

BUSINESS

CONNECTIONS

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Proves Big Things
Are Happening Here**

**SPAN
ENTERPRISES**
endless possibilities



BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

Let's hear it for the home team! All of us who live and work in York County can be justifiably proud of what our communities in this region are achieving. To celebrate, this Fall 2016 issue of *Business Connections* showcases some hometown success stories.

Comporium launched our fiber optic network, named Zipstream, in 2014. On page 3, you'll learn **What's All the Fuss About Fiber?** and discover why today's businesses need the bandwidth that only fiber can provide.

On pages 4 and 5, we look at the **New Strategies to Attract New Businesses in Rock Hill and York County.** Both York County Economic Development and Rock Hill Economic Development Corp. have begun new branding programs as part of larger initiatives to bring more businesses and talent to our region. Comporium is enhancing these efforts by making Zipstream Gigabit internet available.

The **Business Spotlight on SPAN Enterprises** on page 6 is one example of the importance of super-fast internet speeds to growing businesses. Due to Zipstream, combined with the right people, this software company is selling worldwide.

We recently hosted the **Comporium and Economic Development Event** to thank local economic development organizations and municipalities for what they do to foster business growth. You can read more about this event on page 7, including highlights from Comporium's presentation on the communications services that help give our part of South Carolina a competitive edge.

Comporium offers a variety of solutions to help businesses boost productivity and communities boost economic growth. When we team up, we all win.

Sincerely,

David Little
Senior Vice President of Sales



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What's All the Fuss Over Fiber?

Only fiber networks can meet the ever-increasing demands for bandwidth



There's a lot of talk these days about fiber networks and for good reason. Optical fibers are flexible, hair-thin strands of glass that use light instead of electricity to carry a signal. They are unique in their ability to transport virtually unlimited bandwidth over long distances. Fiber to the Premise (FTTP) is the delivery of a communications signal over optical fiber from the operator's switching equipment all the way to a home or business, thereby replacing existing copper infrastructure such as telephone wires and coaxial cable.

"Future Proof" Technology

FTTP is the only technology that delivers enough bandwidth—reliably and at a low enough cost—to meet the ever-increasing demand for more robust internet, video and voice service as well as other online applications. Compared to copper wire or coaxial cable, fiber also has a much longer lifespan and the capability of being 1,000 times faster than DSL and cable modems.

Fiber-optic technology can now provide two-way transmission speeds of up to one Gigabit per second, the equivalent of 1,000 Megabits per second. (To put that in context, the average U.S. home has 10 Mbps internet service.) What's more, ongoing improvements in fiber-optic equipment are constantly increasing

available bandwidth without having to change the fiber. That's why fiber networks are said to be "future proof."

More Applications Need More Bandwidth

Why do we need all this bandwidth? Here are a few reasons:

- More companies are offering feature-length movies for download and one high-definition movie takes up as much bandwidth as 35,000 webpages.
- Families and companies are increasingly using "software as a service"—meaning they subscribe to cloud computing applications rather than install them on their own computers.
- There are currently 200 telemedicine networks in the U.S. connecting 2,000 institutions.
- Services such as distance learning and remote energy management are expected to grow considerably over the next several years.

These applications, plus the many other ones not even invented yet, are going to require much greater bandwidth than what is generally available today. Bandwidth demand is growing at an enormously high rate and is projected to grow for years to come.

Years ago, Comporium recognized the need for fiber to speed our area's future as a knowledge-based economy. We launched our 1 Gigabit fiber-optic network, named Zipstream, in 2014. It connects your business to the internet 85 times faster than standard cable modem service. Get details on availability and pricing at zipstreambroadband.com.

New Strategies to Attract New Businesses

Both York County and Rock Hill are strengthening their economic development efforts



Significant activity is currently taking place in both York County and Rock Hill—in the form of expansions, new development and redevelopment—all supported by assets readily recognized by both the county’s and city’s economic development arms. Although each department is charged with unique objectives, you’ll find the collaboration involved in retaining and recruiting businesses and talent to the area is the same.

This is reflected in the current rebranding initiatives. York County Economic Development promotes the area as “The location you need. The life you want.” Rock Hill Economic Development Corp. uses the slogan, “Connecting Bright Minds and Big Ideas.”

Both entities tout area advantages that are key to attracting certain industries such as tech companies, call centers and financial intuitions. Assets such as Comporium’s Zipstream Gigabit service are essential when it comes to garnering interest from prospective businesses and talent. And these assets are getting better everyday.

York County: A Premier Place to Do Business

York County offers the advantages of a South Carolina location and business climate with adjacent access to the largest metropolitan area in the two Carolinas—Charlotte.

“Simply put, our goal is to attract more jobs and investment to York County,” shared David Swenson, Director for York County Economic Development.

This effort can take on many forms including assisting companies with expansions, helping to facilitate the availability of more product development and ultimately recruiting new companies to the area.

“We have made a concerted effort to focus more on marketing and promotion by means of communicating the assets the county has to offer, both with existing businesses and those businesses we want to attract to York County,” Swenson added.

“One of goals in the rebrand was to make sure people know what we have to offer them here,” said Caroline Floyd, Marketing Director for York County Economic Development.

“Collectively, we have the assets. We just need to make sure people know about them. The tag line merely states what we all already knew, only now it serves as a storytelling pathway, paving the way for those assets to emerge, shaping market perception,” Floyd added.

“In a tech world, Zipstream Gigabit service is a vital asset. Our locations for business require this asset and Comporium delivers.”

—DAVID SWENSON, DIRECTOR,
YORK COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

“Comporium was ahead of the curve by offering Zipstream in downtown Rock Hill in 2014 along with fiber to homes and business parks. Rock Hill beat Charlotte, which just recently got Google Fiber.”

—STEPHEN TURNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ROCK HILL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP.

Rock Hill: Focusing on Entrepreneurs and Tech Companies

Rock Hill Economic Development Corp. has created new branding and marketing strategy initiatives to give the city a fresh image, establishing itself as a technological and knowledge-economy hub. You may have seen billboards on Interstate 77 targeting commuters to Charlotte with headlines such as “You Could Have Hit Snooze” and “You Could Have Finished Your Coffee.” They’re part of an overall campaign based on “Connecting Bright Minds and Big Ideas.”

The campaign is designed to position Rock Hill as a regional center for technology and creative companies where business breakthroughs and big ideas are encouraged. Rock Hill is home to a number of business and industrial parks—Knowledge Park, TechPark, SouthCross Corporate Center, Waterford Business Park and Riverwalk Business Park—and it continues to develop more.

Stephen Turner, Executive Director of Rock Hill Economic Development Corp. noted, “Our main mission is to support the development of business parks in Rock Hill where entrepreneurs and tech companies can locate. We need to have the land and facilities to market to prospective businesses. We have smooth, seamless collaboration with York County Economic Development. One area in which we overlap is our support for their efforts to recruit businesses to Rock Hill.”

“Connecting Bright Minds and Big Ideas” focuses on recruiting talent since Rock Hill is going after human-intensive businesses with a need for educated and innovative employees. Turner said, “We asked ourselves the question, ‘How do we create job opportunities for the next generation of businesses?’ For Rock Hill, it’s all about growing talent.”

He added, “When we first started two years ago to develop Knowledge Park, it was about the same time as Zipstream’s launch in Rock Hill. Our city was the first in South Carolina to have Gigabit internet speed available, and the first Zipstream customers were small tech companies in our downtown.

Comporium’s Zipstream is Sales Tool

Both Rock Hill and York County leverage Zipstream when their economic development staffs are talking with prospective businesses.

Turner explained, “Comporium’s Zipstream is important to the businesses we’re targeting for Rock Hill. SPAN Enterprises is a ‘poster child’ for this. One reason this growing software company is still here in Rock Hill is Zipstream.

While it’s starting to become more common to have Gigabit speeds, probably 80-90 percent of U.S. communities don’t yet have them. Comporium was ahead of the curve by offering Zipstream in downtown Rock Hill in 2014 along with fiber to homes and business parks. Rock Hill beat Charlotte, which just recently got Google Fiber.”



Zipstream is also highly valued by York County Economic Development. Swenson said, “Zipstream is a tool in our tool box when selling our region—similar to roads, sewer lines and other infrastructure. In a tech world, Zipstream Gigabit service is a vital asset. Our locations for business require this asset and Comporium delivers.”

Comporium’s role in helping with economic development is appreciated. Turner sums it up this way: “Comporium takes its role as a locally owned business very seriously. They’re willing to make community-spirited investments that are about much more than their company’s bottom line. Comporium is a great corporate citizen.”

SPAN Enterprises

Based in Rock Hill, this software company proves big things are happening here



SPAN Enterprises opened in Rock Hill in 2009, but moved to 202 E. Main Street at the end of last year.



Agie Sundaram, a former wedding photographer and small business owner, believed a cloud-based software company could thrive in Rock Hill—he was right.

Photos by SPAN Enterprises

SPAN Enterprises is not afraid to forge new paths in pursuit of truly cutting-edge software solutions. Founded in 2009, the company now has over a dozen world-class products on the market including ExpressACAForms and ACAwise, groundbreaking solutions for Affordable Care Act compliance management, reporting and e-filing.

Agie Sundaram, Co-Founder of SPAN Enterprises, says, “Overall, SPAN Enterprises creates business management tools. We’re an IRS-authorized eFile provider and offer everything from simple tax extensions to heavy vehicle use taxes. Our products reach a range of users from small businesses to tax-exempt organizations to large enterprises. We sell to customers in the U.S. as well as in Canada and South America, all from Rock Hill.”

Right Internet, Right People

The choice of a small town as the location for SPAN Enterprises may surprise some. But Sundaram responds by saying, “It doesn’t matter where you are, due to technology. We could be in the middle of nowhere as long as we had high-speed internet and the right people. When we first started SPAN Enterprises in Rock Hill, we just had average internet service. As we grew, we needed much more speed, and Comporium met this challenge with their Zipstream service. Thanks to Zipstream, we didn’t have to move to a larger city in order to get Gigabit speeds.”

He adds, “Zipstream is a fantastically priced option, and it’s been a huge help to SPAN Enterprises. Since we’re a completely cloud-based company—everything is online—having reliable internet is key. With Zipstream from Comporium, we never need to worry about drops or not having enough speed. It’s completely out of our minds, and we can focus on growing the company.”

Comporium Helped Speed Growth

SPAN Enterprises recently expanded from 18 employees to over 30. They were one of the first software developers to offer ACA products, and the response from companies has been strong, fueling the company’s successful growth.

Sundaram notes, “SPAN has been awarded as one of the fastest-growing private companies in the nation for the second year in a row by Inc. 5000, and we realize that we couldn’t be where we are today without supportive services from other companies. Comporium’s Zipstream service and the talent of our employees combine to give us the potential to compete with large corporations located in big cities from right here in Rock Hill. It also gives us the capability to satisfy the needs of customers throughout North and South America. I believe our success proves that big things can happen in a small town.”

“Comporium’s Zipstream service and the talent of our employees combine to give us the potential to compete with large corporations located in big cities from right here in Rock Hill.”

—AGIE SUNDARAM, CO-FOUNDER, SPAN ENTERPRISES

COMPORIUM in the Community

COMPORIUM HOSTS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EVENT TO SAY THANKS AND SHARE RESOURCES

On September 15, 2016, representatives from local economic development organizations and municipalities were guests of Comporium at the Pump House in Rock Hill. The Comporium and Economic Development Event was, first and foremost, a way for us to express our appreciation to these organizations for their efforts in building a stronger economy here in York and Lancaster counties.

In addition, the event provided attendees with frequently requested resources to aid in discussing communications-related needs with potential business prospects. Comporium gave a presentation titled, "WINNING TOGETHER: Your Ally in Economic Development."

This presentation highlighted how our communications services and customer care combine to create a competitive edge for this region of South Carolina as it competes to attract new businesses and entrepreneurs. Our business solution include voice, Internet, Ethernet, Data Center, wireless, structured cabling, security solutions and monitoring, and digital video.

As a technologically advanced and locally owned communications company, Comporium wants to support the future knowledge-based economy with ultra-fast internet service. Named Zipstream, the service provides download and upload speeds of one Gigabit—or 1,000 Mbps—over Comporium's fiber optic network. The Zipstream service area includes:

- 150 residential communities and 30 business parks
- 20 new communities within the next 12-24 months

Attendees at the Comporium Economic Development Event also had the opportunity to become better acquainted with contacts at Comporium who can provide the specific information they need when working with a prospect.

Thanks again to our partners in economic development in York and Lancaster counties!



NEW VENTURES AT COMPORIUM

Included in Comporium's "WINNING TOGETHER: Your Ally in Economic Development" presentation at the Economic Development Luncheon was a look at our company's new ventures. We showcase a few of them here:

Spirit Communications, headquartered in Columbia, South Carolina, provides voice, data, internet and fiber optic solutions, along with a full suite of cloud services to commercial businesses and government agencies across the Southeast.

Immedion, an enterprise-class, dedicated data center services and Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) provider, with data center locations in Greenville, Columbia, Charleston, Rock Hill, Asheville, NC, and two locations in Cincinnati, OH.

Hypersign, a cloud-based digital signage solution, gives organizations the ability to manage multiple content sources and initiate alerts published on multiple displays from a central location to the pixel, by the second.

STEM Premier provides the same kind of talent identification and tracking services to academics that has been available for athletics.

icontrol Networks is a leader in connected home technology and innovation, creating solutions that provide greater peace-of-mind, enable simple home and energy management, and make life more convenient for consumers around the world.

Centralite is a trusted manufacturer of control and energy management products. The company recently launched Jilia, a cloud-based platform and API framework that empowers developers to imagine, build and expand upon the Internet of Things with a single, simple API.

Deep Fiber Solutions converts cable operator coaxial cables to fiber optic infrastructure, which allows the operator to deploy fiber deeper in the network.



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RIGHT HERE. RIGHT NOW.

Google Fiber has blown into Charlotte with the promise that they are ready to get buildings “up to speed” with 1 Gig Internet service. For thousands of Comporium customers, **Google wasn’t fast enough.**

FIFTEEN LOCAL OFFICE PARKS CAN ALREADY GET ZIPSTREAM GIGABIT INTERNET.

- Blistering-fast connections that are up to 100 times faster than the average Internet connection
- Amazing reductions in time needed for medical imaging, website/software development and other companies to transmit very large data files
- 30,000 homes in the area can already get Zipstream Gigabit Internet

Call Comporium and find out more about how Zipstream is fast-tracking the Carolinas’ future.

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