



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – October 26, 2011

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iFiber Project reaching Morrison

The Illinois Fiber Resources Group (iFiber) has announced construction crews from PirTano Construction Company are finishing up around Dixon and will be moving into Morrison soon.

PirTano expects to complete work in Dixon by this week. Those crews will then move to Morrison. PirTano's other crews are constructing the fiber network between Warren and Stockton, which should be complete within two weeks. Crews will then start on the link between Sterling and Morrison. Construction in the zone is expected to continue through the end of the year.

Since July, PirTano crews have installed about 80 miles of iFiber conduit, beginning along Route 52, between Sublette and Amboy, working north. They have finished work in Amboy and also from Mendota to Dixon.

Fiber optic construction will occur within the dedicated roadway right-of-way. During the construction of The network, residents will see cable boring equipment in their neighborhood, as well as hand-hole construction crews. Crews also may have staked or painted to identify infrastructure in the area. Disturbed areas will be restored as part of the project.

In September 2010, Northern Illinois University as the fiscal agent received a \$68.5 million NTIA Broadband Technology Opportunity Program (BTOP) grant to deploy an almost 900-mile network across the northwest Illinois region. The project will bring up to 10Gbps transport speeds, significantly improving broadband technology for improvements in rural education, economic opportunities, and public safety.

iFiber was established as a not-for-profit entity in January 2011 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.

iFiber is a public-private partnership that will provide access to the new fiber optic network to community anchor institutions, such as schools, government, libraries, community colleges, and health care providers. Through its service provider partners, iFiber will promote similar high speed network transport services to businesses and residential subscribers in the private sector.

iFiber is part of the Illinois Broadband Opportunity Program (IBOP). Design engineering and permitting are being coordinated by Baxter & Woodman. Construction is being completed by PirTano Construction Company (Addison, IL) in Carroll, JoDaviess, Lee, and Whiteside counties. Aldridge Electric (Libertyville, IL) has partnered with Kelso-Burnett (Rockford, IL) to complete construction in Boone, LaSalle, Ogle, Stephenson, and Winnebago counties.

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

For more information, please visit www.ifiber.org. In addition, questions about the iFiber project may be directed to Kathy Siebrasse (ksiebrasse@niu.edu) or Daniel Payette (daniel.payette@blackhawkhills.com).