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ICN Achieves Broadband Milestone

Iowa Communications Network (ICN) achieved an important milestone in receiving the approval to move forward with its work relating to its recent federal broadband infrastructure grant.

ICN received its Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) notification for its Environmental Assessment (EA) that was submitted to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) one month before the deadline of December 30, 2010. The EA assists NTIA in determining the extent to which the project may impact environmental, cultural, or historic resources.

The vast majority of ICN's project includes replacing Network equipment located inside existing facilities. The need for ICN to submit an EA was due to outside work of building out fiber-optics routes in three locations: Decatur County, Tama County (Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi), and Winneshiek County.

Dave Lingren, ICN's Executive Director said, "Reaching this

milestone allows ICN to begin exclusively focusing on enhancing the infrastructure of the Network in order for our customers to benefit from applications that require larger amounts of Internet bandwidth."

Submitting ICN's EA was a collaborative effort between many entities within Iowa. Involved was FiberUtilities Group, based in Cedar Rapids, the Meskwaki Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi, and the Winneshiek County consortium, which includes the Winneshiek Medical Center, Decorah School District,

Decorah Community Library, City of Decorah, Winneshiek County, and Luther College.

The FONSI achievement provides ICN permission from NTIA to begin executing the project and drawing down funds for full project implementation. ICN will begin to release Request for Proposals (RFPs) for vendors to bid on projects relating to equipment and construction elements. Vendors interested in bidding on projects are encouraged to visit regularly ICN's Bidding Opportunities page located

at www.icn.state.ia.us/resources/bidding_opp.

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.

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. For more information about the ICN visit www.icn.state.ia.us.

