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iFiber selects PirTano Construction for fiber optic network construction

The first contractor has been selected for the northwest Illinois project designed to bring a reliable high-speed fiber optic network to a nine-county region.

Illinois Fiber Resources Group (iFiber), an Illinois not-for-profit organization, has selected PirTano Construction Company to help build the network through a portion of the designated region. Based out of Addison, IL, PirTano Construction will complete work in Carroll, JoDaviess, Lee and Whiteside counties for the project.

The project is a public-private partnership focused on improving broadband infrastructure in underserved rural areas. It will provide access to the new fiber optic network to community anchor institutions such as schools, government, libraries, community colleges and health care providers.

Design engineering and permitting will be coordinated by Baxter & Woodman. Announcements are expected soon naming other contractors selected for the iFiber project. Firms selected for construction are uniquely qualified in specific regions of the network area.

According to iFiber Board Chairman John Lewis, "iFiber looks forward to breaking ground on the fiber network with PirTano Construction early in July. This firm has proven itself capable and efficient, as well as responsive to the needs of iFiber and the region."

Jack Horn, vice president of PirTano Construction, said the company has been doing utility construction work for more than 25 years, and is excited to begin work on the iFiber project.

"Our firm builds and splices fiber optic rings, coaxial systems, conduit/duct systems, as well as engineer and design systems. We are a complete contractor with the ability to do directional boring, open cut trenching and aerial work with our own workforce and equipment. We have built and placed thousands of miles of communication networks and are skilled at blowing fiber in conduit systems," Horn said.

The engineering and contractor firms will continue to work with iFiber to build the network throughout the nine-county region. Specific details on the route schedules will be forthcoming pending design, engineering, and permitting processes.

Illinois Fiber Resources Group (iFiber) was established in January 2011. The group was created to address current and future high-speed internet needs of communities across northwest Illinois.

Counties included are Boone, Carroll, JoDaviess, LaSalle, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside and Winnebago.

The iFiber Board includes representatives from Northern Illinois University, LaSalle County, North Central Illinois Council of Governments, the City of Rockford, Boone County and Blackhawk Hills RC&D.

The project is funded through a grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's Broadband Technology Opportunity Program. Questions about the iFiber project may be directed to info@ifiber.org or visit www.ifiber.org.