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Phase 3 of fiber optic internet project in Waukon getting set to begin in October

POSTVILLE – The next phase in a planned deployment of fiber optic internet in Waukon is set to begin next month, according to representatives from AC Skyways, a division of Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative (ACEC).

Beginning in October, the physical work of boring the main fiber optics lines will begin on the north Waukon project, which will bring over 800 “drops” to the community. This is the next phase in a large development to bring fiber to the entire community.

“Bringing high quality fiber optic internet is a major goal of ours. Every year, it becomes even more apparent how much this is needed in our area,” said Hollee McCormick, ACEC General Manager. “This is a continuation of our overall project to bring fiber to the entire Waukon area, benefiting both residents and businesses in a variety of ways. It’s exciting to be moving one step closer, we only wish we could move faster, as we know how badly folks everywhere want this service.”

ACEC has contracted with West Union Trenching and R&S Fiber Optic Services for the project. West Union Trenching is scheduled to begin trenching and underground boring of the fiber optic cable in early October

What to expect

Trenching and boring will take place at multiple locations along the route, beginning as early as October 1. Residents and motorists are asked to be aware when approaching a work site along the route.

The project runs north of Main Street, picking up where Phase 2 left off. On the western edge, it runs along 8th St. NW from 1st Ave. NW to 3rd Ave. NW. It runs west to east along 2nd Ave. NW and 3rd Ave. NW from 8th St. NW to Allamakee St. The Allamakee Street build was a part of Phase 2.

The lines will continue to the east of Allamakee Street, picking up from Phase 2 just to the east of the downtown area. Trenching and boring will continue along every east/west street from 1st Ave. NE to 7th Ave. NE.

The southern portion of the project starts on 4th St. SE, going to the neighborhood to the east of the golf course.

The northern part of the project continues along Allamakee Street past the fairgrounds and Waukon Municipal Airport before going west along 10th Ave. NW and into the Northgate neighborhood.

The project is expected to take several weeks to complete, and of course weather will make a difference too.

After the main fiber line is trenched, the next step is work on the actual “drops,” which are the connections from the main line to homes and businesses. There are approximately 800 drops in this phase.

“Our crew has been working diligently to chat with property owners in this phase about finding the best location to connect each home or business,” she said. “It takes a while to reach out to everyone along the build, and we appreciate the property owners being patient as we get to everyone.” “I encourage anyone on this route to take a drop, even if you believe you’ll never need it, the next owner of the property may want it and it can help the sell your property.”

When the drops are completed, works begins on splicing and testing 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 next summer.

History of the project

This is the third 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 for starting in west Waukon. In total, there were over 200 passes created, meaning more than 200 families and businesses had access to faster speed internet. That project centered to the west of 9th 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 7th Ave. SE, as far south as the former Northern Engraving plant. There were about 350 drops with this phase.

“Our three AC Skyways technicians began work this summer hooking up businesses and residents in the downtown build. They have really made great progress in getting installs complete.” said McCormick.

Asking for patience

McCormick expects the underground boring and trenching to be completed this fall, with the drops beginning as soon as possible. Work will be paused once winter conditions become too challenging and will pick up again in the spring once the ground thaws.

“The sheer amount of fiber projects going in the tri-state area on have delayed the start to this project as we waited for contractors, but we are so thankful to be moving forward and getting it done in 2023,” she said. “Our contractors



will start again in 2024 to get our customers hooked up as quickly as possible.”

McCormick also 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 taken care of.

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

Those who have not made previous arrangements to have their service connected in the downtown build or the upcoming north project are invited to call the AC Skyways office at 800-864-1611 Monday from Friday between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. You can also email skyways@acrec.coop.

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