



Transatlantic cable comes ashore

By Ian Graham PA

A NEW transatlantic under-sea telecommunications cable linking Northern Ireland directly to North America for the first time came ashore at the weekend on the Co Antrim coast.

It was brought to land at Portrush by the US company **Hibernia Atlantic**, the transatlantic submarine cable provider, and will also provide improved connection with mainland Europe.

The cable deployment was part of Project Kelvin, the £25 million (€30 million) joint scheme by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in Belfast and its Dublin counterpart, the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.

The European Union partly financed the scheme.

"This is a historic milestone for both Northern Ireland and for Project Kelvin," enterprise minister Arlene Foster said.

"The new cable will connect Northern Ireland, for the first time, directly to North America and greatly improve connectivity with Europe.

"When combined with the new terrestrial telecommunications infrastructure, currently under construction across Northern Ireland, it will put us at the heart of the global economy."

The minister encouraged companies in the north to take advantage of the benefits the new international telecoms cable would bring.

"Northern Ireland companies will have access to the same international telecommunications services as found in major cities including London, Amsterdam and New York," Mrs Foster said.

"We are now firmly on the world telecoms map and I urge Northern Ireland companies to exploit the opportunities this will bring."

She said the flagship project was one of a number of actions being taken under the Programme for Government to capitalise on the north's world-class telecommunications infrastructure.

"In these difficult economic times

telecommunications has an important role to play both in helping our companies continue to compete and in providing access to new and emerging markets in preparation for the upturn in the world economy," she said.

Eamon Ryan, the Republic's minister for communications, said with communications developing apace it

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was important to be part of the development.

"Today Ireland links into a new international communications network," he said.

"This will facilitate fast, low-cost and state-of-the-art communications which will allow us to connect and compete internationally.

"It will help to secure our future economic successes, attract inward investment and create new jobs.

"Ireland is now well established on the world telecoms map and is quickly advancing in terms of ICT, digital and data-intensive industries."

Fergus Innes of Hibernia Atlantic said the running ashore of the cable in Portrush was an exciting benchmark.

Hibernia has said it is committed to completing the entire project including onshore infrastructure by next March and operating it until the end of 2018.



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■ **WIRED:**

Hibernia Atlantic chief executive Bjarni Thorvardarson, left, and vice-president of network operations Derek Bullock with fibre-optic cable as the company's transatlantic cable came ashore on the Co Antrim coast

PICTURE:

Kelvin Boyes/
Press Eye/PA