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## ICN hits 50 percent completion with broadband initiative

Iowa Communications Network (ICN) has completed 50 percent of the enhancements associated with its federal broadband project. The infrastructure technology has been switched to Ethernet, which improves the robustness by providing the ever-increasing bandwidth requirements authorized users are requesting.

The ICN, a State of Iowa agency, is the country's premier fiber-optic Network, committed to continued enhancement of distance learning and providing Iowans with equal access to education, healthcare, and government through Internet, data, voice, and video conferencing services.

Currently, 653 sites have successfully completed the implementation phases, with 629 sites either in the engineering, installation, or beginning implementation phases. The project is ahead of schedule, and ICN anticipates having all work com-

pleted prior to the June 2013 federal funding deadline. Authorized users that have received increased bandwidth so far include State of Iowa entities: the Judicial Branch, Homeland Security, Department of Public Safety, Department of Human Services, and the Department of Transportation.

Through this federal project, it provides ICN the capability to enhance the broadband connections and provide more bandwidth capacity between the ICN and designated sites. Sites will have the capability to move from DSL speeds or less to the capacity of up to 1 Gbps (gigabytes per second) at the endpoints. The 3,000-mile network infrastructure improvements consist of removing legacy equipment for resiliency, simplifying troubleshooting, and cost effectively bringing authorized users to the network at the bandwidth capacity their applications require.

The first year of the project was spent primarily conducting an environmental assessment, and the actual implementation work began during this past year. The project has a three-year expenditure window.

In July 2010, ICN was awarded a \$16.2 million broadband infrastructure grant from the federal Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP). The project will enhance the Network to a ten (10) Gbps (gigabytes per second) backbone that would reach all 99 counties in Iowa. This middle mile network advancement will also provide one (1) Gbps of symmetrical Ethernet connectivity to 1,036 education facilities, hospitals, libraries, public safety, workforce development, and other Community Anchor Institutions throughout the state. For more information about BTOP visit [www.broadbandusa.gov](http://www.broadbandusa.gov).

For more information about the ICN visit [www.icn.state.ia.us](http://www.icn.state.ia.us).