



229 Highway 51 ■ PO Box 715
Postville, IA 52162-0715

Phone: (563) 864-7611 ■ (888) 788-1551
Fax: (563) 864-7820
E-mail: acrec@acrec.coop

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Contact: Jenny McIntyre, Manager, Marketing and Communications (563) 864-1611

Monday, March 23, 2020 – POSTVILLE, IA –

Allamakee-Clayton Electric receives an additional \$3 million in broadband grants

Gov. Reynolds and the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) recently announced recipients of the latest Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grants Program. Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative was one of 160 applicants awarded two grants totaling over \$3 million for new broadband infrastructure in rural Allamakee County.

With the help of Upper Explorerland, this grant is the fourth OCIO grant awarded to the Cooperative. “We know increasing access and usage of broadband infrastructure in our rural areas lead to higher property values, increased job and population growth, higher rates of new business formation, improved health, increased socialization through social networks, educational opportunities, and lower unemployment rates,” said Rachelle Howe, Executive Director of Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission. “We are more than excited to partner with Allamakee Clayton Electric Cooperative on these two OCIO broadband awards again.”

ACEC believes that having full internet access in rural Iowa will remove barriers for people who struggle to participate in today’s economy and education system due to poor connectivity. “The State of Iowa is committed to high-speed, reliable broadband for Iowans, and we’re happy to see the progress connecting rural Iowa,” said Hollee McCormick, general manager. “We are constantly hearing from members and non-members alike that they need better internet. Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative is making every effort to fill the gaps.”

Last year, the \$4.5 million OCIO-5 grant awarded to the Cooperative helped us to deploy fiber in northern Allamakee County but came with a tight deadline. “We had six months to get all the fiber bored and place the fiber drops to the homes,” said McCormick, “This was especially challenging because materials were taking longer to get, and contractors’ schedules were filling up fast.” Nevertheless, our Skyways division and contractors worked hard to meet the grant deadline through the fall and winter. As a result, the northern fiber project in Allamakee County is now complete, and we plan to begin activating a potential 600 customers this spring. We anticipate the connection to start sometime in late spring/early summer for fiber customers along the Rural Waukon route.

This new OCIO-7 grant will partially fund the fiber deployment project in portions of rural Dorchester and southwest Allamakee County, with four years to complete the project. This grant has a potential of about 440 passings, which will offer more families and businesses in rural areas access to fiber internet. “The deadline for this project is much more manageable with a project deadline of 2026, but we are already in the planning phases and will begin the process as soon as contractors’ schedules and supplies are available, but it’ll likely be closer to 2023,” said McCormick.

Please visit ACSKYWAYS.com to see a map of fiber projects.

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