



*Inviting you inside to learn more*

**JUNE 2022**

**Michigan Issue**

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5351 North M-37, Mesick, MI

**Closed for business**

**4TH OF JULY** | Jul 4

**LABOR DAY** | Sep 5

**VETERAN'S DAY** | Nov 11



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**Welcome New CEO** page 2



# Welcome New CEO, Mike Osborne



In January, Mike Osborne took the reins from Todd Roesler, becoming the new CEO at AcenTek. While he is new to the position, Mike is not new to the company. He was hired in 2009 as Division Manager and for the past nearly 10 years, Mike has been the Chief Operating Officer at AcenTek.

Todd leaves a lasting impression on the company due to his many contributions. He continually emphasized the importance of providing customers with superior service. He pushed for innovation, continually striving to offer only the best products. He was fully committed to the goal of bringing fiber to every customer, regardless of location. Todd also helped the company to successfully navigate a very challenging environment these past couple of years. His confident leadership set the tone for the company through every situation. His strong financial background, his trust in his management team and employees and his leadership style all contributed to the success the company has seen in the years he served as CEO. Since future-planning is a very important

and ongoing task at AcenTek, the decision of who should take over had been considered for years prior to Todd finalizing his date of retirement. The board of directors' input, along with the recommendation of the current CEO, played into the decision of who should fill the role of CEO. Those people, the ones who have been successfully making decisions for the company for years, arrived at the conclusion that Mike Osborne was the best candidate for the job.

As new CEO, Mike was asked what he thought customers would notice regarding the differences between himself and former CEO, Todd. Mike answered, "I want to assure you that what this company stands for and the way we operate will continue as it has in the past. Our mission will be the same. Just as when Todd was leading AcenTek, our goal is still to provide unparalleled connections. That will not change."

Prior to becoming CEO, Mike worked mainly out of our Allendale office, visiting our headquarters in Houston, Minnesota, monthly. Since his promotion, Mike now splits his time more evenly between his home in Michigan and the Minnesota location.

After receiving the promotion, Mike commented, "I am grateful to begin my new role as CEO at AcenTek, and excited for what lies ahead. Working beside Todd for years has prepared me for this role. I am very familiar with the goal of providing unparalleled connections to every customer because I understand that fiber makes all the difference."

*PICTURED: Todd Roesler (right) congratulates Mike Osborne (left) on his promotion of CEO at AcenTek.*

## Careful What you Click

### SOCIAL MEDIA DANGERS



#### DON'T ANSWER QUESTIONS:

By answering your dog's name, your birthdate or where you were born, hackers can get the information needed for security questions (used for bank accounts or credit cards). Answering these questions can lead to your information being stolen without you even realizing it.

#### QUIZ!

#### DON'T DO QUIZZES:

By clicking on something like "Let us guess your age" you are satisfying curiosity of whether the correct answer will appear. However, clicking can be dangerous! These quizzes can lead to dangerous downloads or possible viruses being transferred to your device.



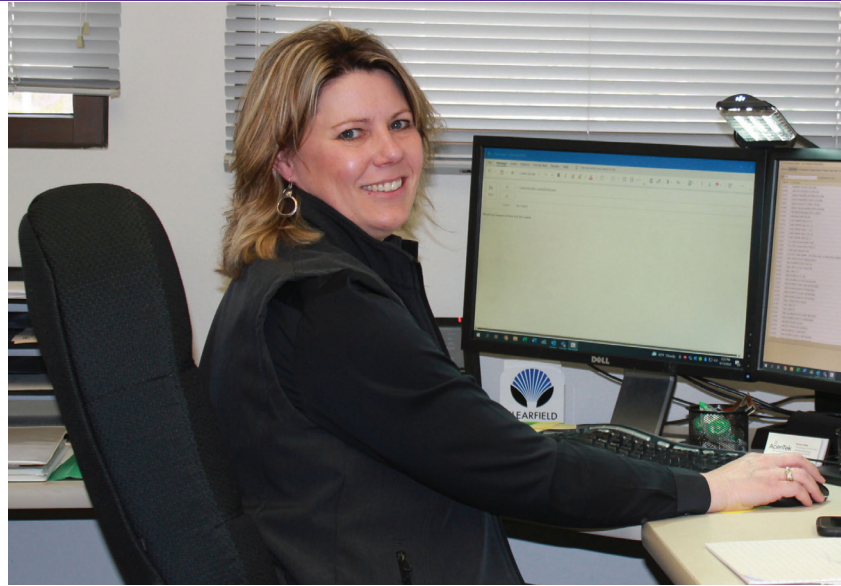
# Back to the Office, Hybrid

After more than two years of remote work, on April 4th, the AcenTek staff went back to the office. Sort of. The staff was given the option of working a hybrid schedule. This option allows staff to work from home two or three days each week, while reporting to the office on the remaining days.

Some employees prefer to work remotely, some prefer to be in the office, and still others see the benefit of both. "Having the flexibility to work from home and be in the office is the perfect arrangement, in my opinion," says Kendra Eide, Purchasing Coordinator. "If I have a project that I need some uninterrupted time to work through, a day at my home office is perfect. If I need to collaborate with a co-worker on a project, that might be easier in person. I love having that flexibility."

"AcenTek is a progressive company. We are always trying to improve and that's not just with our customers, but also with our staff. With that in mind, we decided the hybrid option would be offered as our staff came back to the office. Each department will be evaluating productivity and task completion rates so that we can use those measurements for future decisions about the work options for our team," said Kim Connor, Human Resources Manager.

With an increase in retirements, a decision about work schedule options could play a significant role in hiring at AcenTek. On average, there are two or three employees who retire each year, but in the last year, a record nine employees retired. Many of our employees are long-term employees so this trend is inevitable. So, we plan for this. AcenTek is proud of the work environment we have created and are optimistic that we will continue to fill the voids left by these valuable team members with new, qualified candidates. "We



will continue to evaluate new options that help with the work/life balance, both for existing staff and for our future hires," says Connor.

In addition to the staff being back in the office, our lobby is now open two days a week. For the past two years, AcenTek has successfully served you, our customer, remotely. While many of our customers have adapted to these new ways and found them to be far more convenient, some customers prefer to do business in person. For that reason, we have re-opened our lobby on Mondays and Thursdays, from 8:00am – 4:30pm to serve you.

*PICTURED: Kendra Eide, Purchasing Coordinator, working in the office.*

## Channel Numbers Changing

At the end of June, video customers will notice a change to their service. Many channel numbers are changing. No channels are leaving our lineup, but your favorite shows may soon be on a new channel. This change will take place at the end of June. Community, music and premium channels (HBO, Cinemax, Showtime and Starz Encore) will not be affected. Realigning the channels let the different viewing genres to be organized together, while also allowing room for adding HD channels, as they become available. This change will not impact your DVR library or parental controls.

Customers in Minnesota will notice the updated lineup on June 28th, while customers in Iowa will see the change on June 29th. All video customers received a new lineup brochure with their June bill. (If you are an E-bill customer, you received yours via email.) You can also access your lineup on our website by clicking on the video link and typing in your zip code. This new lineup brochure reflects the new channel numbers so you can easily find your favorite channel. If you have questions regarding this change to AcenTek's video service, please contact us at 888.404.4940.





# An Update on Fiber Projects

Recent years have proven that fiber optics are essential to every customer. Despite the hurdles encountered due to the pandemic and supply chain issues, we continue to make progress on our goal of enhancing every customer's life by providing unparalleled services. Fiber optics make that mission a reality. While the amount of time and expense are substantial for every fiber build, we have a plan for how to bring fiber to more of our customers throughout 2022.

Phase one of building fiber to customers in our Mesick exchange began in early May. We estimate construction to be complete by September. This project covers over 95 miles around the Mesick area and will bring fiber to over 1,000 homes.

AcenTek did receive the Ironfish grant for the Copemish exchange, meaning we will bring fiber to 56 rural customers in the Thompsonville area. The project will begin in September with an estimated date of completion of mid-October.



# Scholarships Awarded



We were excited to award 20 high school seniors with \$1,000 scholarships this spring. These deserving recipients are graduating seniors who have been accepted to a college or university and have AcenTek phone or broadband service in Minnesota, Iowa, or Michigan. Over the past 21 years, AcenTek has given out \$405,000 to graduates in the communities we serve.

## Congratulations to this year's winners!

### MICHIGAN:

- **Alexys Abraham**, Mesick Consolidated Schools
- **Jacob Barley**, Buckley High School
- **Anna Durfee**, Forest Area Community Schools
- **Bridget Rozema**, Allendale High School
- **Rehema Sango**, Allendale High School
- **Anabel Sietsema**, Coopersville High School
- **Shannyn Spenser**, Mesick Consolidated Schools
- **Logan Thomsen**, Allendale High School

### MINNESOTA:

- **Jack Gagermeier**, Aquinas High School
- **Therese Jore**, Houston High School
- **Lydia Rosendahl**, La Crescent High School
- **Adam Ruen**, Lanesboro High School
- **Carson Ruen**, Lanesboro High School
- **Amber Stemper**, Caledonia High School
- **Carson Thompson**, Rushford-Peterson High School
- **Sadie Treptow**, Caledonia High School

### IOWA:

- **Brenna Berns**, Waukon High School
- **Madelyn Helgersen**, Waukon High School
- **Taylor Luzum**, North Fayette Valley High School
- **Holly Schmitt**, South Winneshiek High School



# Brys Estate Vineyard & Winery

Brys Estate Vineyard & Winery stands out next to other wineries. Spanning 155 acres, the family-run business is focused on providing the full experience to their guests.

It is the largest winery on the Old Mission Peninsula and within that space they have created many special areas. Guests are welcome in the tasting room, or on their upper deck, which sits elevated above the vineyard and offers a spectacular view. There is also a lawn bar so guests can enjoy their drink on the green. Guests also can visit the Secret Garden, where lavender plants and a strawberry patch offer the ingredients for Lavender Lemonade and Moomer's Ice Cream in their gift shop. They even have a wine wagon, where guests can taste and tour all the estate has to offer.



*Tasting Room*

The legacy began in 2001, when a modest 10,000 grape vines were planted on the estate. Four years later, the doors to the tasting room opened for the first time. Today, Brys vineyard consists of 53,000 vines. They grow eight different varietals, including both red and white grapes. Their growth is not only be measured by size, but also by accomplishments. The vineyard has earned over 500 medals at national and international wine competitions.

The small team at Brys prides themselves on giving visitors something they cannot get elsewhere. "Traditional, yet unconventional" is how they describe their business. They continue to follow the techniques that have worked for years but are also unafraid to jump at any new opportunity that presents itself. This could be the recipe for their success.

The success and growth of Brys didn't come without some growing pains. As they began to expand and include more locations on their property, their technology needs also grew. They soon realized the need for a phone system that would allow for their multiple sites to operate as one business. AcenTek was able to help Brys with a solution. A new phone system allowed the staff to take calls at a separate location, instead of in their tasting room. This created a more favorable experience for their guests. The staff, too, benefitted from this change. Customer service could now easily be divided between those serving guests in person and helping those phoning in.



*Upper Deck*



*Secret Garden*

More recently, AcenTek was again able to help Brys continue to grow by bringing fiber optic services to the property. This was especially beneficial given how spread out their business is. As new locations were created, internet and phone services had to be extended to that location. With the old infrastructure (copper), extending service further and further away from the source would mean that the service could be unreliable. But with fiber, all those obstacles were removed. Distance no longer mattered. Fiber services at Brys Estate provided a reliable connection for the business so that they could complete their day-to-day tasks without interruption. AcenTek is proud to be the technology provider for Brys Estate and looks forward to serving them as they continue to grow.



## Giving Back to our Community



Pictured: Randy Bosch, Deputy Chief accepts check from AcenTek employees, Lisa Phillips (left), Amy Hehl, (middle) and Shari Brookhouse (right).

Late last fall, the staff at our Allendale office donated \$600 to the Allendale Firefighters Association. These donations are made possible by our Casual Day Fund. Non-uniform employees can choose to pay for the luxury of dressing casually for work. That money is then matched by the company and donated to non-profit organizations in the communities we serve.

Our donation was used to support the Fire Education Program, which targets the lower elementary age children in the Allendale School District in the Public and Private Schools. In addition to the fire safety program, the funds were also used to support a local weekend food program for children in Allendale Schools. The program, Hand2Hand, supports students who are experiencing food insecurity over the weekend and on extended school breaks.

AcenTek is proud to support the Allendale Firefighters Association and commends those who do all they can to provide such beneficial programs in our communities.

## Donation to Mrs. Mullen's Closet

The staff at our Mesick office donated \$600 to Mrs. Mullen's Closet late last fall. These donations are made possible by our Casual Day Fund. Non-uniform employees can choose to pay for the luxury of dressing casually for work. That money is then matched by the company and donated to non-profit organizations in the communities we serve.

Mrs. Mullen's Closet was started in honor of Dyanne Mullen, a principal at Hart Public Schools, who passed away in 2010. Mrs. Mullen always made sure all students in her building had the clothing they needed, year-round. Her legacy lives on as Mrs. Mullen's Closet continues to help many students and families in need. Due to the success of several fundraisers, Mrs. Mullen's Closet is now able to also offer support to grades 7-12 at both Benzie Central and Frankfort. This support includes assistance in paying for drivers' education for the students and offers a scholarship.

AcenTek is proud to support this commendable cause and thanks all those who manage this effort.



Even small digging projects, like planting trees, shrubs or installing a new mailbox, require you to call 8-1-1 to get utilities, such as gas, electric, phone, cable, water and sewer, marked. Some utilities are located as little as a few inches below ground. You could easily hit one while doing even the smallest project.

**These repairs are at the customer's expense.**

Calling in advance helps you dig safely and avoid the costs of repairing underground facilities.





**RANDY ENGELSMAN**  
Combination Technician

In March, Randy retired after 12-1/2 years working as a Combination Technician out of our Allendale office. The way he took care of our customers was both impressive and greatly

appreciated. AcenTek commends Randy for his attention to detail, his dedication to a job well done and his commitment to our team. We wish Randy all the best on his retirement.

H A P P Y  
*retirement*

Thank you for 116 years  
of combined service!



**TONY RUSKOWSKI**  
Operations Manager

After an impressive 39 years with AcenTek, Tony Ruskowski retired from AcenTek. He was hired in 1982 as Combination Technician in our Mesick

office but filled many other roles over the years. In 2012, Tony accepted the position of Operations Manager, which he held until his retirement in May. We appreciate all Tony gave to the company over his years with us and wish him a happy retirement.

## Retirement News



**TODD ROESLER** CEO

On April 1st, Todd Roesler retired as CEO of AcenTek. Todd leaves a lasting impression on our company. He always emphasized the importance of providing superior service, pushed for innovation, and was very committed to bringing

fiber to every customer. His financial background, along with his trust in his team, were the reasons he was able to lead us on the successful journey we have been on for the last 14 years. We are so grateful to have had his leadership for more than a decade. We wish Todd the very best as he retires.

**JOEL ROELOFS**  
Facilities Engineer

Joel Roelofs, Facilities Engineer in Allendale, retired in April. Joel began as a combination technician in 2009. He transitioned into the role of Facilities Engineer in 2017. Joel was an asset to our company for 12 years and is missed. We congratulate Joel, on a job well done and wish him all the best in his retirement.



**HILDA WITTINGEN**  
Customer Service Supervisor

In 1997, Hilda Wittingen was hired as the Marketing Manager. Roughly ten years later she became Office Manager and eventually, Customer Service Manager. Many thanks to Hilda for the care and attention she gave our customers during her 13 years with AcenTek. We wish her all the best on a well-deserved retirement.



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# welcome

TO THE TEAM



**RICH SEAGRAVES**

In January, we welcomed Rich as Construction Engineer Manager in our office in Mesick. Rich is no stranger to AcenTek, as we worked with him while he was employed by one of our contractors, Vantage Point Solutions. Rich's experience in telecommunications, OSP Engineering and Construction has made him an excellent fit for our team.



**ROBERT  
MILLER**

Robert began working in our Allendale office in March. He was hired on as a Combination Technician. We are so glad to have Robert as part of our team!



**RYAN  
COMPAGNER**

In March, Ryan was hired as Facilities Engineer in our Allendale office. We are very excited to have him as part of our team.



**STEVE  
KUHN**

In April, Steve joined our team as Combination Technician in our Mesick office. We are so pleased to have him join us.