

CEO

Barbara DeGarmo / barbara@bbcmag.com

PUBLISHER

Nancy McCain / nancym@bbcmag.com

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Masha Zager / masha@bbcmag.com

EDITOR-AT-LARGE

Steven S. Ross / steve@bbcmag.com

ADVERTISING SALES ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Irene Prescott / irene@bbcmag.com

EVENTS COORDINATOR

Dennise Argil / dennise@bbcmag.com

COMMUNITY NEWS EDITOR

Marianne Cotter / marianne@bbcmag.com

DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Karry Thomas

CONTRIBUTORS

David Daugherty, Korcett Holdings Inc.

Heather Burnett Gold, FTTH Council, NA

Joanne Hovis, CTC Technology & Energy

W. James MacNaughton, Esq.

Christopher Mitchell, Institute for Local Self-Reliance

Henry Pye, RealPage, Inc.

Bryan Rader, Bandwidth Consulting, LLC

Craig Settles, Gigabit Nation

Robert L. Vogelsang, Broadband Communities Magazine

BROADBAND PROPERTIES LLC

CEO

Barbara DeGarmo

VICE PRESIDENT, BUSINESS & OPERATIONS

Nancy McCain

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Robert L. Vogelsang

VICE CHAIRMAN

The Hon. Hilda Gay Legg

BUSINESS & EDITORIAL OFFICE

BROADBAND PROPERTIES LLC

1909 Avenue G • Rosenberg, TX 77471

281.342.9655 • Fax 281.342.1158

www.broadbandcommunities.com



Broadband Communities (ISSN 0745-8711) (USPS 679-050) (Publication Mail Agreement #1271091) is published 7 times a year at a rate of \$24 per year by Broadband Properties LLC, 1909 Avenue G, Rosenberg, TX 77471. Periodical postage paid at Rosenberg, TX, and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to **Broadband Communities**, PO Box 303, Congers, NY 10920-9852.

CANADA POST: Publications Mail Agreement #40612608. Canada Returns to be sent to Bleuchip International, PO Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2.

Copyright © 2016 Broadband Properties LLC. All rights reserved.



Shelter From the Storm

Extreme weather disrupts lives in many ways – but fiber to the home offers protection from the elements.

As I write this, the Mid-Atlantic is being blanketed by yet another “snowpocalypse,” which follows hard on the heels of a snow-caused “carmageddon” – which follows the hottest year in recorded history. In the central United States, floods have become more frequent; the West is suffering long-term drought, with the number of large wildfires rising rapidly.

Extreme weather causes disruptions of many kinds, including electrical outages. Unsurprisingly, U.S. Department of Energy data show that annual outages have doubled every five years since 2000. Even adding more renewable energy sources into the mix – a chief weapon against the increase in extreme weather events – can add to the likelihood of outages.

However, some communities are doing better than others at avoiding weather-related disruptions. Two outstanding examples appear in this issue.

In Chattanooga, the municipal electric utility, EPB, has reduced the number of power outages by a whopping 60 percent over the last several years. (See p. 46.) Its power grid monitors itself, diagnoses itself and heals itself almost immediately, rerouting electricity when equipment is damaged.

In Kentucky’s Owsley County, in the Appalachians, schools used to close for long periods each winter because so many students and teachers live on remote mountain roads that can’t be cleared quickly after snowstorms. Now, the state government has authorized 10 learn-at-home days per year. Instead of staying home and watching TV, schoolchildren stay home and work on

their class assignments using Internet-based learning programs. Their teachers supervise and help them from the comfort of their own snowed-in homes. (See p. 32.)

FTTH COMMUNITIES

What do these two examples have in common? Both Chattanooga and Owsley County are fully fiber-to-the-home communities. Chattanooga EPB built its own municipal FTTH network, attached smart meters to every premises in its service area and now operates a fiber-enabled smart grid.

Owsley County is served by Peoples Rural Telephone Cooperative (PRTC), a member-owned co-op that covers two counties. Like EPB, PRTC built out fiber throughout its entire service area; even residents of houses up in the mountains or down in the “hollers” can get gigabit broadband. PRTC is dedicated to bettering its community and has helped use its fiber network to improve residents’ access to jobs, education and health care. Jackson and Owsley counties have received the “Smart Rural Community” designation from NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association.

Now that fiber broadband is available to nearly a quarter of U.S. homes, it’s time to think more deeply about using this infrastructure for communities’ benefit. EPB, PRTC and other pioneers are showing the way. ❖

Masha Zager

masha@bbcmag.com