



**July 27, 2011**

## **iFiber selects Aldridge Electric and Kelso-Burnett for broadband network construction**

Two additional contractors have been selected for the northwest Illinois project designed to bring a reliable high-speed broadband network to a nine-county region.

Illinois Fiber Resources Group (iFiber), an Illinois not-for-profit organization, has selected Aldridge Electric, which partnered with Kelso-Burnett to provide a joint proposal to build the network throughout Boone, LaSalle, Ogle, Stephenson and Winnebago counties.

Work for the project is already underway by PirTano Construction Company (Addison, IL) in Carroll, JoDaviess, Lee and Whiteside counties.

The iFiber project is a public-private partnership focused on improving broadband infrastructure in underserved rural areas. It will provide access to the new fiber optic network to community anchor institutions such as schools, government, libraries, community colleges and health care providers.

The new network will provide dark fiber that supports up to 10 Gbps, making possible efficiencies in service, enhanced economic development and remote off-site storage capabilities.

Design engineering and permitting for the iFiber project are being coordinated by Baxter & Woodman. Firms selected for construction are uniquely qualified in specific regions of the network area, according to John Lewis, chairman of the iFiber board.

The iFiber Board includes representatives from Northern Illinois University, LaSalle County, North Central Illinois Council of Governments, the City of Rockford, Boone County and Blackhawk Hills RC&D.

Aldridge Electric, Inc., headquartered in Libertyville, IL, is recognized as one of the largest specialty electrical contractors in the nation, with an established reputation for successfully completing complex projects for nearly 60 years.

"We offer a complete range of electrical services throughout the industry and take great pride in our highly talented employees and contributions to building and strengthening of the nation's infrastructure," said Frank Manna, Vice President of Aldridge Electric, Inc.

"A rigorous training regimen and substantial safety and quality programs have historically been the keys to our success, and they will be essential to the iFiber project, as well," Manna said.

For this project, Manna said Aldridge has strategically partnered with Kelso-Burnett Co. and Baxter & Woodman in order to ensure success and mitigate risk for all associated parties.

"Our project team looks forward to working together to resolve challenges, bring innovative solutions to the table, and ultimately exceed our customers' expectations," he said.

Kelso-Burnett Company has been serving the lighting, power, and communication needs of northern Illinois since its inception in 1908, according to Brad Weir, President/CEO.

"We have installed electrical, security and communication systems for nuclear stations, corporate campuses, TV and radio networks, museums/aquariums, railroads, data hosting centers, the new Rivers Casino and numerous other projects throughout Northern Illinois.

"Fiber projects include the City of Batavia, City of Lake Forest, Harvard School District, City of Rockford and Community Unit School District 300," said Weir.

Kelso-Burnett's office in Rockford has served the greater Rockford area for more than 40 years, as well as provided numerous electrical and communication systems for Northern Illinois University.

"We are very excited about teaming together with Aldridge Electric to provide high speed fiber to the iFiber project in northern Illinois. This will give thousands of Illinois residents access to the same speed and efficiencies enjoyed in the larger metropolitan areas of the country," said Weir.

A timetable for construction by Aldridge Electric and Kelso-Burnett is now being coordinated, said Lewis.

"iFiber looks forward to breaking ground on the fiber network with Aldridge Electric and Kelso-Burnett early in August. These firms have proven themselves capable and efficient, as well as responsive to the needs of iFiber and the region."

Illinois Fiber Resources Group (iFiber) was established in January 2011. The group was created to address current and future high-speed internet needs of communities across northwest Illinois. Counties included are Boone, Carroll, JoDaviess, LaSalle, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside and Winnebago.

The project is funded through a grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's Broadband Technology Opportunity Program. Questions about the iFiber project may be directed to [info@ifiber.org](mailto:info@ifiber.org) or visit [www.ifiber.org](http://www.ifiber.org).

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