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Check Out Our FTTH Primer — A Great Educational Tool

Ideal for spreading the word; now there's an updated version

With this issue, we are putting in your hands a powerful tool with a proven value. I am referring to our 32-page magazine-within-a-magazine entitled "Fiber to the Home: Advantages of Optical Access," that starts after page 56.

Our staff – and the Fiber-to-the-Home Council, which sponsors it - refer to the publication as the FTTH primer. The new version is an update of the document we first published in February 2007. The original has gotten wide acclaim over the past year, and I've spoken with many readers whose companies distribute it as an integral part of their business strategy.

As I began reading our updated primer, I reflected on what's been called the "Aha!" experience: a breakthrough in personal understanding where all the pieces come together in a unified view. Those who benefit from "Aha!" experiences often become evangelists, on fire with a mission to carry their insights to the world at large – for better and for worse. To be sure, there are people like that in the world of FTTH, and I've heard them speak in neighborhood meetings, public hearings, and conferences. They see the benefits of fiber and quite understandably want everyone to get on board with them immediately. That's all for the better; but, there's a downside. As some wise observers have pointed out, these missionaries – in their impatience for near-instant conversions – are not affording others the opportunity to go through the same learning process, often one that occurred over a lengthy period, that they themselves underwent.

Now when I witness such proselytizing, I have a contribution to make: I urge the champions to provide - as I do - paper or electronic copies of the FTTH primer for the nonspecialists being addressed.

One might consider a primer an elementary piece of writing that helps the uninitiated get up to speed. By contrast, our primer integrates information from

different fields and provides a far-sighted and well-grounded overview – and is a masterpiece of good writing and skillful explanation to boot.

By all accounts, the impact that the primer has on those who read it is generally just what would be hoped. They see the pieces come together as a whole. They get an overview that offers satisfying answers to their questions. For groups, it gets everyone on the same page by dispelling obstacles to discussion such as oft-repeated scraps of misinformation. Educators have used it in the classroom. Municipal officials have studied it, often at the encouragement of their staffs. One consultant I know printed a thousand copies to distribute at a national conference of developers. "I couldn't break through with brochures or PowerPoint, but your primer worked. It was credible and clear," he said. The primer answers the key questions developers and property owners pose about the wisdom of deploying fiber now.

The current primer contains new information and statistics, plus profiles of consumers making use of FTTH in their personal lives, and information about a rich assortment of applications. (It could be a fact about telemedicine, or videoconferencing, or energy management that ignites the Aha! experience in a reader.)

You'll see the 100-plus other pages in this issue are worth exclaiming about also, with our exclusive international coverage providing another important resource for readers. We know that is what you have come to expect from us. But the primer puts in your hands the ability to convey to others what you may already know a lot about and could use some help in organizing and expressing.

We will be making electronic versions of the primer available from our Web site. Send everyone there for copies.