

# iFiber Groundbreaking Event



**iFiber partners were joined by federal and state legislators, local mayors, community anchor institutions and construction company representatives at the Groundbreaking Event Aug. 29, held at Sauk Valley Community College in Dixon. The iFiber project is part of a network designed to improve broadband in Illinois.**

## ***Nine-county project underway to improve broadband infrastructure***

A commitment to jobs and the economic development of Illinois were important points stressed at the official Groundbreaking Event of the iFiber project held Monday, Aug. 29, at Sauk Valley Community College, Dixon.

Ryan Croke, Deputy Chief of Staff for Gov. Pat Quinn, told the 100-member crowd that the iFiber project will do much to provide jobs now and in the future for Illinois residents. iFiber is part of a critical state-wide network designed to enhance broadband in under-served areas, he said.

Sauk Valley Community College is one of the first community anchor institutions to sign a letter of intent with iFiber. Its President George Mihel, welcomed attendees and stressed the importance of the project to higher education. Also speaking at the Groundbreaking Event were John Lewis, chairman of the iFiber board; Rockford Mayor Larry Morrissey; Bill Tonne, Blackhawk Hills Resource Conservation and Development; Ken Terrinoni, Boone County; and Jerry Hicks, LaSalle County and North Central Illinois Council of Governments. All represented iFiber's partner organizations.

They said building the "information highway" today will position Illinois and its communities to compete and succeed in the future. They added that the broadband initiative is laying important groundwork for future generations, just like the nation's interstate highway system and rural electrification program did for current generations.

The iFiber project is designed to bring a reliable high-speed broadband network to a nine-county region including Boone, Carroll, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside and Winnebago. Funded by a \$69 million federal grant, iFiber is part of the National Telecommunications and Information Agency's Broadband Technology Opportunity Program. It is a public-private partnership that will provide access to the new fiber optic network to community anchor institutions such as schools, government, libraries, community colleges and health care providers. Through its service provider partners, iFiber also will promote similar high speed network transport services to businesses and residential subscribers in the private sector.

The grant is administered by Northern Illinois University and is an Illinois Broadband Opportunity Partner (IBOP). Design engineering and permitting are being coordinated by Baxter & Woodman. Construction is being completed by PirTano Construction Company (Addison, IL) in Carroll, Jo Daviess, Lee and Whiteside counties; and Aldridge Electric (Libertyville, IL), which partnered with Kelso-Burnett (Rockford, IL), in Boone, LaSalle, Ogle, Stephenson and Winnebago counties.

