



*Inviting you inside to learn more*

**JUNE 2022**

Minnesota/Iowa Issue  
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**Closed for business**

**4TH OF JULY** | Jul 4

**LABOR DAY** | Sep 5

**VETERAN'S DAY** | Nov 11



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# 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.*



## 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.

## Careful What you Click

### SOCIAL MEDIA DANGERS



**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.



# 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.*



## REFER A FRIEND

Refer a friend to AcenTek and  
you both earn a \$50 credit on  
your account when they  
become our customer.

Visit [ACENTEK.NET](http://ACENTEK.NET) to learn more



# 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.

In April we began the final phase of the fiber build in our Waterville exchange. This phase includes 448 homes and will complete our fiber build to Waterville. Construction is estimated to conclude in late July with these customers enjoying the benefits of fiber-fed services by the middle of October. In total, the Waterville fiber project will reach 660 customers.

Last September, AcenTek was awarded a \$12.1 million dollar grant from the Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant program. Our grant application proposed building fiber to Harpers Ferry, Fort Atkinson, Ossian and Clermont. This year we will begin work on these projects, starting in Clermont. All the engineering for the rural Clermont build is already complete and materials ordered. We are meeting with customers to find out who is interested in receiving a fiber drop to their home and gathering the information needed to begin construction. We estimate construction to begin later this summer or early fall.

In Minnesota, customers in Peterson will also receive fiber this year. We kicked off the project in late May and will include both rural customers and those living in the city limits. We are excited to add another 559 homes to the list of customers who are enjoying services fed by fiber. The estimated completion date for the construction phase is early September, with customers having their services switched over to fiber by December.

These three projects will bring fiber optics to approximately 1,325 more AcenTek customers before the end of 2022. We are excited to be able to continue building our fiber network, knowing the difference fiber will make in the lives of our customers.



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 scholarship winners!

## Congratulations to this year's winners!

### 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

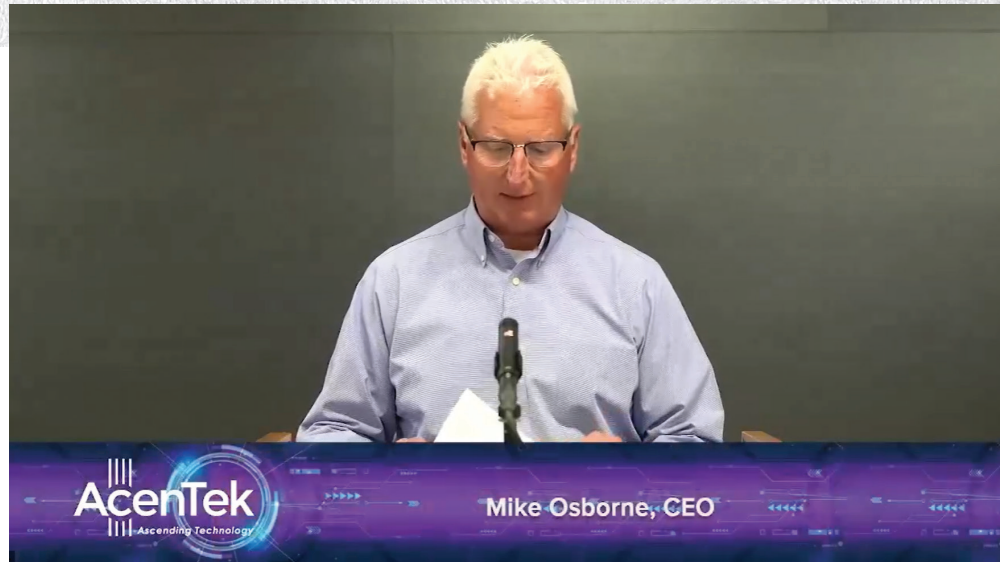
### MICHIGAN:

- **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



# 72nd Annual Meeting In Review

On April 19th, AcenTek held the 72nd Annual Meeting of the Members online. Congratulations to Lesa Moose, our new board member, announced at the meeting. Lesa will serve the portion of Iowa, served by the Association. Congratulations also to incumbents, Garth Zenke (Winona County) and Joseph Thesing (Houston County) on their re-election. Special thanks to Bluff Country Financial Services for securely handling the ballots and tallying the results again this year. We had an impressive 1,513 ballots submitted; about 8 times as many as our in-person meetings yielded. One may conclude that this increase may be due to the convenience of being able to mail in the ballot, versus having to vote in person. AcenTek thanks every member who took time to vote in this year's election.



The online venue continues to prove positive, as we see not only an increase in ballots cast, but also in attendance. Members attending our annual meeting has more than doubled from our in-person meetings. This year we had 531 people watch the online meeting. Our in-person meetings, held at the Houston High School, averaged a crowd of about 200 people. With no need to travel, we suspect that the online format encouraged attendance for some customers who live a distance from Houston. The day and time also could be contributing factors. Our in-person meetings had always taken place on a Saturday, a popular day for outdoor tasks, children's events, or family functions. Choosing a weeknight and minimizing the time commitment needed to attend may have helped encourage people to attend our meeting online. Thank you to all our loyal members who attended this year.

Our annual meeting has always been the ideal time to show our gratitude to our members. Again, this year we rewarded all members who attended the meeting with a \$10 credit on their AcenTek account. To reward those who participated, ten members who voted were randomly chosen along with ten winners from those who attended the online meeting. Winners were contacted after the meeting and were awarded a gift card to the merchant of their choice. Congratulations to all 20 of the winners!

## Congratulations Winners!

### **\$50 Gift Card Winners:**

- John H. Albrecht (Winona, MN) – Target
- Brian & Maxine Blair (La Crescent, MN) - Kwik Trip
- Bob & Karen Christiano (Houston, MN) - Kwik Trip
- Julie Hakes (Brownsville, MN) - Bauers Market
- Cheryl Jostad (La Crescent, MN) - Kwik Trip
- Rod J. Morcomb (Rushford, MN) – Kwik Trip
- Herbert F. Platten (Harpers Ferry, IA) – Walmart
- Richard S. Smith (Rushford, MN) - Kwik Trip
- Donald & Judy Thesing (La Crescent, MN) - Kwik Trip
- Robert & Carol Verthein (Winona, MN) - Kwik Trip

### **\$100 Gift Card Winners:**

- Ricky Beach (La Crescent, MN) – Kwik Trip
- William Halvorson (Waterville, IA) – Walmart
- Chad Gjere (La Crescent, MN) – Kwik Trip
- Kathy Moore (La Crescent, MN) – Walmart
- William Tewes (Eitzen, MN) – Walmart

### **\$250 Gift Card Winners:**

- Tom Fuchsel (La Crescent, MN) – Kwik Trip
- Mark Kerrigan (La Crescent, MN) – Kwik Trip
- Tom Lindh (Rushford, MN) – Walmart

### **\$500 Gift Card Winners:**

- Blake Ferkingstad (La Crescent, MN) – Target
- Karla Nelson (Houston, MN) – Kwik Trip



# Donations Made to 7 Area Libraries



“ We are going to buy a projector so when we have an author visit they can project further, allowing more people to be able to enjoy the presentation. ”

LANESBORO PUBLIC LIBRARY

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Pictured librarian, Tara Johnson with AcenTek  
Combination Technician, Tad Ellinghuysen

“We will use the donation to pay for new books in preparation for all the kids that will be coming through our doors for our Summer Reading Program. We want them to have a selection of new materials to choose from. Thank you for helping to make this possible”

--- HOUSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



HOKAH PUBLIC LIBRARY

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Pictured Library Director, Willow Arden with  
AcenTek Combination Technician, Mike Laufenberg

“We plan to use your donation for our summer reading activities. We create take-home craft bags and also have reading prizes over the summer.”

-- LA CRESCENT PUBLIC LIBRARY

In April, AcenTek donated to seven libraries in communities we serve in Minnesota. Libraries in Caledonia, Hokah, Houston, La Crescent, Lanesboro, Ridgeway and Rushford were each awarded a \$600 donation. 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. AcenTek commends those who manage these small-town libraries, understanding that, even with all the technology available, libraries are a beneficial part of our communities.



“ This is greatly appreciated! We will be using the donation to purchase materials for our summer reading program this year, themed 'Travel with Us.' Thank you, AcenTek! ”

CALEDONIA PUBLIC LIBRARY

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Pictured Library Director, Stephanie Eggert with  
AcenTek Combination Technician, Mike Loken



“ We are updating our non-fiction childrens section since it is very outdated. This donation will offset that cost. ”

RUSHFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

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Pictured Library Director, Beth Nelson with  
Business Services Director, Jamie Meldahl

“Thank you for the generous donation. We want to add titles to our library focused on farming, as there is a growing number of requests for this. Also, the donation will help us to promote the library as a community resource. Building the awareness will encourage its use.”

-- RIDGEWAY COMMUNITY LIBRARY



# Understanding Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi is something many of us use daily, yet don't really understand how it works. Most of us don't really care to understand how it works, just that it does! But understanding a few things about Wi-Fi could improve your experience.

## WHAT IS IT?

Wi-Fi is the wireless technology used to connect computers and other devices to the internet.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

A radio signal is sent from a router to a device, translating data into something you see and use.

## WHAT FACTORS IMPACT MY WI-FI CONNECTION?

- Age of your device: Older devices may not be able to reach faster speeds due to being built with older technology.
- Obstacles: Certain walls, cordless phones, certain appliances like microwaves or baby monitors can also cause interference.
- Your neighbors: Their wireless network can also interfere with yours since they can generate potential noise on the same frequency as your Wi-Fi.

## WHAT IS THE BEST OPTION FOR ROUTER?

You can purchase your own router and manage your Wi-Fi service if you choose to do so. Shop for a router that has been built with the most current technology.

If you are not very tech-savvy, simply subscribe to Wi-Fi services through AcenTek. Our Wi-Fi service provides current technology at just \$4.95/month. When you subscribe to AcenTek Wi-Fi, technical support is also included.

# 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.



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.

welcome  
TO THE TEAM



**CRAIG CASBERG**

In April, Craig joined our team as a Cable Locator out of our Houston office. We are very excited to have him as part of our team. Welcome Craig!





207 E Cedar Street  
PO Box 360  
Houston, MN 55943

Thank you for 121 years  
of combined service!



**TODD ROESLER**  
CEO

On April 1st, Todd 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!



**BRIAN JERVISS**  
Engineering Supervisor

After an impressive 44 years of serving our company, Brian retired in April. He was hired in 1978 as Central Office Equipment Assistant. Since then, he has filled many roles including Engineering Supervisor, which is the position he has held for the last 22 years. Regardless of his role, Brian's work has always been marked by efficiency and excellence. His integrity and dedication have been an example to everyone he worked with. We congratulate Brian on a job well done and a retirement well deserved.

HAPPY  
*retirement*



**DAN SMITH**  
Construction Inspector

Dan started with us in 1988, working seasonally, as a small equipment operator. In 2006, Dan became a full-time member of our team, and has worked as our Construction Inspector for the past 15 years. His dedication to a job well done, over all these years, is admirable. We offered our gratitude to Dan as he said his goodbyes to AcenTek in April. We wish him nothing but joy as he begins his retirement.



**NANCY NIMMO**  
Provisioning Technician

After an impressive 48 years of service, Nancy Nimmo retired from AcenTek. From General Clerk to District Clerk, Sales Rep to Data Processing Clerk, Computer Operator to Programmer, to eventually filling the role of Provisioning Technician, Nancy has given so much to this company. We congratulate Nancy and wish her all the best as she begins her next chapter.