



## **Plumas-Sierra Telecommunications**

**PO Box 1057, 73233 State Route 70, Portola, CA 96122  
(800) 221-3474 | Fax (530) 832-4515 | [www.PST.coop](http://www.PST.coop)**

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### **Gold Mountain Residents Overcome Internet Speed Bumps**

**December 21, 2017, Portola, CA** –When it comes to the Internet, every millisecond counts. Ask anyone in Gold Mountain—an upscale golf resort development between Portola and Clio, California, boasting 400-plus custom home sites.

The views, championship golf course, new fitness center, four-star hotel facility with state-of-the-art broadband service to all rooms, and Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired club house are second to none. But access to high-speed Internet has evaded property owners in the development until now.

Gold Mountain residents have relied on satellite or terrestrial transmissions from out-of-the-area service providers, or a Wi-Fi signal from mobile-phone service providers. Each of these technologies has its limitations and restrictions, and makes running a home-based business or telecommuting a nightmare. With more and more data-hungry smartphones and tablets creating mounting digital traffic jams, residents on the mountain needed a solution.

Barring challenges with the weather, Plumas-Sierra Telecommunications project managers hope to solve this problem by early spring, 2018.

Gold Mountain HOA began talking with PST, based in Portola, regarding bringing high-speed Internet to the development in 2015. “Bob Marshall [PST General Manager] was very helpful with financing and pricing information, and was eager to help,” says Jim Lafferty, president of the association.

The good news for Gold Mountain residents is that developers laid the foundation for future services when they initially planned the gated, environmentally conscious community in 2002 by installing underground conduit throughout the project. The challenge was whether that conduit, which was initially installed for cable TV, could be cleaned out and made a vehicle to carry fiber optic cable.

Prior to commencing work on the broadband project, property owners had to first appoint a project manager from the HOA, research project requirements, locate existing conduit and raise funds—which required a special assessment requiring a vote of the members.

Once the HOA cleaned the conduit, they began installing ground vaults and pull-rope in key junction areas, based on PST's network design. The association mapped the entire network system to ensure accurate records for the future while they were doing the groundwork.

PST began construction September 11, 2017 on Red Fox Road in Gold Mountain, even before the association had all the ground vaults in. Since then, PST has been placing cable, installing electronics and dialing in the microwave link from Delleker that will feed the system. PST will pull roughly 90,000 feet (about 13 miles) of fiber-optic cable throughout the Gold Mountain community in the coming weeks and months.

Lafferty says he and others are concerned that foul weather could impede progress. "Everybody's mind is in the right place: to complete the project. We are hoping PST can get fiber optic cable to all the houses as fast as possible, but know that hookups to homes will take more finesse than installing the main cable. I want to be ready to go, so my project for today is to build a platform for the ONT [Optical Network Terminal] in my house.

"Having broadband will be a sensational improvement. This area has very poor Internet service. Delivery rates are so slow that we lose connections all the time. Patricia Ryan and her husband [other Gold Mountain residents] telecommute. I don't know how they do it.

"PST's system will feel like coming out of the dark ages—from talking on a tin can and string compared to high speed Internet. It's going to be a different set of rules up here. Having a broadband connection can offer opportunities for a small company to start up.

"It has been said, 'location, location, location.' While it is true this is not the greatest location in terms of current Internet distribution, it offers things you can't buy in Truckee. Truckee is getting more and more crowded. You have to stand in a line at times to even get into Safeway. Truckee is starting to be a city that cannot keep up with its community.

"The locals here are amazing. My wife walks into the local grocery store, and clerks know her by her first name. It's the little things like that which make a community.

"Getting this done, [improving Internet access] is one of the key things needed here to put plugs in the dyke. If you can telecommute to the Bay Area—that will make a big difference," says Lafferty.

Once complete, Gold Mountain homeowners will have fiber-to-the-home connections with a microwave link in Delleker to PST's fiber backbone. This hybrid option is just one of several solutions PST has been able to devise to address various challenges hindering deployment and distribution of broadband in its rural communities.

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