

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

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Sean Buckley / sean@bbcmag.com

COPY CHIEF

Eli Penberthy / eli@bbcmag.com

ADVERTISING SALES ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Irene Prescott / irene@bbcmag.com

EVENTS COORDINATOR

Dennise Argil / dennise@bbcmag.com

ONLINE NEWS EDITOR

Marianne Cotter / marianne@bbcmag.com

ART DIRECTOR

Karry Thomas

CONTRIBUTORS

Rollie Cole, Sagamore Institute for Policy Research

David Daugherty, Clarus Broadband
Heather Burnett Gold, HBG Strategies
Joanne Hovis, CTC Technology & Energy
Trevor Jones, OTELCO

Michael A. Kashmer, Digital Broadband Programming Consultant

W. James MacNaughton, Esq.
Christopher Mitchell, Institute for Local Self-Reliance

Bryan Rader, UpStream Network
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

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 © 2019 Broadband Properties LLC. All rights reserved.



The Winner's Circle

This year's FTTH Top 100 list reflects a healthy and growing fiber-to-the-home industry.

Congratulations to the FTTH Top 100 winners!

Once again, **BROADBAND COMMUNITIES** can report that the fiber-to-the-home industry is growing and thriving. There was no shortage of strong candidates for the Top 100 slots in 2019, and winnowing the list to 100 was more difficult than ever.

During the past year, 5G wireless grabbed the headlines, and cable, telephone and fixed-wireless operators stepped up their games. However, fiber broadband grew at record rates. Operators – and their customers – recognize that only fiber will meet the broadband demands of today and tomorrow.

In fact, many operators now invest in other broadband technologies mainly as a transition to fiber. For example, starting with fiber-fed wireless is a relatively inexpensive way to gauge demand in a new area and win loyal customers who will make the jump to all-fiber when it becomes available.

Competitive operators usually build all-fiber networks from the outset, without any transition. In areas with strong competition, they believe fiber will be most competitive. And in areas with poor broadband, they know residents want their broadband problems solved once and for all.

This year's Top 100 list includes large and small telephone companies, cable companies, multifamily broadband providers, municipalities, electric cooperatives and pure-play fiber overbuilders. All have different motivations and business cases, and all have found FTTH strategies that work.

RESPONDING TO DEPLOYERS' NEEDS

Any successful FTTH strategy requires innovative, reliable vendors – and these companies make up the bulk of the Top 100 list. Whether they provide equipment, software, consulting services, design, construction or other inputs for FTTH projects, these companies work closely with deployers to understand their requirements and tailor their offerings to today's needs. Responsiveness to – and even anticipation of – customer needs is a common theme when operators describe the vendors they rely on.

The input that fiber deployers find most challenging to obtain is capital. The number of private lenders and investors that care about and understand the value of fiber networks is still relatively small. Government loans and grants are sometimes available for fiber projects, but applying and qualifying for these funds is never easy.

With this in mind, we paid more attention this year to the role of vendors in helping deployers obtain capital. Some Top 100 companies help clients identify and apply for private or public funding. Others, which have ongoing relationships with investors seeking investment opportunities, aggregate investments to create financing packages. The role of these vendors in educating the financial community about fiber networks and helping bring projects to fruition is becoming immensely important. ❖

Masha Zager

masha@bbcmag.com