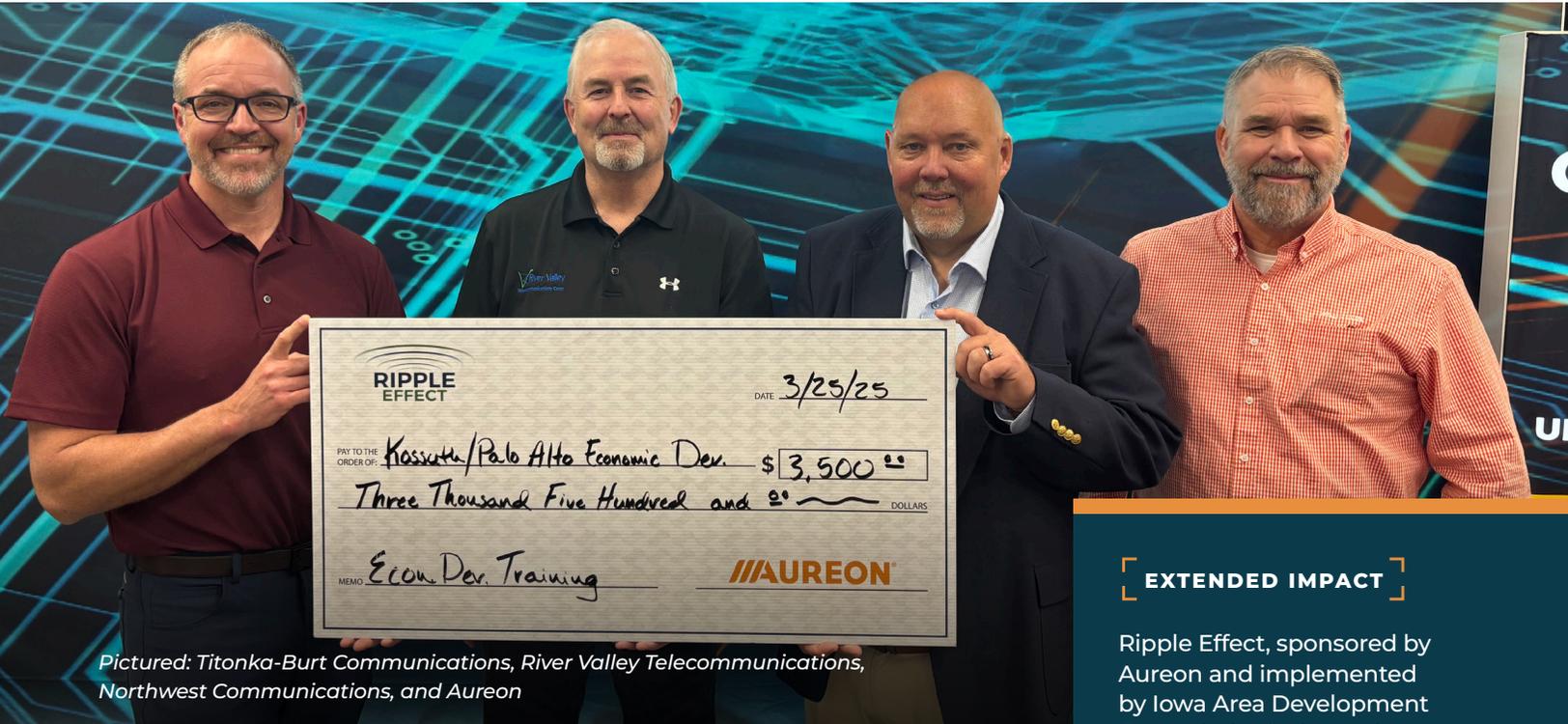




2025 Ripple Effect Annual Report

Community Projects Empowered by Rural Iowa Broadband Providers



Pictured: Titonka-Burt Communications, River Valley Telecommunications, Northwest Communications, and Aureon

EXTENDED 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.



2025 Total Impact

43	\$160,000	\$1,661,310	\$983,333
<small>RIPPLE EFFECT PROJECTS</small>	<small>MATCHING SUPPORT FROM AUREON</small>	<small>DIRECT SUPPORT FROM ITC SHAREHOLDERS</small>	<small>USDA GRANT AWARDS</small>

Featured Projects

Marne Elk Horn Communications
Premier Communications
Minburn Communications
Northwest Communications
River Valley Telecommunications
Titonka-Burt Communications
Heart of Iowa
Platinum Connect

Butler-Bremer Communications
Panora Fiber
FMTC - Stanton
Jefferson Telecom
GRM Networks
Western Iowa Networks
Rockwell Cooperative Telephone
Partner Communications

Citizens Mutual
Ellsworth Cooperative
Hubbard Cooperative
WesTel
Webster-Calhoun Cooperative
Dumont Telephone
Lehigh Valley Cooperative
FCTC - Dysart

Raccoon Valley Radio Transitions to Local Ownership

Raccoon Valley Radio has successfully transitioned to local ownership thanks to critical funding from Minburn Communications and Guthrie County REC. Both rural utility providers have USDA awarded Revolving Loan Funds, which Raccoon Valley Radio utilized as part of its financing package, allowing longtime station manager John McGee and his wife Jen to purchase the radio group and continue its legacy of local broadcasting.

Raccoon Valley Radio operates stations KDLS, KGRA, and KKRF, which are known for their strong community focus and for providing daily local news, weather, and sports coverage for Dallas, Greene, and Guthrie counties. The stations play an important role in keeping residents informed and connected to local events and issues.

The financing package also included an SBA loan facilitated by a local bank. Under the McGees' leadership, the project will ensure the stations continue to be a key economic driver for the region and remain a trusted cornerstone of community life.



Ripple Effect Funding Backs Community Improvement Initiatives

Nashua Secures Butler-Bremer Grant to Revitalize Historic Main Street Buildings



► Nashua, Iowa

The City of Nashua has been awarded a \$1,925 grant from Butler-Bremer Communications, matched by Aureon with a Ripple Effect grant equal to the same amount. The funding will be used to conduct a feasibility study for the historic properties located at 302-308 Main Street.

The feasibility study, with a total cost of \$7,600, will involve a detailed investigation of the existing conditions. The goal is to determine the most effective strategies to stabilize these significant downtown structures and prepare them for future build-out and various potential reuses. This project represents a significant investment in Nashua's downtown core, aiming to transform underutilized historic assets into spaces that will contribute to the economic development and aesthetic appeal of the city.

Tornado Recovery – Minden Master Plan

► Minden, Iowa

A \$5,000 Ripple Effect grant, matched by Marne Elk Horn Communications, will support tornado recovery efforts in Minden, Iowa. The funding will help cover the cost of a master plan study for rebuilding the community club and Little League ballfields, both devastated by an EF3 tornado on April 26, 2024.

This close knit community of 600 has deeply felt the loss of these vital gathering spaces, with the

Community Club marking its second destruction by a tornado since 1976, and the ballfields home to over 80 young athletes left in ruins. Despite this significant loss, the Minden Community Club and Little League are committed to rebuilding and view the master plan study as a crucial first step toward restoring these essential components of their community spirit and identity.

Webster City Receives Grant Funding to Advance Industrial Development



► Webster City, Iowa

Webster City has been awarded \$6,000 in grant funding from Platinum Connect and Aureon through the Ripple Effect program to help fund the certification of one of the city's industrial sites. This grant will be used to offset a portion of the costs for a geotechnical investigation, a step in qualifying the site for the Iowa Economic Development Authority's Certified Site program.

Located along U.S. Highway 20, Webster City has partnered with the Ames Regional Economic Alliance to pursue certification for the 600-acre site. The geotechnical investigation is a critical due diligence step required for certification and will provide data on the site's readiness for development.

Attracting industrial projects to Webster City will create new job opportunities for local and regional workers, making this a significant regional economic initiative.

One Project at A Time

For Iowa’s community-based broadband providers, the mission extends far beyond broadband. While they work tirelessly to keep residents connected with state-of-the-art technology, their true impact is felt in the local projects that enhance the quality of life across the state. In 2025, Iowa providers proved once again that they are the backbone of rural Iowa. Here are a few examples:

► **Solving the Childcare Crisis:**

Premier Communications and Citizens Mutual provided critical grant funding to develop innovative solutions for local childcare shortages.

► **Small Business Resilience:**

Through Revolving Loan Funds (RLF) and innovative fundraising tools, FCTC – Dysart, River Valley Telecom, and Hubbard Cooperative supported the future of local main-street businesses.

► **Vital Healthcare Support:**

GRM Networks, Butler-Bremer Communications, and Heart of Iowa bolstered regional healthcare infrastructure, by contributing funds to essential projects for hospitals, dental clinics, and emergency services.

► **Strategic Growth:**

Jefferson Telecom, Dumont Telephone, Ellsworth Cooperative, Partner Communications, and Westel partnered with their respective communities to fund comprehensive strategic planning, laying the groundwork for long-term success.

► **Investing in the Next Generation:**

Recognizing that amenities drive growth, FMTC Stanton and Western Iowa Networks funded recreational park projects designed to foster youth development and community engagement.

Whether through Revolving Loan Fund support, grant matching, or serving on local boards, Aureon shareholders are deeply invested in Iowa’s rural revitalization.

A standout example is Revitalize Dumont. Led in part by Dumont Telephone, this non-profit is transforming a vacant school building into a catalyst for community change. Their commitment proves that meaningful progress doesn’t happen overnight—it happens through steady, incremental improvement, one project at a time.



The Fallows – New Wedding Barn and Event Center

Amee and Kyle Norris, founders of The Fallows LLC in Graettinger, Iowa, have been awarded low-interest loans from River Valley Telecom, Iowa Lakes Electric, Kossuth Palo Alto Economic Development, and Aureon to help establish a wedding barn and event center on Amee’s family farmstead, which has been in her family for over 120 years. The Fallows will meet the growing demand for authentic and natural wedding venues in rural Iowa. The Norris’ market research shows a strong need for such a facility near Graettinger and the Iowa Great Lakes region. Existing event centers are

often fully booked a year or more in advance, highlighting a strong market opportunity, and The Fallows plans to operate year-round, even during the winter months.

The Fallows will offer a versatile venue with a capacity of 350 people for indoor events. Situated on 2.5 acres, the facility will blend a 90-year-old, two-level barn (3,200 sq ft) with a new, modern, energy-efficient addition (3,800 sq ft). An indoor and outdoor balcony will overlook the ceremony space. With approximately 7,000 square feet, The Fallows will be the

largest event space of its kind in the region. This financing will help bring The Fallows to fruition, providing a much-needed venue for weddings, events, and community gatherings in northwestern rural Iowa.



2025 REDL&G Awards

Supporting Business and Community Growth with 0% Interest USDA Loan Funds



REDL&G AWARD

Southwest Webster Ambulance Receives REDL&G Funding

Southwest Webster Ambulance (SWWA) is set for the construction of a new ambulance and medical services facility in Gowrie, Iowa after receiving a REDG award from Webster-Calhoun Cooperative Telephone Association. In addition to the REDG, Webster Calhoun Cooperative Telephone Association and Aureon will each contribute \$30,000 in matching funds to loan a total of \$360,000 for this project. This will allow SWWA to expand medical services and workforce training opportunities in rural Webster County, including retaining two part-time positions and employing an additional two full-time positions.

► Utility: **Webster-Calhoun Cooperative Telephone Association**
REDG: **\$300,000**



The Bristow, Iowa Fire Department is the primary provider of fire, rescue, and emergency medical services for

the community and surrounding area. Due to the long distances to urban services, Bristow Fire often serves as the first point of medical response, providing crucial initial care for emergencies such as cardiac arrests and traumatic injuries. As the Department has continued to grow, it has outgrown its current facility, which limits the ability to house larger equipment and restricts opportunities to purchase and upgrade essential apparatus due to door height and space constraints.

Thanks to USDA REDG funding and sponsorship support from Rockwell Cooperative Telephone, the City of Bristow can now move forward with constructing a new facility that will offer space for five fire trucks and enable the Department to host essential, standards compliant training. The new space will accommodate yearly compliance courses, including CPR, AED, and extraction equipment training, and allow them to host mutual aid partners for classroom and technical sessions such as burn trailer training. This expansion is vital for maintaining high standards of emergency response, improving preparedness, and ensuring continued quality care for residents throughout the region.

► Utility: **Rockwell Cooperative Telephone Association**
REDG: **\$83,333**



White Oak Dental, a new practice owned by Dr. Erika and Thaylan Bowman, is

addressing a critical oral healthcare shortage in Fort Dodge, IA, with approximately 2,600 residents per local dentist. The Bowmans purchased the established Maggio Dental Office, partially through the assistance of USDA REDG financing sponsored by Lehigh Valley Cooperative Telephone and Dumont Telephone. This project not only includes the succession of an important anchor small business, but also the implementation of new, high-tech medical equipment and renovations to the facility's upper story to expand service capacity. White Oak Dental is projected to retain 7 jobs and create 6 new full-time positions, ensuring continuity and accessibility of high-quality oral healthcare services for the community.

► Utility: **Lehigh Valley Cooperative Telephone Association**
Utility: **Dumont Telephone Association**
REDGs: **\$600,000**



Panora Fiber has been awarded a \$1,000,000 USDA REDL pass-

through loan in support of Guthrie County Hospital's planned \$3.75 million Panora Clinic facility acquisition. The acquisition will allow GCH to achieve operational and financial efficiencies, as well as plan for future growth, new employment, and ultimately improved medical services to Panora and the rural surrounding areas. Taking ownership of the building solidifies their presence in Panora, securing their ability to provide excellent health care to the community long-term. The project is expected to close Spring 2026. Currently, Guthrie County Hospital Health System employs 126 full-time positions.

► Utility: **Panora Fiber**
REDL: **\$1,000,000**



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Aureon is a premier business solutions provider with expertise in IT services, consulting, and customer care. Aureon provides economic development assistance through the Ripple Effect program. For details, visit www.RippleEffectIowa.com.