

AT&T has \$6 billion deal to buy CenturyLink fiber broadband business

AT&T has struck a deal to buy CenturyLink's consumer fiber broadband division for \$5.75 billion, giving the Internet provider another 1.1 million fiber customers in 11 states.

The all-cash deal is expected to close during the first half of 2026 assuming the companies obtain regulatory approval. AT&T will gain new customers in Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington.

The deal will give AT&T room to grow its user base by more than the 1.1 million existing CenturyLink customers, as AT&T said the network areas being sold include over 4 million fiber-enabled locations. "The transaction will enable AT&T to significantly expand access to AT&T Fiber in major metro areas like Denver, Las Vegas, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Orlando, Phoenix, Portland, Salt Lake City and Seattle, as well as additional geographies," AT&T said.

The company, previously called CenturyLink, is officially named Lumen now but still uses the CenturyLink brand name for home Internet service. AT&T, which has 9.6 million fiber customers and 14.1 million broadband customers overall, said the infrastructure it is purchasing will help it expand fiber construction to new locations as well.

"AT&T will gain access to Lumen's substantial fiber construction capabilities within its incumbent local exchange carrier (ILEC) footprint and plans to accelerate the pace at

which fiber is being built in these territories,” AT&T said. “AT&T now expects to reach approximately 60 million total fiber locations by the end of 2030—roughly doubling where AT&T Fiber is available today.”

CenturyLink copper users left out of deal

The deal is also notable for what it doesn’t include: Lumen’s enterprise fiber customers and the old copper DSL lines that were never upgraded to fiber. CenturyLink’s DSL customers have suffered from bad customer service and multi-month outages, as we’ve detailed in numerous articles over the past few years.

The deal seems unlikely to improve matters for CenturyLink copper users. Lumen has seemed uninterested in maintaining the copper network, and long outages often aren’t fixed until a customer asks Ars Technica for help. Users are stuck with slow Internet service that frequently doesn’t work.

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