

## **ICN Fiber Project – Illinois Broadband Opportunity Partnership (IBOP) East Central Region – FAQ**

### **What is IBOP East Central?**

IBOP East Central is the title given to the ICN/CIRBN application for an ARRA BTOP grant to fund the building of a fiber based network throughout a 55 county region of northeastern, central and eastern Illinois. This network will address the lack of suitable broadband access for community anchor institutions in many of the regions rural and economically distressed counties.

CIRBN (Central Illinois Regional Broadband Network) is a community driven initiative to build a high speed network within McLean, Woodford, Livingston, Logan, Piatt, and DeWitt counties.

### **What is ARRA? (taken from Recovery.Gov)**

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 was signed into law in February of 2009 in direct response to the economic crisis, The Act has three immediate goals:

- Create new jobs and save existing ones
- Spur economic activity and invest in long-term growth
- Foster unprecedented levels of accountability and transparency in government spending
- What is BTOP?
- Broadband Technologies Opportunities Program. Purpose is to expand broadband access across America.

### **What is the NTIA?**

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration. An agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce

### **What is the objective of the project?**

The objective of the project is to surround geographical areas with an ultra-high-speed fiber backbone, and then to fill in those areas with the help of the private sector. The large-scale backbone will be accomplished

by joining new regional fiber networks together across the state. Spare fiber capacity will then be leased at nominal cost to private carriers who can bring broadband service to the doorstep.

### **How will this project help regarding “last mile”?**

The project has identified about 400 sites along the proposed fiber path which will be directly connected via fiber. There will be hundreds of access points along the network where other fiber networks will be able to connect. However, the majority of our constituents will continue to connect to the network via a leased circuit, their own fiber, or as a member of a municipal network (for example) connecting through an aggregate connection. The greatest impact the network will have on last mile will be an increase in provider options, lower costs and higher speeds.

### **What is meant by Community Anchor Institution?**

A Community Anchor Institution (CAI) is any one of our traditional ICN constituent types - an education site, library, museum, city hall or similar organization. CAIs are the primary focus of this project.

### **How can I tell if I’m on or near the fiber path?**

Your RTC office staff will provide information on the fiber path and the sites scheduled to be directly served by the fiber. RTC staff will work with the fiber network engineering team on a case by case basis to identify possible fiber connectivity points.

### **Where can I get a detailed map of the fiber path?**

Since the very specific path of the fiber routes is being developed now by an engineering team, a very detailed map is not available. A more general fiber path map is available for distribution. RTC staff will act as the point of contact for constituents requesting information on access points for direct fiber connectivity. We especially need and want to know of any existing fiber networks or planned networks in the event that they can be worked into the larger plan.

### **What if I’m not located in the 55 county area of this project?**

There are a number of similar projects outside this 55 county project and some ICN constituents may fall within a different IBOP project. RTC staff will help identify which project covers your area and will work with that IBOP project staff to ensure everyone has information about connectivity.

### **How will the ICN and CIRBN work together?**

During the build our projects will be inter-related. After the build the ICN/CIRBN relationship would be no different than that of any other IBOP partner.

### **What is the time line for building the network?**

The grant guidelines require that a substantial part of the project must be completed at the end of two years from the start of the grant period. This grant officially began August 1 2010. The full project must be complete by the end of the third year.

Logically, some areas of the state where fiber resources may already exist may move faster than areas of the state where fiber resources are lacking and need to be installed.

### **How will sites connect?**

About 400 sites have been identified to be directly connected as part of the fiber path. Most ICN constituents will continue to connect to the network using traditional methods including leased T1 and metro-Ethernet circuits. Any existing ICN constituent may continue to connect as they do now, but may also work with their RTC office staff to identify other ways to connect as new options become available.

### **Who can connect to the fiber network?**

All of our traditional ICN constituents may connect to the fiber network, and in fact, the project will essentially lift up our current network and set it down on a state owned fiber network. Our constituents will not need to make any changes.

In addition to our traditional constituents, our network will now serve businesses and commercial Internet service providers, telcos and cable providers who will in turn serve homes, businesses and anchor institutions. These commercial entities will not receive the same level of service provided to our traditional constituents and will use the network primarily for transport – point to point service between set locations.

### **Who do I contact for information about connecting with fiber?**

Please work with your RTC office staff. RTC staff will continue to provide consultation services, which will now include connectivity information

related to the fiber network. When answers are not immediately available, RTC staff will find the answers and get them to you as quickly as possible.

On a case by case basis, RTC staff will work with the fiber engineering team to identify which sites may have a direct fiber connectivity option either independently or as part of a local fiber project.

### **How can a metro-fiber network connect to this project?**

RTC staff needs information about local fiber projects so that they may help identify which projects might directly connect to the ICN fiber project. If you are part of an existing fiber network or are planning a fiber network, please let your RTC staff know as soon as possible.

### **Will a new cost recovery model be implemented?**

Yes. ICN staff is in the process of developing a new cost recovery model. . The process will include interaction with the ICN Advanced Engineering Taskforce and ICN Policy Committee. We anticipate that the new model will be implemented in parallel with the fiber roll-out and will result in greater speeds at lower costs.

### **Who may I contact for more information?**

Please contact your [RTC office staff](#) for information. RTC staff will continue to be your advocate for best connectivity models, lower costs and access to higher bandwidth.