



Education Networks of America



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact:

Merle Gruesser  
Education Networks of America  
(802) 552-4296  
mgruesser@ena.com

Gregg Noble  
Sovernet Communications  
(802) 460-9139  
gnoble@sover.net

**EDUCATION NETWORKS OF AMERICA (ENA) AND SOVERNET  
COMBINE EFFORTS TO DELIVER FIBER-BASED COMMUNICATION  
SERVICES TO VERMONT SCHOOLS**

*New Agreement Part of VT Department of Education Initiative to Provide Better, More Cost-Effective Connectivity and Other Technology Resources to Vermont Schools and Students*

**(Bellow Falls, VT)**—December 13, 2011—Education Networks of America (ENA) and Sovernet Communications reported today that they have finalized an agreement to provide broadband Internet connectivity services to schools in southern, central and northeastern Vermont. The agreement allows ENA, which was recently awarded a statewide contract by the Vermont Department of Education to provide managed connectivity and communication services to Vermont’s public and private K–12 schools, to use Sovernet’s local fiber assets to help deliver the next generation of connectivity and communication services to public and private K-12 schools included in the Vermont FiberConnect project. The ENA-Sovernet agreement leverages each organization’s strengths to offer improved quality and value to potentially over 100 Vermont schools that ENA and Sovernet may jointly serve.

Earlier this year ENA was selected by the Vermont Department of Education to offer managed connectivity and communication services to Vermont K-12 schools. ENA is an experienced, education-focused managed service provider that will provide a ubiquitous statewide education network with a high level of quality support services. On behalf of all the state’s K–12 schools, the department had issued a request for proposal (RFP) for these services in an effort to increase affordable bandwidth availability across the state through group purchase pricing, as well as to maximize E-Rate program funding for these services. The federal E-Rate program provides subsidized discounts to school and libraries for the purchase of Internet access, communication and networking services, resources which are essential to both instruction and operations in today’s learning environments. Participation in the program is voluntary and not required by the state.

The Vermont FiberConnect project, a 773-mile fiber-optic network across seven of Vermont’s counties, is a public-private partnership between Sovernet Communications and the Vermont Telecommunications Authority (VTA). Vermont FiberConnect is funded by a \$33.4-million

(more)

federal Broadband Technology Opportunities (BTOP) grant and over \$12 million from Sovernet, with additional funds coming from the State of Vermont and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation via the Vermont Department of Libraries.

ENA has agreed to exclusively utilize Sovernet's wholesale fiber-based connectivity services to offer a broader array of E-Rate eligible services to schools that were included in the Vermont FiberConnect project. By purchasing services through ENA, schools will have access to ENA's extensive selection of network and communications services—including IP voice and video conferencing, content filtering, enterprise-grade e-mail platform, e-mail archiving and more—as well as ENA's specialized expertise in serving schools, while enjoying the benefits of a state-of-the-art, fiber-based network from a local company.

“We are delighted to serve Vermont's schools,” says David M. Pierce, president and CEO of ENA. “As a managed service provider with extensive experience successfully serving K–12 customers on a district-wide and statewide scale, ENA is uniquely positioned to make the most of existing and future infrastructure investments in Vermont. Sovernet is the kind of connectivity provider ENA looks for. The strength of our two organizations means great things for Vermont's schools: an entire suite of powerful managed network solutions, conveyed via a first-rate modern network infrastructure, delivered right to students and educators.” Sovernet CEO Rich Kendall commented, “We are excited to announce this ENA-Sovernet agreement and believe that the joint marketing effort will facilitate interactive learning applications across Vermont that will quickly lead to overall advancements in education.”

#### **About ENA**

ENA provides managed network and communication services to customers in the education, library and government sectors. Their scalable solutions facilitate collaboration, increase productivity and decrease the cost of information management through the convergence of data, voice and video technologies. ENA currently manages multiple statewide and district-wide education and library networks in Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Maryland, New Hampshire, Tennessee, Texas and Vermont, successfully serving 5,345 end sites, 580 school districts, 240 libraries more than 3.1 million students, teachers, administrators and staff and more than 6.6 million librarians and patrons. Empowered by their networks and network partners, ENA's customers can focus on what matters most: preparing students, strengthening communities and leading enterprises into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For more information please visit [www.ena.com](http://www.ena.com).

#### **About Sovernet**

Founded in 1995, Sovernet Communications provides reliable Internet and telecommunication services to residential, business and institutional customers throughout Northern New England. The company is headquartered in Bellows Falls, VT, with facilities in Winooski and Burlington. Sovernet is the sole sub-recipient of the \$33.4M Federal BTOP award issued to the Vermont Telecommunications Authority in July 2010. For more information, please visit [www.sover.net](http://www.sover.net) and [www.vermontfiberconnect.com](http://www.vermontfiberconnect.com).

###