

2024 Ripple Effect Annual Report

Community Projects Empowered by
Rural Iowa Broadband Providers

BEYOND BROADBAND IMPACT

Ripple Effect, sponsored by Aureon and implemented by Iowa Area Development Group, helps independent broadband providers become catalysts for advancing the economic vitality of rural Iowa. This report celebrates Iowa's rural broadband community and each company's dedication to their customers.



2024 TOTAL IMPACT

\$787,877 direct support from
ITC shareholders

\$112,917 matching support
from Aureon

38 2024 Ripple
Effect projects

FEATURED PROJECTS

- STC Supports Local Senior Care Center with REDL&G Funding in Hills, IA
- North Liberty Developing Centennial Center Using Funds Secured from REDL&G Program with Assistance from South Slope
- Winterset Dental Receives Expansion RLF Assistance from OmniTel Communications
- CML Tel Funds Disaster Relief Loans to Help Small Businesses Impacted by Flooding in Cherokee
- Stanton Community Builds its Future with RLF Support from FMTC
- Rural Communities Plan Revitalization Projects with Grant Funding from GRM Networks, Minburn Communications, Danville Telecom, Cascade Communications, Corn Belt Tel, Stratford Communications, WCCTA, Jefferson Telecom, Platinum Connect and Aureon
- Community Construction Projects Awarded Grants from KCTC, Coon Valley Telephone, Dunkerton Communications, FMC Fiber, Premier Communications, Heart of Iowa, Dumont Telephone, WCTA, RTC Communications and Aureon



REDL&G PROJECTS

Sharon Telephone Company Secures REDL&G Funding for Atrium Village

Sharon Telephone Company (STC) secured a \$116,000 USDA REDL&G grant to help Atrium Village, a non-profit organization that provides essential care to seniors in Hills, IA. STC and Aureon also provided \$11,667 each in match funding for the project.

Atrium Village will utilize the funding, in the form a \$140,000 0% interest loan, to upgrade its heating system. Their old, outdated system became increasingly inefficient and prone to costly repairs. Replacing the boilers will ensure reliable and efficient heating throughout the facility, improving resident comfort and care, and significantly reducing energy costs.

Once the loan proceeds are repaid, funding will remain in STC's Revolving Loan Fund (RLF), which will be available for other local businesses and community projects seeking gap-funding assistance.

South Slope Secures REDL&G Funding for Centennial Center

South Slope Cooperative Communications secured a \$300,000 USDA REDL&G grant to help fund North Liberty's new Centennial Center and to establish a new Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). South Slope and Aureon each provided \$30,000 in match funding for the project.

The Centennial Center will include a new 13,000 square-foot indoor event center, a 2,700 square-foot outdoor stage and amphitheater,

exterior restrooms, and expanded plaza space. The venue will host public and private events, including business functions, recreational activities, concerts, and other community gatherings.

North Liberty Assistant Director of Community Relations, Jillian Miller, highlighted the Center's potential to enhance quality of life and attract visitors. Construction is expected to be completed by fall of 2025.



Winterset Dental Receives Expansion RLF Assistance from OmniTel Communications

With assistance from OmniTel's USDA-awarded Revolving Loan Fund (RLF), Winterset Dental is expanding its presence in Winterset and the surrounding areas.

Led by Dr. Elliott and Dr. Phelps, the growing practice will create 5-10 full-time jobs and develop a 5,820-square foot facility that features:

- 15 state-of-the-art operatories equipped with low-dose digital radiography
- An on-site dental laboratory

- Advanced technology, such as 3D printing for clinical models and cloud-based software for enhanced efficiency

- ADA accessibility

- A dedicated learning center for the staff's ongoing education

Winterset Dental's expansion will enhance their ability to serve the local community with cutting-edge technology and a dedicated team of professionals. OmniTel's support was a vital component to the project and the future success of the dental practice.



CML Tel Funds Disaster Relief Loans for Small Businesses Impacted by Flooding

In June of 2024, heavy rainfall led to historic flooding in Northwest Iowa. The banks of the Little Sioux River overflowed, causing severe damage to local homes and businesses. Many counties and communities were impacted, including the city of Cherokee.

Approximately 120 homes and 15 businesses in Cherokee alone were directly damaged by the flooding; some suffered major damage. On June 24th a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration for Cherokee County was issued in response to the

flooding. The community rallied to aid friends, families, and neighbors.

In an effort to provide support to local businesses, the Cherokee County Area Economic Development Corporation launched a Disaster Loan Program for businesses suffering from flood damage. Funded by CML Telephone Cooperative and the USDA through a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF), the program offers low-interest loans up to \$20,000 for five years.

Loans can be used as working capital to help companies cover operating

costs or costs associated with property damage. The intent of this funding is to help companies get back up and running as soon as possible.

The Disaster Relief Loan Fund quickly proved successful. To date, \$194,000 has been disbursed to 11 businesses and organizations, enabling them to recover from the disaster. The fund continues to support local business impacted by flooding, and CML and the local development group, along with many volunteers, are still working hard to restore the community.

Stanton Community Invests in its Future with Support from FMTC

The Lakin Child Resource Center in Stanton opened their doors this fall, becoming the first organization to build within the Stanton Technology Park. The facility provides 130 spaces for children ages 6 weeks to 12 years old and will continue to offer a 3-year-old preschool program throughout the school year.

Building the childcare center in the Tech Park was a strategic decision for the community. The center will provide essential childcare services that enable more families to participate in the local workforce.

In addition to volunteer support, FMTC - Stanton provided a 0% interest loan from their Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) to help construct the road infrastructure for the Child Resource Center and the Tech Park. This infrastructure will be utilized by the families and employees of the Resource Center, as well as future tenants of the park.

FMTC also provides redundant and reliable fiber optic broadband service at the park, which will accommodate any businesses' needs for technology and connectivity.



Rural Communities Plan Revitalization Projects with Ripple Effect Assistance

- **Leon:** Successfully achieved a \$650,000 Downtown Revitalization Grant (DTR) offered by the state of Iowa. This grant will focus on improvement projects for visible facades of commercial or mixed-use buildings within designated target areas. \$10,000 in economic development funds from **GRM Networks** and Aureon were contributed to the project to help cover architectural fees.
- **Jefferson:** Ripple funding from **Jefferson Telecom** and Aureon will be used to cover the cost for an economic impact study performed by the Iowa Bicycle Coalition. The study will support a potential county TIF district amendment to secure the necessary funds to make crucial repairs to the Raccoon River Valley Trail.
- **Perry:** In the wake of the public school incident, and the shutdown of a major local employer, **Minburn Communications** provided multifaceted support for the community of Perry. Matched by Aureon, Minburn Communications provided funding for the expansion of the IEDA-certified Perry Industrial Park and seed funding for the Perry Strong Fund for youth support. These programs represent a multi-pronged approach to addressing much needed aid during trying times for the community.
- **Danville:** Received \$10,000 in funding from Access Energy Cooperative and **Danville Telecom**, matched by an additional \$5,000 from Aureon, to develop a comprehensive plan for future housing and business development in Danville.
- **US Highway 20:** Local groups along US Hwy 20 secured funding from the USDA, matched by **Corn Belt Tel, Stratford Comm., WCCTA, Platinum Connect**, and Aureon. The funding will be used to assess future business sites along the corridor.
- **Cascade:** Cascade Economic Development received a grant to plan downtown improvements, such as wi-fi zones, from Aureon and **Cascade Communications**.



Grants Lead to New Construction

- Readlyn Emergency Service Building Committee (RESBC) received a grant for engineering and design of a new emergency services building, made possible by Aureon and **RTC Communications**.
- Stuart Enterprise for Economic Development (SEED) received a grant for master planning services of a potential recreational center in Stuart, with the help of Aureon and **Coon Valley Telco**.
- City of Rock Valley received a grant from **Premier Communications** and Aureon to support Rock Valley's Recreational Park Master Plan.
- **Heart of Iowa** and Aureon provided matching funds to help renovate an existing elementary school into the new Grundy Community Day Care Center.
- **FMC** and Aureon supported the construction of a new multi-use building in downtown Moulton to house the Postal Service and a local business.
- **Dumont Telephone** and Aureon assisted Legion Post 360 with costs to turn a blighted lot into a welcoming community attraction in Dumont.
- **KCTC** and Aureon awarded funding to the city of Kalona for a downtown building remodel, matched by the Iowa Catalyst grant program. KCTC and Aureon also provided support for the construction of a 12,440 square foot addition to the YMCA facility, including an indoor aquatic center, in the city of Washington.
- **WCTA** and Aureon combined efforts to award the Worth County Historical Society funding to help successfully remodel the historic Hotel Winifred back into a beloved community asset.
- Dunkerton Schools received a grant from **Dunkerton Telephone** and Aureon to help construct a new athletic complex.



Want to learn more about Ripple Effect?

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