today's decision may be obtained by going to the Commission Documents section of the Commission's Web site at [www.dps.ny.gov](http://www.dps.ny.gov) and entering Case Number 20-C-0009 in the input box labeled "Search for Case/Matter Number". Many libraries offer free Internet access. Commission documents may also be obtained from the Commission's Files Office, 14th floor, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223 (518-474-2500). If you have difficulty understanding English, please call us at 1-800-342-3377 for free language assistance services regarding this press release.