

# Undersea telecoms cable comes ashore

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A NEW transatlantic undersea 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 confirmed today.

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

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

Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster said: "This is a historic milestone for both Northern Ireland and for Project Kelvin. 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 terres-

trial telecommunications infrastructure, currently under construction across Northern Ireland, it will put us at the heart of the global economy."

She encouraged local companies to take advantage of the benefits and opportunities the new international telecoms cable will bring.

"Northern Ireland companies will have access to the same international telecommunications services as found in major cities including London, Amsterdam and New York. We are now firmly on the world telecoms map and I urge Northern Ireland companies to exploit the opportunities this will bring," said Mrs Foster.

The flagship project was one of a number of actions being taken under the Programme for Government to capitalise on Northern Ireland's world-class telecommunications infrastructure, she added.

"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."

Eamon Ryan, Minister for Communications in Dublin, said with communications developing apace it was important to be part of the development.

"Today, Ireland links into a new international communications network. 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 and a further indicator the company team and government were working diligently to deliver real benefits for local and international companies seeking bandwidth and security.

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