



## **MP Telecom Fiber Optics Expands**

MP Telecom, a wholly owned subsidiary of Minnesota Power, Inc. (NYSE: MPL), is expanding its network through construction of a 208-mile fiber optics route into southern Minnesota. The new fiber will link Winona, Rochester, Austin, Albert Lea, Owatonna, Faribault and Minneapolis. The project is part of MP Telecom's plan to tie its fiber optic network to Minneapolis, St. Paul, Wadena and Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

"This project advances our goal of expanding MP Telecom's network to better serve Greater Minnesota communities and businesses," said Walt Prah, president of MP Telecom. "When the southern route is operational, our fiber optic infrastructure will connect three-quarters of Minnesota's population. Cities along the new route will benefit from our highly reliable fiber optics backbone; access to increased bandwidth capacity for data, voice and video services; and increased competitive product offerings."

MP Telecom is currently holding discussions with larger wholesale communications customers interested in securing capacity along the new southern route. The company will offer capacity on the fiber optics network to incumbent and competitive local exchange carriers, wireless companies, Internet service providers, national long distance carriers and large commercial users of point-to-point fiber optic bandwidth.

MP Telecom's fiber optic network already interconnects the communities of Duluth, Grand Rapids, Hibbing, Virginia, Eveleth, Ely, Brainerd and St. Cloud. The network uses state-of-the-art digital technology and provides the most advanced telecommunications applications available for data, video, dedicated-line, long-distance and Internet services. When this year's projects are completed, MP Telecom will have more than 1,000 route-miles of fiber optic network in Minnesota.

MP Telecom, headquartered in Duluth, Minnesota, is a telecommunications services provider that markets competitive access, transport and Internet/Web services in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Minnesota Power, Inc. is a diversified services company with principal business interests in electric operations, automotive services, water services and investments. Corporate headquarters are also in Duluth.