

# PANGAEA

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## **For immediate release**

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## **PANGAEA Growth Fuels Educational and Economic Development**

Tryon, NC, February 27, 2008 - PANGAEA, a non-profit business of e-Polk, Inc., has gone from infancy to adulthood in four years. The original seven mile network in Polk County has expanded to one hundred twenty miles serving the major arteries of Polk and Rutherford counties. The growth is thanks to funding from both Counties, as well as e-NC, Advantage West, Z. Smith Reynolds, GoldenLEAF and several business partnerships.

PANGAEA's fiber optic service is "Internet at the Speed of Light" which is 299,792,458 miles per second. Copper-based connections, such as DSL and cable modems, transmit at much slower speeds due to bandwidth sharing and distance limitations. At the networks one gigabit speed, a 100 meg file is transferred in 1 second. On a DSL line it can take as long as five minutes. PANGAEA is connected to the Internet via a 100 megabit fiber link to Charlotte with a diverse second connection to Spartanburg. The minimum speed offered by PANGAEA is 5 mbps download with 2 mbps upload, with step offerings of 5/5, 10/5, 10/10 and up.

PANGAEA delivers high speed connectivity to about 75 locations, including the schools, government agencies, libraries, medical facilities, non-profits, and larger businesses in both counties. Twenty-seven Polk and Rutherford county schools are now connected to PANGAEA and to their administration buildings via fiber and consequently have better connectivity and more computing power than most businesses in the area.

In December 2007, PANGAEA connected to NCREN, the North Carolina Research and Education Network. Thru PANGAEA and NCREN, students can conduct research using NCWISE, a sophisticated database provided by the State Department of Education. Its online encyclopedias and maps offer sound and video along with text references. Distance learning is also a much more valuable teaching tool with PANGAEA service. In fact, Polk County High School students are able to earn a college associates degree while still attending high school.

The Polk and Rutherford county governments are realizing the benefits as well, beefing up their applications and web presence to better serve the population. One example is that each county is implementing GIS applications which allow access to property tax data and mapping. In addition, the counties have direct fiber connections between county locations which dramatically improves the quality and efficiency of communications.

Ron Walters joined PANGAEA as Executive Director in 2007. He is responsible for the overall management of PANGAEA including: administration, sales, fundraising,

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budgeting and pricing. Walters focuses on the product/business strategy and has guided the organization to achieve dramatic results. Operations Director Stu Davidson manages network maintenance, monitoring, documentation, installation and support and has been instrumental in its success. The PANGAEA office is located at Tryon Town Hall.

PANGAEA is currently connecting Polk and Rutherford county customers along its fiber optic path. Please visit the website [www.pangaea.us](http://www.pangaea.us) or call Ron Walters at 828-817-0863 to discuss joining the growing number of “speed of light” PANGAEA customers.

To learn more about PANGAEA you can also attend the Broadband Panel Discussion on February 28<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM at the ICC Spindale Auditorium, sponsored by the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce. See [www.rutherfordcoc.org](http://www.rutherfordcoc.org) for information.

**PANGAEA Mission:** *To build an open and cost effective fiber optic network and infrastructure to deliver affordable high-speed Internet connectivity to enhance economic development, improve the quality of life, and create a broad platform of innovation for rural western North Carolina.*

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