

Deal with city will allow installation of high-speed lines

By Jim Mayfield

December 04, 2014

GREENFIELD — A project to string several miles of fiber optic cable throughout Greenfield will enhance wireless capabilities for Verizon customers in the city when the project is completed next year.

Last month, the Greenfield Board of Works agreed to a proposal that will allow Extenet Systems of Lisle, Illinois, to begin installing the system, and city utility workers have recently begun preparing for the work, said city utilities director Mike Fruth.

Greenfield Power & Light superintendent Nelson Castrodale said Extenet will install some five miles of fiber optic cable and canister antennas on utility poles owned by the city as well as Duke Energy.

The project will involve about 225 city poles and 22 Duke poles and will run generally around the city from Greenfield-Central High School and the junior high school; the Hancock County Public Library; the Old Log Jail near Riley Park; and J.B. Stephens Elementary School, Castrodale said.

The company will pay the city an annual pole attachment charge of \$6.25 per pole that will bring in revenues of some \$1,400 per year, Fruth said.

The charge will increase to \$9.25 per pole in 2020 and will essentially cover maintenance costs the city will incur once the system is installed, Fruth said.

Extenet is also reimbursing the city for pre-construction engineering reviews and for the cost of raising some poles to provide sufficient height clearance for the new lines, Fruth said.

The city has already started some of its work in raising some of its poles, and Extenet spokeswoman Linda Rooney said the company hopes to begin installing the system before heavy winter weather sets in.

Extenet designs, builds, owns and operates outdoor and indoor mobile networks for national and regional wireless carriers, enterprises and venues, according to the company's website.

Extenet marketing director Manish Matta said the company secures the rights to build the network and then allows wireless carriers to use its system.

"At the end of the day, we help the big carriers' systems come to fruition," Matta said.

Though disclosed at the city board of works meeting, Extenet representatives Thursday could not officially identify Verizon as the wireless carrier that will utilize the network.

Rooney said system analysis indicated several areas within the system's current coverage area with users that needed enhanced coverage, and the added fiber optic and antennas will provide that improvement.

Castrodale said the project is somewhat unusual simply because of its small scope.

"Usually, this stuff happens around high-volume uses like the (Indianapolis Motor) Speedway or the (Lucas Oil) Stadium," he said. "We're probably the smallest city they've ever done it in."

Rooney confirmed that Greenfield's project was "relatively small" compared to the company's usual projects.

Small or not, officials say the system will provide better and faster wireless service for city users.

"It should be much faster, and if it helps our community and our schools, it's a good deal," Castrodale said. "That's why the city signed on to it."