

Welcome to Fiber Connect

It's a great time for the fiber industry. Deployment is proceeding at an unprecedented rate, and still more fiber will be needed in the near future.

By Heather Burnett Gold / *Fiber Broadband Association*

The more I think about the Fiber Broadband Association tagline, “accelerating the connected future,” the more relevant it seems for this moment in the fiber industry. Fiber broadband deployment is certainly accelerating: This past year, annual U.S. fiber deployment hit a record 4.4 million homes marketed – the most-ever in a single year – based on consumer demand for greater bandwidth. Nearly 34 million U.S. homes are now passed by fiber.

People across the nation, including many in Washington, D.C., are increasingly aware how critical broadband infrastructure, such as fiber, is to communities and businesses. A slew of proposed policies put connectivity squarely in the spotlight. Among them are President Trump's infrastructure proposal outlining infrastructure spending and streamlining deployment, the Broadband Conduit Deployment Act of 2018, the Streaming and Expediting Approval for Communications Technologies Act and the Inventory of Assets for Communications Facilities Act.

Fiber broadband will also play a major role in the next wave of technological innovations in U.S. cities, including 5G wireless networks and smart-city applications. It's an exciting time to work in fiber. Many of us have been here since the beginning, and it is thrilling to see this industry grow and change.

WHAT LIES AHEAD

Just because we have come a long way, however, does not mean there is not still more to accomplish. Our work is just getting started. Research suggests that, in less than five years,

more than half of fiber providers in North America will offer gigabit service. As the United States works towards 5G, a significant amount of fiber cable will be required to connect 5G small cells. As much as 1,390,816 miles of fiber cable will be needed to supply full 5G service to just the top 25 metropolitan areas of the United States.

The Fiber Broadband Association and its members are ready, able and eager to take fiber into its next chapter. We're committed to accelerating the fiber future from deployment sites and the halls of Congress to the nation's urban centers and rural communities.

At this year's Fiber Connect, thought leaders and industry leaders are coming together to share strategies for success and to discuss the fiber future – what it is, what it will look like across sectors and across the country, and, most important, how to get there.

Thank you for joining us here in Nashville. No matter whether you have been at our previous conferences or it is your very first Fiber Connect, your presence helps makes this conference more valuable, more meaningful and more useful to our overall goal of accelerating the connected future with fiber. Be sure to check out this year's sold-out exhibit hall, the biggest-ever in Fiber Connect history.

From all of us at the Fiber Broadband Association, welcome! ❖

Heather Burnett Gold is president and CEO of the Fiber Broadband Association, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to accelerate deployment of all-fiber access networks. You can contact her at hbgold@fiberbroadband.org.