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Alaska Communications provides subsea fiber for oceanic monitoring

Oregon State research team will study wave activity through technology connected to subsea fiber

October 12, 2022 - Anchorage, Alaska - Alaska Communications is collaborating with Oregon State University's College of Engineering to allow wave activity data to be collected from the ocean floor via the company's subsea fiber optic cable.

Oregon State Assistant Professor of Coastal Engineering, Meagan Wengrove, Ph.D., her Ph.D. student and two post-doctoral researchers traveled to Alaska Communications' landing station in Florence, Oregon in September to attach a DAS interrogator (distributed acoustic sensing) to the company's fiber. The instrument measures strain applied to the cable and reports data back to the research team. In addition, the team has radar on the surface of the ocean and two moorings on the ocean floor which contribute to the research.

This is the first telecom cable the Oregon State team has used to aid its wave study. Wengrove learned of Alaska Communications through University of Michigan Assistant Professor Ƶack Spica. Spica used the company's cable to monitor seismic activity last year.

"The Alaska Communications cable is in an ideal location for our team to monitor the interaction between waves and currents coming out of the Siuslaw River along the Pacific coastline," said Wengrove. "This project will support continued learning about wave interaction which could potentially improve or provide warnings for coastal communities in the event of dangerous wave activity, like sneaker waves."

Sneaker waves, also known as sleeper waves, can appear suddenly without warning. According to Wengrove, they are not well predicted. Through this research, the team wants to learn if subsea telecom cables can aid in predicting sneaker waves.

"We're pleased to aid Oregon State's research by providing space on one of our subsea cables," said Diedre Williams, senior vice president, operations, Alaska Communications. "With two subsea cables connecting Alaska to the Lower 48, we have substantial infrastructure that can potentially help and improve our communities through this type of research."

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Alaska Communications, an affiliate of ATN International, Inc. (NASDAQ: ATNI), is the leading provider of advanced broadband and managed IT services for businesses and consumers in Alaska. The company operates a highly reliable, advanced statewide data network with the latest technology and the most diverse undersea fiber optic system connecting Alaska to the contiguous U.S. For more information, visit www.AlaskaCommunications.com or www.alsk.com.