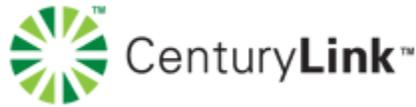


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Press Release

CenturyLink and Qwest Reach Agreement With Unions on Merger

CWA and IBEW Agree Pending Merger between CenturyLink and Qwest is in the Public Interest

MONROE, La. and DENVER, Oct 22, 2010 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ --

CenturyLink, Inc. (NYSE: CTL) and Qwest Communications (NYSE: Q) today announced the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) have agreed that the merger between CenturyLink and Qwest is in the public interest and will withdraw all opposition in any remaining state and federal regulatory proceedings.

CenturyLink, Qwest and the unions have agreed to work together on a number of issues important to their employees and the future success of the combined company, including employment levels, call center stability, investments in broadband and employee healthcare benefits. The companies also agreed to honor all existing collective bargaining agreements.

"We are very pleased the CWA and IBEW acknowledge the public interest benefits of the proposed merger," said Glen F. Post III, chief executive officer and president of CenturyLink. "CenturyLink values our positive relationships with our employees and unions. We rely on each and every employee to deliver an exceptional communications experience to our customers, and we will continue to work toward meeting their evolving communications needs."

After the close of the merger, the combined company will be headquartered in Monroe, La., and will maintain a key operational presence in Denver. The two companies employ approximately 49,000 people nationwide today.

As of June 30, 2010, CenturyLink served approximately 2.3 million broadband customers, 6.8 million access lines and 594,000 video subscribers. As of June 30, 2010, Qwest served approximately 2.9 million broadband customers, 9.4 million access lines, 950,000 video subscribers and more than 980,000 wireless customers. The combination creates a robust, national 180,000 route mile fiber network, which enables delivery of a diverse mix of communications services and provides increased scale.

For more information about the merger, visit centurylinkqwestmerger.com.

About CenturyLink

CenturyLink is a leading provider of high-quality broadband, entertainment and voice services over its advanced communications networks to consumers and businesses in 33 states. CenturyLink, headquartered in Monroe, La., is an S&P 500 company and is included among the Fortune 500 list of America's largest corporations. For more information on CenturyLink, visit www.centurylink.com.

About Qwest

Customers coast to coast turn to Qwest's industry-leading national fiber-optic network and world-class customer service to meet their communications and entertainment needs. For residential customers, Qwest offers a new generation of [fiber-optic-fast Internet](#) service, [high-speed internet](#) solutions, as well as [home phone](#), [Verizon Wireless](#), and [DIRECTV\(R\)](#) services. Fortune 500 companies and other [large businesses](#) and [wholesale customers](#), as well as [small businesses](#) and [governmental agencies](#), choose Qwest to deliver a full suite of network, data and voice services. Additionally, Qwest participates in [Network](#), the largest communications services contract in the world and is recognized as a leader in the network services market by leading technology industry analyst firms.

Forward Looking Statements

Certain non-historical statements made in this release and future oral or written statements or press releases by us or our management are intended to be forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These forward-looking statements are based on current expectations only, and are subject to a number of risks, uncertainties and assumptions, many of which are beyond our control. Actual events and results may differ materially from those anticipated, estimated or projected if one or more of these risks or uncertainties materialize, or if underlying assumptions prove incorrect. Factors that could affect actual results include but are not limited to: the timing, success and overall effects of competition from a wide variety of competitive providers; the risks inherent in rapid technological change; the effects of ongoing changes in the regulation of the communications industry (including those

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arising out of the Federal Communication Commission's National Broadband Plan released in the first quarter of 2010); our ability to effectively adjust to changes in the communications industry; changes in our allocation of the Embarq purchase price after the date hereof; our ability to successfully integrate Embarq into our operations, including the possibility that the anticipated benefits from the Embarq merger cannot be fully realized in a timely manner or at all, or that integrating Embarq's operations into ours will be more difficult, disruptive or costly than anticipated; our ability to successfully complete our pending acquisition of Qwest, including timely receiving all shareholder and regulatory approvals and realizing the anticipated benefits of the transaction; our ability to effectively manage our expansion opportunities, including retaining and hiring key personnel; possible changes in the demand for, or pricing of, our products and services; our ability to successfully introduce new product or service offerings on a timely and cost-effective basis; our continued access to credit markets on favorable terms; our ability to collect our receivables from financially troubled communications companies; our ability to pay a \$2.90 per common share dividend annually, which may be affected by changes in our cash requirements, capital spending plans, cash flows or financial position; unanticipated increases in our capital expenditures; our ability to successfully negotiate collective bargaining agreements on reasonable terms without work stoppages; the effects of adverse weather; other risks referenced from time to time in this report or other of our filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC"); and the effects of more general factors such as changes in interest rates, in tax rates, in accounting policies or practices, in operating, medical, pension or administrative costs, in general market, labor or economic conditions, or in legislation, regulation or public policy. These and other uncertainties related to our business and our July 2009 acquisition of Embarq are described in greater detail in Item 1A to our Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2009, as updated and supplemented by our subsequent SEC reports. You should be aware that new factors may emerge from time to time and it is not possible for us to identify all such factors nor can we predict the impact of each such factor on the business or the extent to which any one or more factors may cause actual results to differ from those reflected in any forward-looking statements. You are further cautioned not to place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements, which speak only as of the date of this release. We undertake no obligation to update any of our forward-looking statements for any reason.

SOURCE CenturyLink, Inc.

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