

## Indiana Telehealth Network Brings Broadband to Rush Memorial Hospital

*Rushville, IN -- September 2011* A partnership between Rush Memorial Hospital, NineStar Communications, and the Indiana Rural Health Association (IRHA) has recently brought fiber connectivity to Rush Memorial and surrounding areas. As the lead entity for this program, IRHA has enabled Rush Memorial to become a new participant in the Indiana Telehealth Network (ITN). The ITN is funded through the Federal Communications Commission's Rural Health Care Pilot Program (FCC RHCPP), administered by USAC. Through this program, construction of over twenty miles of fiber optic cabling took place during the summer of 2010. The public/private nature of the partnership has enabled NineStar Communications the ability to offer fiber connectivity to businesses in the area which before, was very limited. To date, over twenty businesses have converted to NineStar Communications with more being added weekly. "I am very grateful that IRHA was aggressive and proactive with this initiative," stated RMH President and CEO Brad Smith. "This not only gave the hospital the fiber access it needed, but allowed local industry, small businesses and even downtown businesses access to fiber. In addition, the savings have been great with no cost to run fiber to the businesses. All businesses experienced a drop in their monthly costs and faster reliable speeds." Smith further noted, "This will all play an important role towards economic growth in our community."

Tim Hills, President and CEO of NineStar Communications stated, "We are pleased to be working with Brad Smith and Rush Memorial Hospital to promote the availability of fiber optics and advanced telecommunication products and services in Rushville. We look forward to working with other business leaders in the community to meet their needs by providing them with quality broadband, voice and digital television."

Jim Finan, Executive Director of the Rush County Economic Development Corporation, believes that having fiber connectivity available to the North Industrial Park, Commerce Park and throughout downtown Rushville provides not only an operational value to the existing businesses along its path, but provides a very key asset to those businesses expanding and site consultants representing relocating industries as they entertain new locations. "I just participated in an Indianapolis Site Consultant Roundtable where we were 1 of 9 counties sharing our community's assets so that these search firms could better match leads to viable locations. We were only 1 of 2 from nine east central counties that highlighted having fiber directly available for new industry access." Finan noted further, "Even more specifically, we have just recently fielded a relocation inquiry that identified the need for high speed internet access. Because the North Industrial Park is fiber ready, this company has indicated that Rushville made the cut of final sites if they choose to build in a new location."

The teamwork between the Indiana Rural Health Association, NineStar Communications, and Rush Memorial Hospital has provided fiber optic connectivity at 10-gig speeds for Rush Memorial Hospital and its community," according to Jim Boyer, RMH Vice President of Information Technology. "Not only does this connectivity allow faster bandwidth speeds for Rush Memorial and its clinics, it allows us, as a small hospital, to provide a greater service to our patients by giving Rush Memorial the capability of connecting to metropolitan healthcare services, which may not be found in typical rural healthcare settings. The partnership between NineStar Communications, the Indiana Rural Health Association, and Rush Memorial Hospital has allowed Rush Memorial Hospital to stay competitive in an ever-changing healthcare market and advance Rush Memorial towards the future of healthcare."

Don Kelso, Executive Director of IRHA added “It is very exciting to see this project come to fruition with public/private partnerships being formed in Rushville.” IRHA is a not-for-profit entity, subsidized by grants through the federal government, which provides various programs to critical access and rural hospitals throughout Indiana. One such program is the ITN. There are currently 24 hospitals around the state participating in the ITN. The mission of the ITN is to improve the health and well-being of Indiana residents, particularly those in rural areas, through the utilization of a dedicated broadband health network to deliver telehealth applications including, but not limited to, telemedicine, health information exchange, distance education and training, public health surveillance, emergency preparedness and trauma system development. More information on the ITN can be found on the IRHA website at [www.indianaruralhealth.org](http://www.indianaruralhealth.org) under Programs/Indiana Telehealth Network.