



Co-op Chronicle

May/June 2024



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UDWI REMC Partners with Mainstream Fiber Networks to Expand Rural Broadband Access



The Utilities District of Western Indiana REMC and Mainstream Fiber Networks announced their partnership in April for the largest fiber project in the cooperative’s service territory.

As part of the partnership, Mainstream will focus on establishing broadband connections to unserved and underserved areas within UDWI’s service area, specifically taking a county-wide approach. UDWI will provide advice and assist Mainstream in determining strategically located fiber backbones for broadband projects, which will then connect at least 80 percent of residents and businesses in the area.

“At Mainstream, we believe that access to reliable internet is not just a luxury but a fundamental necessity for participation in today’s digital economy,” said Mainstream CEO Brian Gabriel. “By extending our reach into rural communities, we are not only unlocking new opportunities for economic growth and innovation but also fostering greater inclusivity and equality of access. This collaboration with UDWI embodies our commitment to bridging the digital divide and empowering every individual with the transformative potential of connectivity.”

Mainstream will also work on behalf of UDWI to secure broadband development grant funding through federal and state government programs.

“This strategic partnership will allow Mainstream and UDWI to utilize the electric distribution infrastructure already in place to significantly reduce the cost of building a fiber network,” said UDWI CEO Doug Childs. “This project will substantially improve the quality of life for all of our members, and confirms our dedication to finding efficient pathways to increase fiber access across our service territory.”

According to Mainstream, construction could begin as early as the second quarter of 2024. Each backbone project will be completed within a year. The entire project is anticipated to take about five years to complete.

More information on Mainstream can be found at www.msfiber.com.

Office Information



Our office will be closed for Memorial Day on May 27th & Independence Day on July 4th.

Meter Testing Continues: UDWI meter technicians continue with routine meter tests in our entire service territory and will do so over the next few years. Employees will be driving a white utility van with our logo placard. Be sure to identify these items before approaching any vehicle that may be in your area. Report suspicious behavior to your local law enforcement office. “Like” us on Facebook to stay up to date on current testing locations!

UDWI REMC Community Fund



UDWI's Community Fund is a non-profit organization that provides members with an avenue to make a difference in their communities. The program allows members to round up their energy bills to the next whole dollar to create the funds. Then, the community fund board awards the amount collected to local organizations. Applications are now open; apply by **June 19** to be eligible for our next round of grants!

Interested in giving back to local not-for-profit organizations? Call our office to enroll in the round-up program!



SAVE THE DATE



Member Appreciation Day

UDWI's 2024 Member Appreciation Day will be **Friday, June 21 from 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

We invite all members to join us for a day of live-line and pole-top demonstrations from linemen, face painting, games, music, drawings for prizes & more!

Food and refreshments will be provided. Visit our Facebook page for more details and RSVP if you plan to stop by!

UDWI REMC held its 88th annual meeting April 24 at the cooperative's headquarters and renewed its Board of Directors slate of officers.

One new director, Terry McDaniel, replaces incumbent Dax Collins for District 7 and joins the eight-member board, which includes Edward Cullison (President), Melinda Hendrix (Vice President), David Kirkling, Todd Carpenter, Shawn Dugan as well as Michael Williams, District 5 (Treasurer) and Sophie Haywood, District 8 (Secretary), who were both re-elected for their third, three-year term.

CEO Doug Childs' annual meeting presentation focused on 'Measuring the Past, Building the Future' and covered a variety of topics including updates on safety and training, reliability and member service, fiber expansion, and community support.



Mike Williams
District 5



Terry McDaniel
District 7



Sophie Haywood
District 8

2024 Annual Meeting

Childs' complete presentation is available on the UDWI website. The Board of Directors will hold its first meeting of the new term **Monday, May 20 at 6:30 p.m.**

UDWI Fiber Partnership Updates



Smithville Update:

- Stanford Phase 1-6: All complete and open for orders.
- Stanford Phase 7: Engineering phase; construction starting soon!
- Greene County SE Phase 1, 2, and 3: Open for orders
- Owen County Switchboard Phase 1-3: Open for orders

For more details, please visit www.smithville.com/statusmap/

South Central Indiana REMC Update:

Drops to homes are ongoing in Freedom West, Freedom Central, Freedom Northwest, and Freedom Northeast Phase 1. In Freedom South and Freedom Northeast Phase 2, construction is complete, and both are ready for splicing. Construction and make-ready are ongoing in Freedom East. **If you are interested in receiving fiber internet service, please register as soon as possible at join.sciremc.com.**

("Fiber make-ready" refers to preparing a utility pole to receive the new fiber attachment.)

