

## 2022 | The Year in Review

The Ripple Effect program is sponsored by Aureon and implemented by Iowa Area Development Group. The Ripple Effect program helps Independent Telcos, and the communities they serve, become catalysts for advancing the economic health and vitality of rural Iowa.

# The Ripple Effect Report

Community Projects  
Led by Iowa Telcos



### **CML – Helping Improve Access to Healthcare Services** *CML Telephone*

Bruce Johnson with CML Telephone and Gary Jordan with the Cherokee Regional Medical Center (CRMC) met in September to close a USDA Rural Economic Development loan totaling \$360,000. This is a unique loan program designed to provide 0% interest financing for community-enriching projects. CRMC is opening a new Regional Ambulance Station and will use the loan to help finance a portion of the construction. The program requires a local utility provider sponsor the loan application process. CML volunteered staff time to be the sponsoring utility, ensuring that the \$360,000 was made possible for the Ambulance Station.

The USDA also requires a 20% cash match from local partners to complete the program. To fulfill this requirement, several organizations pitched in to raise the \$60,000 match. This was a major team effort that would not have been made possible without the contributions of all those involved. Once the original loan is paid off, the granted funds from the

program will be added to an existing Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) that is administered by Cherokee Area Economic Development and CML. Organizations and businesses are welcome to apply for low-interest loans from the RLF to help finance community and business projects. The interest generated from RLF projects will be deposited back into the RLF to help grow the fund.

Bruce and CML Telephone have participated in several community healthcare projects over the years. In 2018, CML and Aureon contributed \$30,000 each to establish the original RLF for the community using the same USDA loan program. CML helped CRMC build a new medical clinic campus with the loan funds. Additionally, earlier this year, CML was awarded a USDA pass-through loan to help Jeneary Dental acquire an existing practice and expand their services. CML, with Bruce's leadership, is proof that Iowa telcos not only provide state-of-the-art broadband services but are also champions for the vitality of the communities they serve.

### Featured Projects

DUMONT TELEPHONE  
GRM NETWORKS  
WEBSTER-CALHOUN COOPERATIVE  
SOUTH SLOPE  
BUTLER-BREMER COMMUNICATIONS  
KALONA COOPERATIVE TECHNOLOGY  
FMTC – STANTON  
PANORA FIBER  
MINBURN COMMUNICATIONS  
BROOKLYN MUTUAL  
PALO COMMUNICATIONS  
GRISWOLD COMMUNICATIONS  
SHARON TELEPHONE COMPANY  
NORTHWEST COMMUNICATIONS  
WINNEBAGO COOPERATIVE  
OGDEN TELEPHONE COMPANY  
HEART OF IOWA COMMUNICATIONS

### 2022 Ripple Effect Impact Stats

**31**

Projects Completed

**\$1,619,009**

Total Grant and Loan Support  
from ITCs

**\$82,050**

Total Grant Support from Aureon

**\$11,979,327**

Total Amount Leveraged

**\$13,680,386**

Total Investment



[RippleEffectWorks.org](http://RippleEffectWorks.org) | 641.442.5275

## Another Spec Building, Another Prospect, and More Strategic Planning for Perry

Minburn Communications

Perry Economic Development constructed its fourth shell building this year since the organization's inception in 1984. The building has the same specifications as one built in 2018, which is now home to TCB Companies. It is a 30,000 sq. ft. all-steel, industrial, pole-style, insulated warehouse shell building with 30-foot sidewalls. The building is located on a 5.2-acre lot in the Perry Industrial Park, a designated Certified Site by the Iowa Economic Development Authority.

A unique partnership that included Minburn Communications, Guthrie County REC, CIPCO, and IADG provided technical, planning, and financial support for the project. Minburn Communications will accommodate the telecommunications and broadband needs. The building has already garnered serious interest from a promising manufacturing prospect.

With the recent success of the spec building, and now with limited space in their industrial park, the development group is undergoing additional strategic planning to ensure that the community is primed for future success.



## Transforming Historic School House into Community Center

Sharon Telephone Company (STC)

Sharon Center township is home to a rare, two-story historic building that was originally built to serve as a high school. It became much more than an educational facility over the years, however, including a common place for events, entertainment, and town meetings. In fact, the facility served as an original meeting space for Sharon Telephone Company (STC) when the company began operations in the early 1900s. With the help of STC and local leadership, the community is undergoing a remodeling process to transform the historic property back into the vibrant community center that it once was.

## Panora Fiber Helps Another Daycare

Panora Fiber

The Little Charger Early Learning Center in Guthrie Center received a Ripple Effect grant to help fund engineering studies and architectural designs to replace its current building. The new facility will be licensed to care for 82 children, increasing the Learning Center's ability to serve Guthrie Center.

In addition to the support for Little Charger, Panora Fiber has been a longtime partner and advocate of childcare projects over the years.

## South Slope Supports Dentist through Iowa's FIND Program

South Slope

Dr. Daniel Binkowski has developed a business model that focuses on helping underserved populations receive vital dental operations. Dr. B. qualifies for the Fulfilling Iowa's Need for Dentists (FIND) program because of his dedication to the underserved. With South Slope's assistance and grant support, Dr. B. was accepted into the program, allowing him to receive up to \$125,000 in student debt repayment assistance. Visit <http://www.iowafindproject.com> for more information on how FIND can help your community support or recruit a local dentist.

## Tech Park Update and Other Projects

FMTC - Stanton

Planning continues for the Stanton Area Industrial Foundation (SAIF) and the Tech Park project. Much of the engineering plans have been completed, and portions of the project have gone out for bid. The community has made substantial strides in receiving grant dollars and local match contributions. Although 2022 was a busy year for the telco, FMTC still found time and capacity to help with two other community projects this year. Through Ripple Effect, FMTC helped Stanton construct an outdoor basketball court and the city of New Market complete major safety modifications to their playground in tandem with their Park Revitalization project.

## Comprehensive Plan for Lamoni

GRM Networks

The City of Lamoni received Ripple Effect support from GRM Networks and Aureon for a comprehensive plan that will address citywide development and zoning, housing needs, and downtown revitalization. The community completed several major developments following its 2015 US Highway 69 Corridor Plan. Committed to planning, Lamoni leaders hope to expand on the success and momentum of the 2015 plan with the new one.

## Stewart Memorial Hospital Expansion

Webster-Calhoun Coop. Telephone Association (WCCTA)

The Stewart Memorial Community Hospital has embarked on a \$31 million Putting People First campaign to expand and renovate the hospital. WCCTA and Aureon granted funding to the project to cover engineering costs. Once the Putting People First campaign is completed, the ER and rehab services department will be three times larger and have private treatment rooms. The new ER location will be closer to the patient wing, increasing availability and efficiency for nursing staff. There will also be a new main entrance, a new emergency entrance, and a dedicated helipad to increase the efficiency of emergency traffic flow.





## **Downtown Revitalization in Ely** *South Slope*

The City of Ely is working on a strategic plan to enhance and revitalize their downtown district. Ripple Effect grant funding is assisting with the engineering costs for building a new All-Veterans Memorial and a commercial and residential multi-use building. The Vets Memorial and multi-use building will help Ely fulfill its goal of attracting more visitors and residents to the community.

## **Two Grants to the City of Palo** *Palo Communications*

Palo was awarded two Ripple Effect Grants to support community development initiatives. One for leadership grant training courses for city personnel and a second for design engineering costs for a Phase I Neighborhood Trail System. When completed, the new ADA compliant trail will provide a safe walking and bike path for Palo residents to access a community pond, sand volleyball courts, the community center, and the future greater Linn County trail system. Palo Communications is at the forefront of these projects, proving that the telco is more than just the fiber internet provider, but a community leader as well.

## **Student-built Homes Program** *Kalona Cooperative Technology Company (KCTC)*

The City of Kalona received Ripple Effect grant funding to support a student-built housing project. High school students worked under the direction of local contractors to restore a 100-year-old home into a modern home. The City of Kalona plans to continue the student-built housing project and rehabilitate, tear down, or build new homes in Kalona. The proceeds from the sale of the house will go towards future endeavors.



## **Park Revamp with a Splash Pad** *Northwest Communications*

The City of West Bend received grants from Northwest and Aureon to assist the community with planning and engineering expenses associated with a new splash pad. The splash pad, which will be free to all, is expected to be open for the 2023 season and will complement West Bend's public pool and recreational area.

## **Housing Study for Future Growth** *Brooklyn Mutual Telecommunications Cooperative*

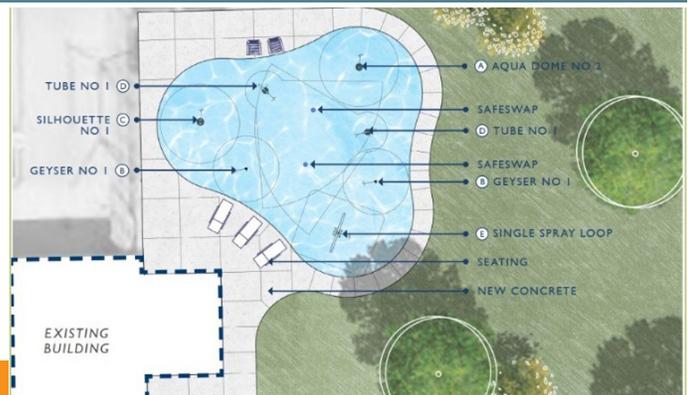
Brooklyn, Iowa, is undergoing a phase one housing assessment. This initial phase, conducted by Hometown Housing, USA, funded in part by Brooklyn Mutual and Aureon, will collect market research based on primary and secondary data from regional surveys targeting local stakeholder groups. Local partners, stakeholders, and employers will have the opportunity to participate in the assessment, which will help the city plan for new housing to meet rising demand.

## **Pool Plans for Allison** *Dumont Telephone*

Local leaders are fundraising for significant repairs and upgrades to transform the community swimming pool in Allison into a modern aquatic center. To help move the project forward, Dumont Telephone has contributed \$15,000 and a Ripple Effect matching grant for design renderings to assist with fundraising efforts. Because Allison is a bedroom community, the facility will be a vital component to providing an important community amenity to residents.

## **Ogden Legacy – Preparing for Future Business Park** *Ogden Telephone Company*

Ogden Legacy received Ripple Effect grant support for a business park engineering study. The grant money, and additional funding from Midland Power Cooperative, the Iowa Rural Development Council, and Ag Reliant, completed the initial fundraising effort for the Ogden Business Park. The study will offer a concept plan and infrastructure cost estimates associated with the development of the first 40-acre parcel of the park.



## **Substantial Support from Griswold Communications for Child Care**

*Griswold Communications*

The Noble Initiative Foundation is leading an effort for a new Child Development Center in Griswold to help alleviate unmet needs in the community and surrounding area. The Ripple Effect program is supporting the engineering and architectural work for the building. Showing strong backing for the project, Griswold Communications also extended substantial grant funding in the amount \$70,000 to help move the fundraising effort to the finish line.

## **New Revolving Loan Fund for the Kalona Community**

*Kalona Cooperative Technology Company (KCTC)*

In September, KCTC and Pleasantview, a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) in Kalona, met to close a 0% USDA Rural Economic Development loan totaling \$297,899. Pleasantview offers skilled nursing, assisted living and independent living services. They are expanding and remodeling their facilities and will use the loan to help with expansion costs.

The USDA program requires that a local utility provider sponsor the loan application process. KCTC volunteered staff time and effort to be the sponsoring utility, ensuring that the \$297,899 was made possible for the initial project and other future projects. The USDA also requires a 20% cash match from local partners to complete the program. To fulfill this requirement, KCTC pitched in \$24,824, and Aureon contributed another \$24,824.

Once payments are made on the original loan, organizations and businesses are eligible to apply for low-interest loans from the revolving loan fund to finance community and business projects. The interest generated from the projects will be deposited back into the revolving loan fund, and the account will be held and administered by KCTC.

## **HOI Finds Bridge Financing for Vet Clinic Expansion**

*Heart of Iowa Communications*

The Steckelberg Veterinary Clinic is a staple animal care facility in Conrad, IA. Pulling in a growing customer base from the surrounding counties, the family-owned clinic offers much needed services for both large and small animals. The Steckelbergs have operated since the 1960s, and with no signs of slowing down, the clinic is expanding their operations, services, and facility.

To achieve their expansion goals, the clinic looked to Heart of Iowa Communications (HOI) to sponsor a USDA Rural Economic Development pass-thru loan on behalf of the company. HOI agreed to sponsor, and through Ripple Effect, the application was completed and submitted this Fall. In the meantime, HOI also helped the Steckelberg Veterinary Clinic apply and receive short-term bridge financing in the amount of \$502,000 from a Revolving Loan Fund managed by neighboring utility, Consumers Energy. These funds will be used to start the expansion project while the company waits to hear back from the USDA. The new clinic should be completed by the Summer of 2023.

## **Business Park Master Plan Support from Butler-Bremer**

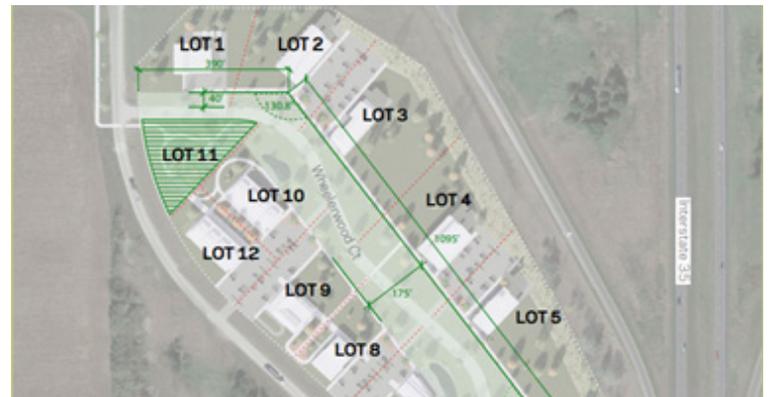
*Butler-Bremer Communications*

The Butler Logistics Park is a rail served industrial site located in Butler County, near the community of Shell Rock. Since 2007, the park has attracted over a half billion dollars in private capital investment from 6 new manufacturing and logistics businesses that have located in the park. Nearly 500 new jobs will be based in the park at full employment when the current project, Shell Rock Soy Processing is completed early next year. With grant funding from Butler-Bremer Communications, Aureon, and other utility partners, the Buter-Grundy Economic Alliance will be contracting with a professional consulting firm to guide additional master planning of the industrial park.

## **WCTA Helps Lead Commercial Park Strategic Sessions and Master Plan**

*Winnebago Cooperative Telecom Association (WCTA)*

The Winn-Worth Betco economic development group received a grant for the development of a master plan for the 22-acre commercial site located next to Diamond Jo's Casino on I-35 near the Iowa/Minnesota border. The study will help identify targeted markets for the property, provide design guidelines for future developments, and 3-dimension renderings for marketing. The plan was completed this summer, which involved input from the development group, the county, WCTA and other local leaders.



### **Interested in Participating in Ripple Effect?**

Telcos across the state already invest a tremendous amount of time, money, and effort to make sure their communities thrive. Ripple Effect helps telcos leverage their community dollars even further with funding support from Aureon and the economic development expertise from IADG.

Ripple Effect offers support for community projects, economic development guidance, and assistance to local entrepreneurs and businesses. If you have questions or are interested in participating in Ripple Effect, contact:

**Ethan Pitt, Ripple Effect Program Director**  
[epitt@iadg.com](mailto:epitt@iadg.com) or 641-442-5275

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