



114 W. Jefferson • Bloomfield, Iowa

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*Volume 24 Issue 1 • February 2024*

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# NEWSLETTER

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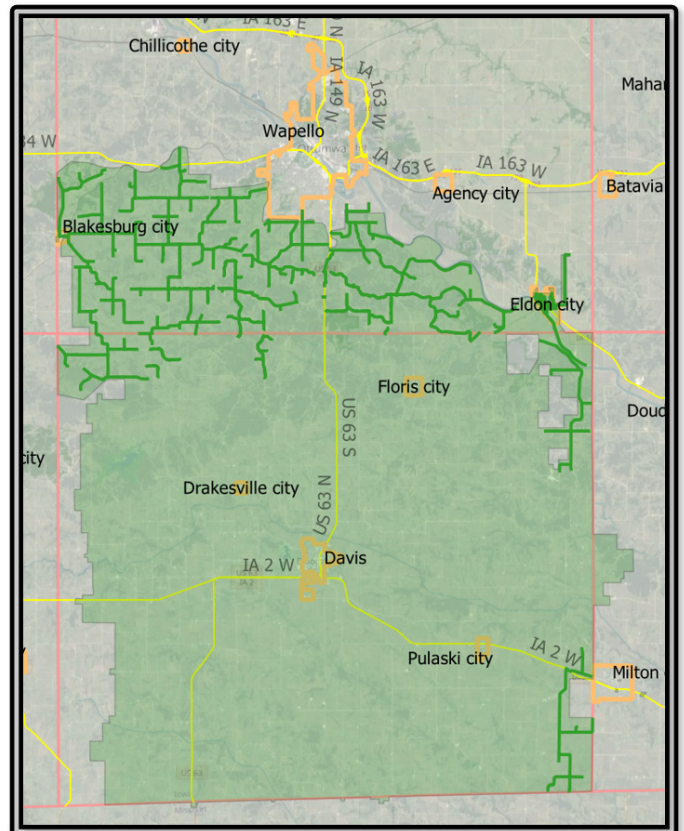
## 2023 Year in Review

2023 was another significant year for your cooperative. While there are many opportunities for rural telecommunications providers, we also face challenges. In order for us to provide reasonably priced telecommunications services, we rely on financial support from the federal government. These high-cost support programs are administered by the FCC and, as with any federal program, there is significant pressure to reduce the amount of financial support and even some pressure to eliminate these programs altogether. This isn't anything new and over the years, we have been fairly successful in maintaining a level of support that allows us to remain financially healthy, thanks in part to your Iowa congressional representatives.

In 2018, we elected to transition to a new high-cost support mechanism named Alternative Connect America Model (ACAM). The ACAM support program was a guaranteed, fixed monthly support through 2028. As our industry is looking toward the future, the uncertainty of what would happen to the ACAM program after 2028 was an important consideration so there was significant work by the FCC and the industry to look at alternatives. The end result was the FCC proposed a new support system (Enhanced ACAM) that has positives and negatives. On the positive side, they extended high-cost support payment another 10 years, through 2038. By opting into the Enhanced ACAM program, we have service level requirements but those have already been met due to the foresight of your board of directors.

The one significant disadvantage to the Enhanced ACAM program is that it reduces our annual high-cost payment by nearly \$300,000 per year. By extending the payments another 10 years, we will gain a significantly higher amount of support in total but does create the challenge of managing the business with less annual high-cost support revenue.

To offset the effect of lower Enhanced ACAM revenue, we simply have a few options. First, we could raise our end-user service rates. Second, we offer new services to our existing members (no, we are not getting back into the appliance sales business). Finally, we can expand our customer base by growing our services area.



Fortunately, the board of directors approved the expansion strategy several years ago, anticipating the need to offset any high-cost revenue reductions and absorb the normal operating expense increases we experience every year. We are pleased to report that 2023 was a record year in growing our membership base. The map below shows our current service area, shaded in green. The green lines represent the areas in which we have expanded our fiber network.

Since we started the expansion project, our fiber expansion has passed nearly 1,600 new locations and we have connected nearly 600 new members. Late last year, we exceeded 3,000 members for the first time in the cooperative's 120-year history. The revenue generated by the new members exceeds the Enhanced ACAM revenue reduction. While all the revenue doesn't go straight to the bottom line, this is a significant step towards making up for the high-cost support revenue reduction.

In addition to keeping your cooperative financially healthy, the growth strategy also provides residents access to high-speed internet for the first time. High speed internet is a necessity for business, education and quality of life and our expansion projects are making a difference in our new members' lives.

Finally, we just want to touch on our 2024 plans. As the previous map shows, the majority of the southern part of Wapello County now has access to our services powered by our all-fiber optic network. The primary expansion focus of 2024 will now be the northern half of the county. With the Iowa broadband grants we have been fortunate to be awarded, we have the funding in place to make a big push to build the majority of the remaining unserved parts of Wapello County. We expect 2024 to be another big year for continued growth in our cooperative membership. And for our existing members, we expect to be rolling out some new features on our video services that we think many of you will find exciting. So buckle up and stay tuned!

## Annual Meeting and Summary of By-Laws

The following information is provided in accordance with the requirements of the Rural Utility Services (RUS):

- The Cooperative's annual meeting shall be held each year on the date designated by the Board of Directors.
- Notices shall be mailed to each member prior to each annual meeting.
- Each member shall be entitled to one vote on each item submitted at the meeting.
- All questions shall be decided by majority vote of those members present or represented by mail.
- Each director shall select and appoint a member of the Nominating Committee.
- The members of the Nominating Committee shall nominate cooperative members for vacancies on the Board of Directors in accordance with the prescribed director area representation.
- A statement of the nominations shall be mailed to each member not later than sixty days prior to the annual meeting.

The Cooperative's complete by-laws are printed in the information pages of your telephone directory.

## Phone Pedestals

With winter weather in full swing Citizens Mutual would like everyone to be watchful of the phone pedestals in the alleys and along the side of roads and drives.

When a pedestal gets damaged, it can affect service to a large number of customers. So whether you are pushing snow this winter, burning weeds in the spring, or clearing and mowing ditches and fence rows in the summer, please watch out for the phone pedestals.



# Scholarship Opportunities for High School Seniors

Citizens Mutual is offering to seniors whose parents are members of the Cooperative:

## **Iowa Communications Alliance Membership Scholarship**

ICA is excited to announce the availability of two \$2,500 scholarships to be awarded to a student whose parent or guardian is currently employed by or serving as a director of an Iowa Communications Alliance “Voting Member” Company. This application is also open to any student who is a current employee of an ICA Voting Member Company.

**We have expanded the applicant eligibility to include both high school seniors and current fulltime undergraduate college/university student who will be continuing their undergraduate education in the 2023-2024 academic year.**

Application deadline is March 3, 2024

Go to [www.iacomcommunicationsall.org/ica-scholarship](http://www.iacomcommunicationsall.org/ica-scholarship) to start the application

## **Foundation For Rural Service Scholarship**

The foundation annually awards scholarships to an exceptional group of rural students for their first year of college or vocational school. All applicants require sponsorship by an NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association member company to be eligible.

FRS has awarded over \$1 million in scholarships since its inception; empowering rural students throughout the country to advance their communities with invaluable skill sets and experiences.

Applications will be accepted until February 8, 2024.

## **Aureon Scholarship Program**

### **Scholarship Overview**

The Aureon Scholarship Program is available to students pursuing a STEM-related course of study after high school graduation and residing in a home with service from an Iowa Independent Telecommunications Company (ITC). The program will award a total of \$10,000. Individual scholarships will range from \$1,000 to \$3,000.

The application deadline is midnight March 1, 2024.

### **Eligibility**

- Residing in a home with active phone, internet, or TV from an Iowa ITC.
- Iowa high school junior or graduating senior in the 2023-2024 school year.
- A citizen or permanent resident of the United States or one of its official territories.
- Accepted and plan to enroll at an Iowa-based, accredited four-year college or university, community college, or vocational-technical school and be pursuing a STEM-related course of study.
- Have a minimum 3.33 GPA. A copy of a recent transcript may be requested.
- Applications must be submitted by March 1, 2024.
- Go to [www.Aureon.com/eventpages/Aureon-scholarship-program/](http://www.Aureon.com/eventpages/Aureon-scholarship-program/)



# High School kids ages 15,16, or 17 have we got a trip for you!

Citizens Mutual is proud to once again sponsor a student to attend the Foundation for Rural Service Youth Tour in Washington, DC. This year's Youth Tour will be June 3-7, 2024.

Students attending the youth tour will have the opportunity to tour some of Washington DC's most exciting historical sites, including the Lincoln Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery, U.S. Capitol, and other famous historical sites. Students will also have a chance to learn firsthand about legislative and governmental processes as they relate to the telecommunications industry.

The Youth Tour is sponsored by the Foundation for Rural Service. This foundation was begun by the National Telephone Cooperative Association, which is a national trade association through which Citizens Mutual participates in activities relating to the telecommunications industry.

Applications for the 2024 Youth Tour may be picked up at the Citizens Mutual business office located at 114 W Jefferson St, Bloomfield or from the High School Guidance Counselor. Any student who is currently 15, 16 or 17 living in Davis County and whose parents are a member of Citizens Mutual, is eligible to apply. **All applications are to be returned to Citizens Mutual Telephone before March, 2024.**

A winner and an alternate will be selected on an anonymous basis by a committee of the Board of Directors of Citizens Mutual.

## Live Streaming

Television, and the way we view it, has changed a lot in the last few years. Citizens Mutual is dedicated to keeping up with the latest trends and making changes that best serve our members. In the next few months, we are excited to be rolling out our live-streaming service. In addition to watching TV like you always have, you will now be able to live-stream your favorite programs on devices throughout your home.

Want to relax on the deck after a long day and catch up on your favorite dramas from your iPad? You've got it!

Have a TV in the garage with a Roku, Firestick, or AppleTV? Invite friends over for the big game and keep the mess out there!

Are there Hawkeye and Cyclone fans living in the same house and both teams play at the same time? No more fighting over one TV. Everyone can watch what they want from their own device!

This isn't "on-demand" programming like Netflix or MAX. This is regular, live TV, just like you're used to, but on an app instead of from a set top box. You will still have the option to watch TV in the same way you always have. Live-streaming can provide flexibility, and possibly some cost savings, to members that are interested.

## Closed Captioning

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is concerned that consumers may experience difficulty in receiving and/or viewing closed captioning on some digital television(DTV) programming, including high definition television(HDTV), provided by a subscription video provider.

If you have difficulties from Citizens Mutual Telephone Cooperative, you should ensure that the captioning function on your set-top box, if applicable, is turned on and ensure that the captioning function on your DTV is also turned on.

If you are still unable to view closed captions, you should contact the cooperative for assistance.

### For Immediate closed captioning concerns:

Customer Service  
Phone (24hrs): 641-664-2074  
Fax (24hrs): 641-664-9780  
Email: mycmtech@mycmtech.com

### To file a written complaint regarding closed captioning issues contact:

Citizens Mutual Telephone Cooperative  
Attn: Vince Tyson, General Manager  
114 W Jefferson St, PO Box 130  
Bloomfield, IA 52537  
Phone: 641-664-2074  
Fax: 641-664-9780  
Email: mycmtech@mycmtech.com

## Directory Updates

Name	Address	Phone #
<b>Eldon</b>		
Eldon City Hall	100 5th St, Eldon	641-652-7510
Eldon Fire Dept	101 Elm St, Eldon	641-652-3411
Living Hope Bible Church	201 W Walnut St, Eldon	641-652-3420
<b>Bloomfield</b>		
Sunnyside Grocery	22422 Highway 63 Blmfld	641-929-3053