

Indianola, Iowa Local Tech News

Indianola, Iowa is pleased to join the nation's list of communities with Gigabit broadband service in January, 2015. IMU congratulates its broadband service partner [MCG](#), headquartered in nearby Oskaloosa, for their recent announcement that Gigabit speeds will soon be available in Indianola. [Indianola Municipal Utilities](#) (IMU) is the proprietor of central Iowa's only municipal fiber-to-the-premise network.

This announcement continues the theme of Indianola Municipal Utilities delivering on reliability, technology, sustainability, and community enhancements. "Recent reports show that gigabit availability has become an important factor in economic growth, job creation, and property values" states IMU General Manager Todd Kielkopf. "Indianola's technology investment in connectivity, collaborations, and content delivery is paying dividends".

Additionally, IMU recently announced its plans to expand its fiber network this winter. Retail service is being extended to an additional 150 premises in the central part of Indianola. Also, a new fiber trunk line is being built as part of the West Highway 92 relocation project that will allow for future retail service in that area. "We continue to build the case that citizens and businesses want higher levels of service at a lower price, and IMU is setting the bar high for that to happen locally" said IMU Network Services' Mike Metcalf, who heads up construction of the network.

As a municipal utility, accelerating the network's expansion relies on community engagement. MCG's website offers a link (www.mahaska.org/build-my-neighborhood) to let IMU know where citizens want to have fiber built into their neighborhood and help guide where to build next. Over 90 people have already done this with more submitting daily. MCG Marketing and Sales Manager Steve Burnett says "Gigabit service is an exciting opportunity. Less than 8% of the people in the U.S. have service of this nature, so Indianola is in rare company. The demand for it will only grow."

IMU and its partners, including MCG, also launched the IMU Partners Program this past month. This collaboration provides marketing opportunities for local businesses, common use of network facilities, community outreach, and business development. Local businesses interested in joining this fledging group as associate members can find more information at www.imupartners.com. Services provided include advertising on IMU's TV channel and streaming video site, sponsoring STEM-related activities at Indianola's schools, and hosting tech-related events. "A local tech center that can attract new partners and businesses is now within the realm of possibilities, given everything else in place" says Indianola Development Association Executive Director Jerry Kelley.

Business development efforts center around IMU Partner's Program's co-founding the EmergeHUB.org platform. This virtual incubator-in-a-box supports local tech ventures in their early development phases. The program is building relationships with the Gravitare co-working space in downtown Des Moines, the West Des Moines Incubator, and venture capital firms. Emerge Program Director Chris Draper states that "IMU and their partners have great tech assets to leverage into the Des Moines metro tech ecosystem and the team-based approach to do it well."

Simpson College, at its Indianola campus, contributes to Indianola's growing tech scene through its EMERGE@Simpson program. On-campus ventures and classes now access resources at the recently-dedicated [Gerald R. Edwards Entrepreneurial Center](#) in Dunn Library. Emerge marketing intern Katie Eichelberger reports on the program's successes and she highlights the recent announcement of the mid-October launch of the Snitch'n law-enforcement app in the Google Play and Apple Store. The locally-developed app is the brainchild of a Simpson student and parent team.

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