

Brighton's FiberTech thrives on high broadband demand

■ Business need for Web access drives up sales.

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While recession-hit companies cut back on everything from business travel to employees, the bill for Internet access gets paid promptly and on time. Which is helping fatten FiberTech Networks LLC's top line.

Revenue at the Brighton-based fiber-optic network operator was up 36 percent in 2008, and the company closed \$124 million in new sales contracts in the first five months of this year — eclipsing the \$101 million in new contracts it landed in all of last year.

"And we've got seven months to go," CEO John K. Purcell said. "In the face of this economy ... we're still seeing this demand."

For 2009, the company expects revenue to reach \$66 million, compared with \$52 million in 2008.

Broadband Internet access is increasingly a vital part instead of an option for business operations. As of 2008, more than 95 percent of American workers are connected to the Internet via broadband, according to media analyst Nielsen Online.

FiberTech employs 176,

with 104 of them in the Rochester area. Because of the new contracts, it plans to add 17 positions this year, though most will be outside of Rochester, Purcell said.

FiberTech moved in 2007 to space at Meridian Centre off Winton Road, taking up an entire floor of one of the office park buildings. Now it is expanding to space on another floor.

The \$124 million in new contracts includes a trio of major deals the company had been pursuing for months, Purcell said.

Through nine years of acquisitions and installation of its own fiber-optic cables, FiberTech currently operates a network in 23 metropolitan areas across the Northeast and Midwest, from Providence, R.I., to Indianapolis. The company then leases space on the data transmission network to customers ranging from telecommunications carriers to school districts.

Competitors include telephone companies and cable companies. FiberTech's particular business niche is to provide broadband for a flat monthly fee guaranteed over the life of its multiyear contracts.

This year, the company plans to spend \$48 million — its largest single-year bill for capital expenses



ANNETTE LEIN staff photographer

FiberTech Project Manager Eric Finnemore of Henrietta works on a cell tower in Henrietta. FiberTech expects revenue to reach \$66 million this year.

— as it moves farther into northern New Jersey and suburban Philadelphia and as it doubles its network size in the Rochester area and adds miles of fiber-optic cable to networks in Buffalo, Syracuse, Albany and Connecticut. By year's end, the company plans to have a network of

more than 5,000 miles.

The investment in Rochester will give the company close to 600 miles of fiber optics in the area as it extends coverage into the counties around Monroe, said Dan Clifton, marketing director for FiberTech. □

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