



CORNING

Bluestem Fiber delivers “Internet for Everyone.”

The Challenge

Seward, Nebraska has the distinction of being “America’s Official Fourth of July City – Small Town USA,” with tens of thousands of visitors streaming into this town of approximately 8,000 residents every year for its iconic Independence Day celebration. Located 20 miles outside of Lincoln, what Seward lacks is the connectivity that’s considered “table stakes” today in more densely populated areas where access to jobs, education, healthcare, and entertainment is increasingly happening online.

Research conducted by Bluestem Fiber, a competitive local exchange carrier based in Lincoln, shows that approximately 40 percent of Seward’s residents don’t have broadband access in their homes, and those who do are using dated technology with speeds so slow that forms completed online cannot submit before timing out, and students sit on steps outside their school or go to fast-food restaurants for a Wi-Fi connection to do homework.

The co-founder and CEO of Bluestem Fiber, Greg Dynek, recognized through his involvement in the communities surrounding Lincoln that there is a digital divide that’s handicapping the businesses and people

who lack access to high-speed connectivity. To level the playing field between the digital haves and have-nots, Bluestem Fiber has challenged itself to build networks in underserved communities and to offer high-speed service at a price point that’s affordable for everyone, like a utility.

The Solution

To deliver on its vision of “Internet for everyone” and to offer service at a utility-level price point, Bluestem Fiber has selected a cost-efficient network design using low-cost installation techniques. Equally important to Bluestem Fiber is its commitment to build Seward’s network using best-in-class, quality components to ensure high-speed performance many years in the future.

Meeting those dual requirements is an end-to-end Corning solution, including the FlexNAP™ system, a technology that enables installers to “tap into” the fiber optic cable running outside the home, then connect it through a drop cable to the residence or business in a process that’s similar to plugging a lamp cord into an electrical outlet. The approach is much easier than the traditional method of cutting into the fiber optic cable

and using a fusion splicer to mate the optical fiber of the drop cable to the larger cable running through each neighborhood.

“Since the subscriber connection is such a simple process, I can easily employ local talent to build out the final piece of the network,” said Dynek. “I don’t need to find someone outside the community with years of fusion splicing experience to guarantee fast installation and the highest transmission speeds for my customers.”

The benefit of the FlexNAP™ system goes beyond making the job easier for an installer – the connection of the subscriber drop cable is assured to meet Corning’s factory specifications, and there isn’t potential for mistakes in the field that can disrupt service or cause the quality of the signal to subscribers’ homes to degrade. And if the quality of the connection isn’t impressive enough, add time savings to the equation. Bluestem Fiber says it takes 60 minutes to connect a home with the FlexNAP system instead of the five hours typically required, so Seward’s citizens will be able to telecommute, stream binge-watchable videos, and easily access content for healthcare, education, and other services – without having to wait for a network installation that would otherwise take years.

The Impact

Today, two of the town’s five zones in the network design are already cabled, and all zones will be connected to the network by December 2017. All of Seward’s citizens will be able to order service from \$50 per month as soon as fiber optic cable passes their home with additional options for low- and fixed-income subscribers.

And for the visitors of Seward’s annual Independence Day celebration? In 2017, they will be able to share photos, videos, and thoughts about the day over Wi-Fi along the parade route downtown, thanks to Bluestem Fiber’s “Gigabit Fiber” capabilities.

“With improved access for everyone, I believe we will see tremendous impact made by the people of Seward and towns that are similarly sized,” said Dynek. “We believe that the internet will be richer for having underserved rural populations finally able to contribute to the conversation that’s taking place online.”

For information about Bluestem Fiber’s “Gigabit Fiber” project, to become a subscriber, or for information about when it may be available in your area, call 402-853-7102. To learn more about Corning’s products and services, contact a customer care representative at 1-800-743-2675, toll free in the United States; or (+1) 828-901-5000, international; or visit us online.

The logo consists of a solid blue square with the word "CORNING" in white, uppercase, serif font centered within it.

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