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### **For Immediate Release**

## **Fatbeam Launches Fiber Optic Network in Butte Montana**

**Post Falls, ID – July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013:** Fatbeam, a Competitive Access Provider delivering data transport services to customers in the Western U.S., announced that construction is underway to build out its high capacity fiber optic network in Butte, Montana. At an estimated cost of \$1.6M, Fatbeam will rival Google Fiber's much publicized 1Gigabit offering in certain U.S cities by delivering 2Gigabits of data transmission to each of the 14 Butte School District locations. Long-term contracts signed by both the Butte School District and the Montana Economic Revitalization and Development Institute (MERDI) were key drivers to Fatbeam's investment. "Obviously we have great respect for Google, so anytime you can replicate their success by investing fiber in a community, deliver greater connectivity for education and drive economic development at the same time, everyone wins," stated Greg Green, President of Fatbeam.

"Butte School District and MERDI are leveraging the services of Fatbeam to bring transformative technological infrastructure that is a first of a kind model for the communities within the State of Montana," stated Phillip J. Curtiss, Ph.D. and owner of SIAFU Technology Group, which manages the MERDI data center in Butte. The high capacity fiber network in conjunction with the prior investment that MERDI made in its Data Center will help drive a large number of services, such as virtual desktop infrastructure, virtual private clusters, high-speed broadband access to the Internet, disaster recovery and business continuity services that are today not readily available in Butte, Montana. "As part of the technology investment, the Butte School District is well positioned to ensure our students acquire the necessary skills to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and put us in a position to integrate our curriculum to inspire, challenge and engage the next generation of students," stated Judy Jonart the Superintendent of Schools.

Like most rural communities in America, Butte has its history of success and decline, much centered on its long history in the mining industry. Butte was one of the largest cities west of the Mississippi in 1890 and peaked with a population of 95,000 in 1920. However, after a steady decline over the last several decades, Butte now has 34,200 in population and is currently Montana's fifth largest city. So it's not surprising that economic development and a vision of the future are a core focus for the community business leaders. "While today the mining industry is very much alive in Butte, MERDI understands the value of fiber optics and technology and what they can do to support our existing Butte business base and provide another economic development tool to attract other industries and jobs for our community and state," commented Jim Kambich, President and CEO of MERDI.

## About Fatbeam

Fatbeam is a Competitive Access Provider delivering data transport services to business and enterprise, healthcare, education and government customers in the Western U.S. While competitive telecom and broadband fiber capacity are mainstream throughout larger cities in the United States, Fatbeam focuses on underserved markets. Fatbeam delivers fiber optic bandwidth beginning at 1 gigabit Ethernet, extending to 400 gigabit, and jumping to dark fiber.

Headquartered in Post Falls, Idaho, Fatbeam was co-founded by Shawn Swanby, owner of Ednetics Inc. ([www.ednetics.com](http://www.ednetics.com)), and Greg Green ([www.greggreen.com](http://www.greggreen.com)).

For further information, please visit our web site at [www.fatbeam.com](http://www.fatbeam.com)

## About MERDI

The Montana Economic Revitalization and Development Institute (MERDI) was created in October 1974 to conduct energy research, commercialization for technology transfer and economic development. Over the years, MERDI has created or facilitated many economic development projects in diverse industries, such as advanced energy and aerospace, mining, wastewater treatment, power generation, polycrystalline silicon production, municipal water and wastewater services.

MERDI manages the Thornton Technology and Enterprise Center, which is a renovated historic building, located in uptown Butte, Montana that is listed on the National Register. Through a unique adaptive reuse, the former hotel structure has been repurposed into a Technology and Enterprise Center featuring cutting edge information technology infrastructure, a data center offering a full suite of services including access to high speed and high capacity broadband. The facility offers an IBM 1350 high performance-computing cluster. MERDI has collaborated with many of the facility's tenants in a wide variety of range of projects including, power plants, special forces training, high performance computing and business management software systems to name a few.

MERDI is currently leading an effort to build a hybrid-community fiber optic network. This effort is part of a broader project called **mFUSION**, a collaboration started by MERDI and its strategic partner, Siafu Technology Group using cutting edge technology to drive social and economic development in Montana. Its goal is to provide Montana businesses, non-profits, educational and governmental organizations the increasingly necessary tools to thrive in the 21st century economy.

[www.merdi.org](http://www.merdi.org)