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News

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Fiber-optic cable being installed

WEST UNION - Installation of a fiber-optic cable in Adams County by contractors with Horizon Telecom is steadily making progress. Horizon was awarded an \$18 million contract to construct a fiber-optic network across 13 counties in southern Ohio by the Southern Ohio Health Care Network.



A pre-cast building to house fiber-optic cable for the Connecting Appalachia Ohio Middle Mile Consortium project is placed behind the former hospital building for Horizon by an 80-ton crane from Capital City Crane. - Photo courtesy Horizon

"Here at the Adams County Economic Development we are constantly working to promote Adams County, as well as overall economic growth to the area," said Holly Johnson, director of ACED. "We hear a lot from businesses and consumers about the need for high speed internet access, and that is the reason we support every effort to bring broadband into the rural areas that will benefit Adams County greatly. Broadband is essential in today's global economy and it is critical for economic development. It is also essential for our county's residents and their quality of life, from education and tele-medicine, to job training programs to small business development."

The cable was placed along state Route 247 from Highland County and was taken south to US Route 52. Two precast concrete buildings have been installed in the county, one in Seaman behind Adams County Regional Medical Center, and one behind the old hospital building, from which the cable will service ACRMC and local businesses and government agencies. However, the cost of supplying broadband to residences is prohibitive at this time, according to a Horizon spokesperson.

Along with Horizon Telecom, the Ohio Academic Resources Network (OARnet), Com Net, Inc. and OneCommunity formed the Ohio Middle Mile Consortium to create a roadmap for a seamless broadband infrastructure in Ohio. The three companies together were awarded a total of \$141.3 million in federal stimulus funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Their projects will add more than 3,600 new miles of broadband fiber throughout Ohio.

On Aug. 18, 2010, a \$66.5 million grant was awarded to the Consortium to support an Appalachian project, with Horizon Telecom providing the additional \$28.5 million. The grant was a Broadband Technologies Opportunity Program stimulus grant. Connecting Appalachia Ohio Middle Mile Consortium project will connect 592 community institutions to broadband in 34 counties.