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**South Shore Fiber Link is "Pure Economic Development"**

**The South Shore Fiber Link carries information not passengers, and it holds the promise of opening the entire region to IT development.**

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Fiber Link is a provider-neutral, dark fiber network. It runs 75 miles along the South Shore rail line from South Bend through Michigan City, Chesterton, Gary, East Chicago, Hammond and other communities to the Kensington Station in Illinois. There is also a spur to Elkhart. Fiber Link will connect with the St. Joe Valley MetroNet and the Chicago fiber optic grid.

Bryan Baker, Principal of ComControl, explained that any company that needs to move large amounts of information — manufacturing, finance, engineering, design/build, medical, for example — is a potential client. Clients could realize significant savings and greatly increase capacity by leasing Fiber Link connectivity services ("lighting up" the dark fiber). ComControl will manage agreements and connect users to the Fiber Link network.

The project was engineered with particular attention to quality. Boris Matakovic, CIO at the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), said, "Our Engineering department had the foresight to create a carrier-grade plan. It sets the bar to a high level." NICTD is the owner of Fiber Link. Baker added, "Nothing reaches the street as what we have in this corridor. ***It's pure economic development.***"

Fiber Link has the potential to become an economic development blockbuster because the state recently passed legislation (SEA 448) to exempt personal property tax on IT equipment, positioning the region as an ideal location for tech-based businesses. Baker said, "SEA 448 is the perfect complement at the perfect time for companies looking to locate IT jobs here."

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