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**Final phase of AC Skyways fiber optic internet deployment starts this spring**  
*All of Waukon will have fiber internet by end of 2024*

POSTVILLE – Due in part to the unseasonable winter weather, the final phase in a planned deployment of fiber optic internet in Waukon is set to begin early this spring, according to representatives from AC Skyways, a division of Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative (ACEC). With the conclusion of the fourth phase of the project, the entire city of Waukon will have fiber internet available.

Beginning in late March or early April, the physical work of boring the main fiber optics lines will begin on the south Waukon project, which will bring over 300 “drops” to the community. At the same time, contractors and AC Skyways technicians will begin the final steps to deploy fiber in Phase 3, those homes in the northern portion of Waukon. By the end of the spring, roughly 800 homes and businesses will be able to connect to fiber internet that was deployed last fall.

“After years of planning and construction, being this close to the finish line is exciting and rewarding,” said Hollee McCormick, ACEC General Manager. “It is so important to have fast, consistent and affordable internet, both for home owners and for business owners. We’ve already heard stories about how beneficial this is to the community. We’re looking forward to completing the final drops and seeing Waukon continue to thrive with this resource.”

AC Skyways has contracted with West Union Trenching and R&S Fiber Optic Services for Phase 4 of the project. West Union Trenching is scheduled to begin trenching and underground boring of the fiber optic cable around the end of March, weather permitting.

**What to expect in south Waukon**

Trenching and boring will take place at multiple locations along the route. Residents and motorists are asked to be aware when approaching a work site.

The northern edge of the project starts along 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. SW between 9<sup>th</sup> St. SW and 2<sup>nd</sup> St. SW. It moves south, moving further east to just west of Rossville Rd., which was a part of the Phase 2 build. The southern border goes to just south of 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW to the Southridge Senior Village.

The project is expected to take several weeks to complete. Spring weather will factor into the completion timeline.

After the main fiber line is trenched, the next step is the actual “drops,” which are the connections from the main line to homes and businesses. There are approximately 350 drops in this phase.

“I cannot give enough praise to our drop crews or to our Skyways employees. We are really fortunate to have a great group of people who go door-to-door to chat with Waukon residents and business owners about what we are doing. It makes the process so easy for our construction crews. As I’ve said all along, I encourage anyone on the route on the south side of Waukon to take the drop, even if you don’t think you’ll need it. Just because you take the drop doesn’t mean you have to sign up for our fiber service. However, having fiber available on your property is a selling point for your home or business,” said McCormick.

When the drops are completed, crews from R&S will splice and test the main line. This is the most time-consuming part of the project, said McCormick, noting that if all goes well, ACEC will begin hooking up people to the fiber optic network in the fall.

### **Wrapping up Phase 3**

While Phase 4 work begins, Phase 3 in the north part of Waukon continues. Last fall, ACEC began work on deploying fiber on the northern side of town. The main line was trenched before the weather turned in December. With the warmer than average winter, the crews were able to begin the connections from the main line to homes and businesses earlier than expected this spring.

Crews began working on the northwest side of town this fall and will continue with splicing and testing the lines this spring, working west to east. When the project is completed, a total of 829 homes and businesses will have fiber available.

In addition, the West Union Trenching crew will move back to the eastern portion of Phase 3, located near the Waukon Golf & Country Club, to trench in the main line. The crews were unable to trench the mainline in last fall before winter hit. That project will begin after Phase 4 work has been completed by the trenching crew. Residents in that area can expect to be able to have their fiber installed by the fall of 2024.

### **Southwest Allamakee**

Later this summer, AC Skyways will begin their Southwest Allamakee build. That project will bring fiber to 427 residents located south of Waukon. It will extend west along Highway 9 and east on Main Street outside of Waukon and will go south of Highway 9, hitting homes on Picnic Woods Dr., McCabe Dr., Countryside Dr. and Bethlemen Dr. It will also extend south on Forest Mills Rd., ending just south of Smithfield Dr.

Work on that project will begin around June 1 and will go through the summer. Residents in that area can expect to have fiber installations start this fall.

### **History of the project**



This is the fourth and final phase of ACEC's build in the Waukon community.

The project began in 2021 when the Co-op was awarded about half a million dollars from OCIO-3 to build in west Waukon. In total, there were over 200 passes created. That project centered to the west of 9<sup>th</sup> Street NW and SW.

In the fall of 2022, work began on Phase 2, focusing on the downtown area. This picked up where Phase 1 left off, starting on the western edge on West Main Street near Quillin's and heading east along Main Street. The northern route brought service across Allamakee Street to the Allamakee County Courthouse and Waukon City Hall, as well as east on Main Street to service Veterans Memorial Hospital and Medical Clinic. The route continued south down Rossville Road to 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. SE, as far south as the former Northern Engraving plant. There were about 350 drops with this phase.

With the 829 drops in Phase 3 and roughly 350 drops in Phase 4, that means about 1,750 homes and businesses in Waukon will have access to AC Skyways fiber.

"We were able to kick off this whole endeavor thanks to a grant from the state. Now, three years after we trenched our first line, we're able to hook up our final residents. It's been a long process but an invaluable one. Residents are able to work from home with the speed and reliability they need. Families are able to stream multiple devices at the same time. Businesses can now better serve their customers. We're thrilled that we've been able to provide this service," said McCormick.

"Our AC Skyways staff are so invested in providing high-quality service and are an extremely customer-centered bunch. They're the ones answering your phone calls. Our three service technicians have worked tirelessly to install fiber into your homes and answer any questions you have, while constantly staying up-to-date on updates to the system to maintain your internet security, and Staci is taking the calls, scheduling installs, scheduling maintenance visits and keeping everything flowing!"

### **Be safe this spring**

McCormick reminds residents and property owners that once initial crews leave the area, there will be other crews that will follow to complete different aspects of the project. All areas that are disturbed during the construction phase will be attended to.

"Clean-up and restoration of any disturbed areas will be addressed. We ask all property owners to please have patience and to give our office a call if they have a concern. Typically contractors sends crews in to clean-up after the job is done," she said.

Those who have not made previous arrangements to have their service connected in any of the four builds are invited to call the AC Skyways office at 800-864-1611 Monday from Friday between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. People in areas who aren't yet ready for connection will be put on a waiting list to be called when the connection is ready. You can also email [skyways@acrec.coop](mailto:skyways@acrec.coop).

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