

April 2025



Dear Neighbor,

We are pleased to announce the first phase of the AIRRAQ Network will launch in the coming weeks, bringing unlimited broadband home internet and mobile data plans to Bethel. This fiber project has been achieved after nearly four years of planning and construction and with strong support from Tribal Councils in Bethel and the surrounding communities. Your partnership is deeply appreciated.



The BNC-GCI Partnership. In mid-2021, Bethel Native Corporation applied for funding to build AIRRAQ from a federal grant program designed to support the deployment of broadband internet service to Tribal communities. In its role as grant applicant, BNC selected GCI as its partner to design, deploy, operate, and maintain AIRRAQ because of GCI's longstanding commitment to serving the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta.

GCI has not only provided data, mobile, and other services across the Delta for decades, it has also consistently supported local hire and workforce development efforts and currently employs 53 community members throughout the region. In addition to the \$42 million grant awarded to AIRRAQ, GCI has invested a substantial amount of its own capital in the project and has committed to maintaining and expanding the Network for years to come.

The Project Name. Since the new network will serve the Tribal communities of the Delta, BNC proposed a Yup'ik name for the project. AIRRAQ means, "string that tells a story" — an appropriate name for the fiber that will enable Bethel and other Delta communities to share their unique stories, culture, language, and lifestyle with the world.

A Generational Investment. AIRRAQ is a great example of infrastructure investment that will yield benefits for generations to come. The first phase of AIRRAQ has required massive up-front investment, but it will be long-lived (25-plus years), will support fast, unlimited urban-level home internet plans right from the start and will be able to support much higher speed plans as data needs grow in the future.

A Transformational Project. When Dr. Jill Biden, the former First Lady of the United States, visited Bethel last year, she recognized the transformational nature of AIRRAQ, saying, "The funding is going directly to Bethel Native Corporation because you know what your communities need, and I love the name that you have chosen for it. An airraq isn't the story itself. It's a tool that helps us tell it. A simple string that becomes a thing of beauty with the creativity and joy and hope we bring to it. The connections of this community are already deep. But with AIRRAQ, you will be able to bring them to life in new ways."

WHAT TO EXPECT NEXT

In coming weeks, as the launch draws nearer, you will hear much more about AIRRAQ. You can find information on the items described below at www.gci.com/bethel.

Immediate mobile service improvements at no extra cost

- With access to the AIRRAQ fiber backbone, GCI will activate its 5G mobile wireless network in Bethel, upgrading from limited data service to an urban unlimited market. Not only will Bethel mobile customers enjoy blazing fast speeds, they will also experience the same unlimited mobile data as customers in Anchorage. For example, an Apex plan customer in Bethel will move from an included data allowance of 20 gigabytes per line to unlimited data per line.

New plans and savings

- Bethel residents will have access to new home internet plans at the same speed, usage, and pricing as those offered to Anchorage residents. These plans will include multiple unlimited internet options with download speeds up to 2,500 megabits-per-second.
- Access to fiber will also bring to Bethel residents GCI+, a highly popular plan in Anchorage that offers Alaska's only unlimited home internet and mobile service package.
- Finally, new Bethel unlimited home internet customers who package their internet service with mobile will be able to enjoy an extra \$35 off per month for the first six months — with prices starting at just \$99.99 for both unlimited home internet and one line of unlimited 5G mobile.

The AIRRAQ Network will bring transformational change to the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. Our partnership is working to extend the Network to other communities as well. We look forward to celebrating with you the launch of AIRRAQ fiber service to Bethel — the first step toward closing the digital divide in the Delta.

Quyana,

Ana Hoffman

President and CEO, Bethel Native Corporation

Greg Chapados

President and COO, GCI