



FIBER TO THE HOME – REINVESTING COOPERATIVE EARNINGS

In our May 1 newsletter, we discussed the basics of fiber optics and how EBTC has invested over \$1.5 million into our current fiber network for rural customers in the Aurora and Stanley areas.

EBTC will be applying for broadband (Internet) grants from the Iowa Office of the Chief Information Officer who will be overseeing two different funding opportunities – one state and one with federal CARES Act funding. We hope to be able to obtain grants for both rural Winthrop and rural Quasky service areas because fiber is so costly to deploy. Both areas are each expected to cost between \$2 million to \$2.5 million to deploy fiber optics to every rural customer!

The EBTC Board, as your coop fiduciaries, are exploring all options for funding including loans and reinvesting patronage dividends that would normally be distributed to cooperative members in late Fall. Reinvesting in our underground cable plant is an investment that will pay dividends far into the future – and our members demand it. Over the past 15 years, patronage dividends distributed averaged \$512,000 per year. EBTC is a cooperative and as such, any revenue paid by our members over and above the cost

of service is the coop's margin from which patronage dividends are paid. As owners of the cooperative, members allow the coop to hold these margins as equity to use for system and plant improvements when appropriate.

As the COVID pandemic halted many schools and businesses this past Spring, it became very clear that we needed to upgrade and reinvest in our rural service areas with fiber optic cabling to allow faster Internet speeds – both upload and download – to facilitate video conferencing for remote learning for students, tele-commuting, and tele-medicine. Video conferencing, streaming of TV shows as well as any type of video, put a high demand on our Internet infrastructure. But through the use of patronage dividend allocations used for equity, grants, and other methods of financing, we are working diligently to meet these demands for faster broadband.

So stay tuned as we hope to have successful broadband grant applications with the State of Iowa and begin deploying fiber in our remaining rural service areas.

FTTH – FIBER TO THE HOME

THE PERFECT STORM

As your local telecommunications cooperative, we feel a strong need to keep our customers informed of events affecting your cooperative. In the past four weeks, we've had four major unrelated issues and unusual events. From video distribution issues, to an unacceptable level of support from network engineers, to a dozen customers with intermittent Internet issues, to a full-blown Internet outage from an "upstream" Internet provider, our staff has worked long hours to overcome these obstacles. We commend them for their diligence, and we commend our members for your patience! Our upstream Internet provider has mitigated the issues encountered, and we fully expect them to provide an upgrade to service equipment over the next few weeks to ensure a reliable Internet experience.

In the event of service-affecting outages, we will try to post news to our East Buchanan Telephone Cooperative Facebook page and starting very soon on our EBTC website. If you haven't followed us on Facebook, be sure to "like" our page to keep informed and up-to-date on EBTC events.

ANNUAL CUSTOMER APPRECIATION POSTPONED

On July 9th, the EBTC Board conducted their monthly meeting and reluctantly decided to postpone our annual customer appreciation that is held in September of each year. The Board felt it was in the best interest of our members to postpone the event due to recent surges in the COVID-19 virus.

As the saying goes "It's not about me – it's about infecting those around me that may be high-risk". As 2020 progresses, the Board may consider holding a customer appreciation at a later date. The safety of our cooperative members is our highest priority, and we will also keep that in mind regarding a decision concerning our annual meeting held on the first Monday of December. Stay tuned for more info!

Board Member Interest?

As a cooperative, board member elections are held annually in December. And in each election, one member from each of our service areas of Aurora-Stanley, Winthrop, and Quasqueton are up for election to a 3-year term, while 2 members from each service area remain on the board in a rotating fashion.

If you are interested in being on the ballot to serve on the EBTC Board, please call Mike Becker, General Manager, at 935-3011. A committee will be assigned this Fall to locate coop members interested in being nominated to serve their fellow members. While contrary to national politicians, no one can guarantee a win in any election. So if you know of someone who may be interested, again please let us know. It's an exciting and challenging yet rewarding time to be in the telecom industry as we deploy fiber optics to customers.

Did You Know...

Did You Know...that while the terms "broadband" and "Internet" are commonly used interchangeably in conversations, the term "broadband" technically always refers to "high-speed" Internet, while the term "Internet" refers to any speed level of service including low speeds such as 10 Mbps or less.

TECH TIP OF THE MONTH

Shut off your "Wi-Fi Direct" settings on your wireless printer as it will interfere with the "normal" WiFi signal coming from your router. We had a case in July where a customer's Internet speeds were doubled after shutting down the Wi-Fi Direct on their printer which was causing interference and degradation of service.

Trailer For Sale

EBTC has a Stoddard 5th wheel flatbed trailer for sale. The 12-ton rated trailer has 3 axles with an overall length of 20 ½ ft with the flatbed portion being 15 ½ ft in length. Please call our office at 319-935-3011 and speak to Roger for more information.

NOTICE:

Construction crews will begin burying fiber optic cable in rural service areas this Fall.