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Two Veteran Team Members Retire

Last November, Construction Supervisor, John Jore retired after 36 years of service. During his time, he filled the roles of Heavy Equipment Operator and Combination Technician before becoming the Plant Supervisor. In 2009, John's title changed to Construction Supervisor, the role he filled for the remainder of his time at AcenTek. No matter what the job, John demonstrated precision. He was known for his meticulous nature and pride in a job well done. John led by example, guiding those on his team to do the same.

More recently Joanne Wagner, Accountant, retired after nearly 38 years of service. She was hired as an Accounting Assistant in '88 and was promoted to Accountant in '93. Her wealth of knowledge in the accounting field made her a huge asset to our team. Joanne was known for her friendly, easy-going attitude and impressive work ethic.

While their absence is felt at the office, we wish John and Joanne all the best on their well-deserved retirement. Thank you, both, for the essential role you played at AcenTek.

Annual Meeting Recap

On April 28th we held our 76th Annual Meeting of the Members online. CEO, Mike Osborne, shared highlights of the year, including our financials, and also celebrated staff with milestone anniversaries. Board of Director election results were also shared at the meeting. For a full recap, along with the list of prize winners from our meeting, turn to page 6.



Named the Best

In April, AcenTek was selected as one of the 2026 Best Places to Work in Southeast Minnesota by Workforce Development, Inc. On April 9th, Human Resources staff, Kim Connor and Rebecca Larson attended the Workforce Development forum in Rochester, where they accepted the award for AcenTek.

Workforce Development created this program to recognize some of the best area workplaces. Each company is asked to complete an extensive survey that allows employment practices to be analyzed. Criteria included factors such as turnover, rate of growth, promotion rates, percentage of employees injured, benefits offered, and paid days off, just to name a few.

This is not the first time AcenTek has won this award. In 2021, we were also awarded this honor.



EMAIL SCAMS PAGE 4

What you need to know to protect yourself in your inbox

Why is Fiber-to-the-Home the Best?

Comparing Fiber-to-the-Home to Other Solutions

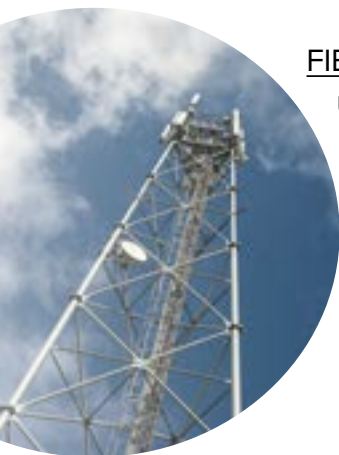
With all the other options out there, do you ever wonder why you need fiber from AcenTek? We are determined to provide the very best for you, and the best is fiber-to-the-home. Why is that the best? Here is a breakdown of why fiber-to-the-home is better than any other option out there and why AcenTek will continue building fiber until every one of our customers is connected.



FIBER-TO-YOUR-HOME vs. Fiber-to-your-neighborhood:

You may have heard the phrase ‘fiber-powered’ and been misled thinking it was the same as fiber right to your door. Fiber-powered is providing fiber to the vicinity, but not directly to your home. At some nearby point in your neighborhood, the fiber switches to coaxial cable. That cable is what connects to your home. This partial-fiber approach is done by some companies as a way to cut costs but is only moderately reliable. People using services that are only fiber-powered have complained about interruptions to their service, especially in the evening. During peak hours of usage, the congestion can cause dropped connections leading to regular frustration.

★ **FIBER-TO-YOUR-HOME** is not prone to electrical interference, is more resistant to weather and provides a consistent connection, from our facility all the way to your home.



FIBER-TO-YOUR-HOME vs. Cellular:

Using cellular means connecting to the internet by using cell towers instead of any physical connection to your home. Those using cellular for internet face challenges since it is affected by signal strength. If you don't have a good signal, you would not be able to be online. Network congestion, significantly slower speeds and possible interference based on buildings or other obstacles near your location were among other concerns.

★ **FIBER-TO-YOUR-HOME** offers the ‘always on’ experience. Designed to have dozens of devices connected simultaneously, performance is consistent. Fiber all the way to your home provides symmetrical upload and download speeds. This is essential when video calling, uploading large files or gaming.



FIBER-TO-YOUR-HOME vs. Hot Spots:

Hot spots can be described as portable device that provides internet by acting like a wireless access point. These are best for temporary use as they are subject to congestion, speed fluctuates with cell signal strength, and data caps. Weather and network congestion can affect performance of hot spots making them unreliable. Hot spots work best with one device, as two or more can result in sluggish performance. Users of hot spots have complained about dead zones, signal drops, and congestion.

★ **FIBER-TO-YOUR-HOME** offers higher bandwidth and unlimited data. This makes it the ideal answer for working from home, and for a family who loves to stream movies or game. Fiber-to-the-home supports multiple devices at once, providing unmatched speeds.

Expedited Fiber Plan

Earlier this year our Board of Directors approved a plan to accelerate the plan for building fiber to our remaining customers. More information will be provided later this year, including maps and accompanying dates for when fiber will be available in each of our remaining serving areas.



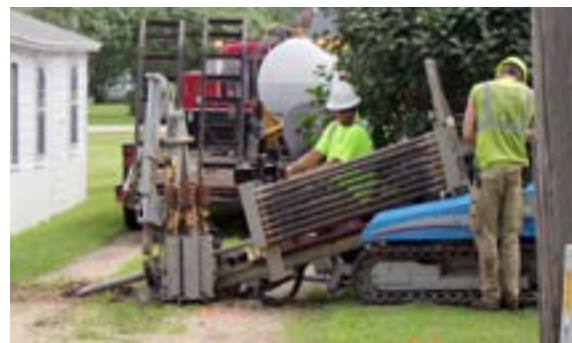
Wrapping up our Canton Build

In June of 2025 we began our fiber project in Canton, Minnesota. With the help of our contractor, Central Cable, we worked to connect 289 locations earlier this year. In May we began construction in the southern part of our Canton serving area. This project will bring fiber to an additional 37 homes. August is the estimated completion date to have all homes in Canton connected to fiber.



Ostrander Project

In April we began underground construction on our fiber project in the city limits of Ostrander, Minnesota. Central Cable, our contractor, is helping us with this project. We are excited to be bringing fiber to 131 homes in this part of our serving area. The estimated timeline for the project to be completed is the end of July.



Finishing Fiber to Harpers Ferry

In 2024, we built fiber to the rural part of our Harpers Ferry, Iowa, serving area. This was part of a grant which enabled us to build only to specific locations. This spring we returned to Harpers to finish building fiber to locations within the city limits. In March, we began making home visits. Construction will begin later this summer. With the help of our contractor, West Union Trenching, we expect to complete our fiber build to Harpers Ferry in December, connecting 897 homes.



FIBER FACTS PAGE 2

Learn why fiber is the best by comparing it to other options

Spotting Email Scams and Knowing What to do

Phishing is when someone sends you an email pretending to be someone you trust. They fool you into doing something you should not do, like give money, share a password or give access to their computer by opening an attachment.

How it works: Through clever wording and pretending to be a person or organization you know and trust, the email persuades you to click the link or open the attachment. If you click the link, you are taken to a website which resembles a legit site. This site offers you a login. Once you log in, your credentials are recorded, then you are forwarded to the real site or to an error page. The error page asks you to log in again, giving hackers an additional chance to log your credentials. Opening an attachment also can result in unpleasant consequences. It can cause malicious software to be run on your computer. This is highly sophisticated software that sits and watches what you are doing. Through this, sensitive information is sent back to the hackers by this software.

What to do if you're unsure: VERIFY INDEPENDENTLY.

If you are suspicious of an email you receive do not click on anything, reply or open any attachment. Be cautious and verify the content outside of email. For example, if you get an email from your bank that you are not entirely sure is legit or not, call your bank. Ask them directly about the contents of the email. They will be able to help you decide if the email is legitimate or not.

What to do if you receive a phishing email:

1. Do not engage.
2. Report it. Within your email client you can report the email as spam or phishing. This will remove the email from your inbox. The email is sent to security teams to analyze the threat, improve filters and help block malicious senders.

How to spot a phishing email:

- 1 Look for misspelled email addresses**
Take a careful look as most often these misspellings are subtle, replacing the letter "O" for a zero or something similar.
- 2 Look for a sense of urgency**
The message will likely be urging you to act now or something negative will happen, like your account will be locked.
- 3 Watch for emails requesting something**
These emails often ask you to disclose your password or other sensitive data. They may also ask you to make a payment.
- 4 Watch for suspicious links**
Always hover over a link to see the web address. If it doesn't match where you believe it should go to, do not click.
- 5 Notice attachments you didn't request**
If you didn't ask for it, be cautious to open any attachment to your email.

EXAMPLE:

The screenshot shows a phishing email with several red flags highlighted by callouts:

- URGENT: Your Office 365 account will be suspended in 24 hours**: A callout points to this text, stating "Sense of urgency so you have less time to think".
- Microsoft <security-alerts@micr0sft365.io> to me**: A callout points to the sender's email address, noting "Suspicious sender addresses with small errors that make them look similar".
- Microsoft** logo: A callout points to the logo, stating "Blurry logo indicates it was copied from online".
- Dear User**: A callout points to the salutation.
- We have detected suspicious activity on your Office 365 account. Your account will be automatically suspended within 24 hours unless you verify your identity immediately.**: A callout points to this text, stating "Creating Urgency".
- Click here to verify your account: <https://office365-verification.secure-login.io>**: A callout points to the link, stating "Links that don't match the claimed destination. Using a zero in place of the 'O'".
- If you do not complete this verification process you will lose access to all your emails, documents and Office applications.**: A callout points to this text.
- Microsoft Security Team**: A callout points to the sender's name.
- Pro Tips: Cautious if you were not expecting this email. Always navigate directly to the service provider's website rather than clicking links in suspicious emails.**: A callout points to the bottom of the email.

2026 AcenTek Scholarship Winners

It is with great excitement that we announce this year's scholarship recipients, each receiving \$1,000 to go towards their continued education. These deserving seniors have been accepted into a tech school, college, or university to fulfill their future aspirations. Congratulations to this year's winners! AcenTek wishes all these young adults the very best as they follow their dreams.

For the past 27 years, we have supported young adults as they pursue post-secondary education. AcenTek has given out \$482,000 in scholarships to deserving area graduates. We feel passionate about the education of our youth and are proud to support them by offering a scholarship opportunity in the communities we serve. Students who live in our serving areas in Minnesota, Iowa or Michigan can apply for the AcenTek scholarship. Details about the scholarship, along with deadline information, are available on our website. If you know an area high school student graduating in 2027, point them to AcenTek.net/scholarships.

Minnesota



CHRISTO BADENHORST
Rushford area



GRAYDEN BECKMAN
Houston area



HAILEY ERICKSON
Peterson area



ALEXANDER HENKE
Hokah area



ELLA HOSCHEIT
Caledonia area



CADENCE KOEHLER
Houston area



ISAAC LEHMANN
La Crescent area



EVELYN LEMKE
Houston area



ALEXA SMITH
Rushford area



LILLIAN WEST
Lanesboro area

Iowa



ADELE CONWAY
Ossian area



LAURYN JOHNSON
Harpers Ferry area



JULE SADLER
Ossian area



DYLAN STEGEN
Waukon area



ELLA THEIS
Ossian area

Michigan



OLIVIA HILL
Allendale area



CODY LINNA
Mesick area



KAYLA MILARCH
Copemish area



BAILEY SCHOLMA
Allendale area



JOSHUA WALKER
Mesick area

Prize Winners

Each of the winners have member accounts. All were contacted and chose which gift card they would like. Options included: Best Buy, Target, Walmart, Kwik Trip, Casey's General Store, Bauer's Market, Cox True Value Hardware, Caledonia True Value Hardware, Rushford Hardware, Quillin's, Root River Market or Rushford Foods. Below is the list of winners, with their corresponding serving area.

\$50 Gift Card Winners:

- ♦ Gerry Beyerl (Houston)
- ♦ Kelsey M Biel (Canton)
- ♦ Lisa A Gratz (La Crescent)
- ♦ Mark Guthrie & Dawn Krutza-Guthrie (La Crescent)
- ♦ David & Pamela Hougé (La Crescent)
- ♦ Lynda Meyer (Houston)
- ♦ Anthony & Lori Oldenburg (La Crescent)
- ♦ Everett & Vicki Rowland (Clermont)
- ♦ William J Schuldt (Dakota)
- ♦ Terry L Stearns (Dakota)

\$100 Gift Card Winners:

- ♦ Ted Ager (Waterville)
- ♦ Marilyn Bayer (Houston)
- ♦ William Halvorson (Waterville)
- ♦ Theresa Heuker (Harpers Ferry)
- ♦ The City of New Albin (New Albin)

\$250 Gift Card Winners:

- ♦ Sharon Budd (La Crescent)
- ♦ Janice Goede (La Crescent)
- ♦ Mandy Poeppe (Houston)

\$500 Gift Card Winners:

- ♦ Denise Johnson (La Crescent)
- ♦ Jason Nefzger (Clermont)

76th Annual Meeting Recap

Our 76th annual meeting of members took place on April 28th via Zoom. At the meeting, CEO, Mike Osborne, spoke about communication, commitment and consistency. That became the company's mantra over the past year, guiding them through their tasks. He described the customer notification plan that was created, improving customers' access to information about their cooperative. He also reminded members of the ongoing commitment of bringing fiber to every customer, regardless of location. A brief recap was given of what projects were accomplished in 2025 and insight was shared as to what the future will bring regarding fiber projects. Osborne finished his address by providing a financial overview of the year, and celebrated staff with milestone anniversaries. Both of these offered proof of the consistency AcenTek provides customers, beyond their services.

Congratulations



CONNIE EDWARDS
Minnesota Area



BRUCE LEHMANN
Iowa Area



BRAD HOINESS
Fillmore County

During the meeting, election results for our Board of Directors were shared. Connie Edwards was re-elected for the directorship from the Minnesota area, served by the Association. Bruce Lehmann was re-elected to represent the portion of Iowa served by the Association, and Brad Hoiness was re-elected by acclamation, to serve Fillmore County. Congratulations to all, and thank you for your willingness to serve on the Board of Directors.

This was the second year that members were given the option of voting online or by mail. Special thanks to all who took the time to place their vote. In appreciation, ten winners were randomly chosen and will be awarded gift cards to the area merchant of their choice. In addition, every member who attended the meeting received a \$10 credit on their June bill. Thank you to all who attended, proving you care about your cooperative. From the list of confirmed attendees, ten more winners were randomly chosen and awarded a gift card to the area merchant of their choice. Congratulations to all 20 winners!

Donations Given to 6 Iowa Fire Departments

The employees at AcenTek continue to pay to dress casually to work, even though many work remotely several days per week. Our Casual Day donations are made up of employee contributions plus a match by our Board of Directors. Each year we donate to nonprofits in the communities we serve. This spring was no exception as we donated to six fire departments in the communities we serve in Iowa. Fire departments in Clermont, Fort Atkinson, Harpers Ferry, New Albin, Ossian and Waterville were each given \$600.



FORT ATKINSON FIRE DEPARTMENT

Jim Schmitt (left) and Levi Holstad (right) accept donation from AcenTek, presented by Dean Kerrigan (center).



CLERMONT FIRE DEPARTMENT

Dean Kerrigan of AcenTek, presents volunteer firefighter, Allan Billmeyer, with donation.



HARPERS FERRY FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mark VanderKolk of AcenTek, presents James Melcher with donation.



OSSIAN FIRE DEPARTMENT

Denis Holein accepts donation from Dean Kerrigan of AcenTek.



WATERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mark VanderKolk of AcenTek, presents firefighter, Paul Deason with donation.



NEW ALBIN FIRE DEPARTMENT

Jon Johnson of the fire department accepts donation from AcenTek's Teri Vatland.

As we stopped by to deliver each donation, we had a chance to visit with the volunteer firemen. They shared their current needs and how the donation may be used. Fire gear washers seemed to be a popular need. Both Fort Atkinson and Ossian's departments explained the need for properly cleaning gear after a fire. The industrial-grade machines are designed to properly remove carcinogenic toxins that become trapped in the gear. This is important in reducing the long-term health risks such as cancer. The Clermont Fire Department recently purchased new gear for their team and the fire department in Harpers Ferry is in the process of getting a new rescue truck. New Albin's Fire Department is working on a revamp of the body of their rescue unit. In Waterville, we learned about the drone the department recently got, making it the only department in the county with drone capabilities. Having drone capabilities is not only beneficial for the fire district they serve but also has benefited neighboring communities. The drone was recently used for an emergency just outside of the area the Waterville Rural Fire Department serves. Batteries and the battery bank necessary for this type of equipment are very expensive and donations aid in footing that cost.

As we thanked these local heroes and learned more about the important work they do, it was obvious that every donation they receive is greatly appreciated and put to good use. The price tags attached to all their necessary equipment and supplies are exorbitant. AcenTek is proud to support essential organizations like local fire departments and encourages others to do the same.



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www.AcenTek.net

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-  No worry about if the mail will reach our office on time.
-  Stay connected through email. Messages from us will reach you faster through email.
-  Eliminate need to sort through mail for your invoice or risk your bill getting tossed out.
-  Make the earth-friendly choice and reduce the amount of paper needed by AcenTek.

BUSINESS HOURS: Monday - Friday (8:00am - 4:30pm)

LOBBY HOURS: Monday - Thursday (8:00am - 4:30pm)

**CLOSED: May 25 - Memorial Day
July 4 - Independence Day
September 7 - Labor Day**



Two AcenTek Customers Awarded MTA Scholarships

Congratulations to two local seniors for receiving scholarships from the Minnesota Telecom Alliance (MTA). Isaac Lehmann of La Crescent (left) and Grayden Beckman from Houston (right) were both awarded the \$2,000 scholarship.

Applicants must be Minnesota residents who are customers of telecommunication companies. Applications were submitted to their telecommunication provider, who confirmed that they were, in fact, a customer. Each provider then passes the applications to MTA for their deliberation. We were so excited to learn that two of the MTA scholarship recipients were from homes AcenTek serves!

The MTA scholarships program recognizes academic achievement, leadership, and a commitment to continued education. This year, 126 students applied for the MTA scholarships. These students are served by more than 40 telecommunications companies across the state of Minnesota.



SCHOLARSHIPS PAGE 5
[Read about the AcenTek Scholarship winners](#)