GA Weissenstein and Swisscom sign agreement to jointly expand the fibre-optic network

At the end of May, GA Weissenstein GmbH and Swisscom signed a cooperation agreement to extend the fibre-optic network to the homes and businesses of customers in the municipalities of Solothurn, Biberist, Zuchwil and Langendorf. A total of 22,000 homes and businesses are to be connected to the new network by 2018.

GA Weissenstein GmbH (GAW) and Swisscom are to connect approximately 11,000 homes and businesses in the town of Solothurn to the fibre-optic network by the end of 2015 and a further 11,000 homes and businesses in the municipalities of Biberist, Zuchwil and Langendorf by the end of 2018. Following the signing of a declaration of intent at the end of 2012, both companies have now signed a cooperation agreement, creating a further partnership in Switzerland between Swisscom and a cable network provider in the area of FTTH. Under the terms of the agreement Swisscom will focus on the town of Solothurn, while GAW will look after expansion in the three neighbouring municipalities.

The joint effort will help prevent additional costs and unnecessary inconvenience being incurred by local residents. Swisscom and GAW will each assume 50% of the costs. The cooperation includes homes and businesses in Solothurn already connected by Swisscom to the fibre-optic network. Initial services are already available on the network in a number of districts.

Four optical fibres per connection pave the way for competition
In line with the recommendations of the Federal Communications Commission (ComCom), both partners will lay at least four optical fibres per home and business. The fibre-optic network will allow customers to choose between services from Swisscom, GAW or other telecommunications providers who will also have access to the new network thanks to the four optical fibres. Customers will therefore benefit from attractive offerings from a range of service providers.

About GA Weissenstein

GA Weissenstein GmbH (GAW) is an independent, regional communication service provider owned by the municipalities which it serves. Its coverage area in the Solothurn region and neighbouring communities in the canton of Berne encompasses 31 municipalities, with an overall population of around 100,000.

Through this joint venture, GAW is working towards its goal of replacing its high-frequency network with a FTTH network over the coming years, and continuing to provide an efficient communication network in the Solothurn region. To this end around CHF 90 million will be invested over the next 10 years.

Customers can continue to use the tried-and-tested Quickline products with Internet, telephone and digital television from GAW regardless of the network infrastructure (HF or FTTH).

About Swisscom's fibre-optic network expansion

The fibre-optic network is rolled out to a new household or business in Switzerland roughly every two minutes. By the end of March 2013 Swisscom and its cooperation partners had connected some 576,000 homes and businesses with fibre to the basement (FTTB). This figure is set to rise to around a million by the end of 2015, equivalent to one-third of all households in Switzerland. In 2013 alone Swisscom will invest CHF 1.75 billion in infrastructure in Switzerland.

Berne/Solothurn, 5 June 2013