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ECFiber Board Chief Says VISPO Is Ready

New GWI Lawsuit Claims Group Poached Staff

OCTOBER 02, 2025

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ECFiber board chair F.X. Flinn, flanked by GWI Vermont CEO Tom Cecere, shakes hands with Corey Klinck, the network engineer, after formally announcing the hookup of the White River Valley substation in 2023. (Herald File / Tim Calabro)

The chair of the governing board of ECFiber said Monday it is ready to take over operations of the telecommunications district.

East Central Vermont Telecommunications District, which does business as ECFiber, formed the Vermont ISP Operating Company, or VISPO, as a nonprofit to take over its operations from Great Works Internet at the end of its current contract, which ends December 31.

“[VISPO] is ready to go, it will be business as usual January 1,” board chair F.X. Flinn said this week. “We’re ready to take over now. We’re sufficiently staffed and prepared to operate the business now.”

A judge, however, decided that Great Works Internet can continue to operate ECFiber until the end of the year.

In August, ECFiber asked the courts for an injunction allowing it to take over operation now, citing a Federal Communications Commission filing August 14 that GWI had undergone a series of upheavals including the takeover of operations by Mac Mountain, an investment firm that held controlling shares of GWI.

The Mac Mountain takeover came after, according to the FCC filings, GWI fired a majority of highly skilled senior employees, quit paying vendors, and announced internally a plan to cease operations in Vermont. The filing claims GWI also set forth a plan to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, willfully withheld critical financial information from its chief administrative officer, moved and then canceled board meetings, and then was unreachable for several days as this all unfolded.

According to the FCC filing, the “erratic and ill-advised moves” violated the company’s fiduciary duties and “threatened the future [of the company] to continue providing service to customers ... in rural Vermont.”

According to the FCC filing, Mac Mountain assumed control to stabilize the company.

“To halt these actions and prevent the bankruptcy filing, [Mac Mountain] had no choice but to ... take control of [GWI] ... on August 12, 2025.” The critical employees were rehired, payments re-established with critical vendors, and new management established, the filing read.

Flinn said that when the ECFiber board saw this information, they decided to file the injunction to immediately take over operations.

“GWI came apart at the seams on August 8th, terminating employees, stating the intention to cease operations in Vermont and to declare bankruptcy,” Flinn said. “[The] contract, in our opinion, required GWI to inform us of its difficulties and to collaborate with the District in resolving them.”

On September 3, the district filed for an emergency motion to enforce and modify the court’s preliminary injunction.

But District Judge Mary Kay Lanthier ruled in favor of GWI to continue to operate until the end of the year.

Meanwhile, two mediation sessions, required by the contract between the companies have gone nowhere, Flinn said, adding that mediation sessions are confidential, but “we weren’t the ones who said mediation is over.”

In a new turn of events, Great Works Internet filed September 12 for an expedited hearing and preliminary injunction against two former GWI employees, East Central Vermont Telecommunications District, and VISPO.

The court filings allege Corey Klinck and Andrew Oberholzer are violating a non-compete restriction in their contracts after choosing to work for VISPO.

“ECFiber and VISPO are actively raiding GWI’s workforce and will continue to do so unless this Court intervenes and orders injunctive relief,” the court filing said.

The court document said that on August 21, personnel from ECFiber and VISPO took advantage of court-ordered access to

offices where GWI employees work, and visited with GWI employee Delta Tetreault to convince her to go to work for VISPO, Tetreault gave her resignation notice the same day and now works for VISPO, according to court papers.

The court filing said Klinck and Oberholzer were also recruited, and said that Flinn has testified in court that “four or five VISPO employees were poached from GWI, and approximately a dozen GWI employees have agreed to leave GWI to work for VISPO at some point in the future.”

The court filings said that almost all of the employees have similar non-compete clauses in their contracts.