

ICN Insider



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We are glad to provide you stories and news in the ICN Insider. The publishing team will be taking the next few summer months off to focus on new projects. Be sure to visit our website to keep up-to-date.



ICN Continues to Make Progress with BTOP

Significant progress has been made within the last month with the federal broadband infrastructure grant. ICN's BTOP grant will be used to improve its infrastructure by increasing bandwidth with a 10 Gbps (gigabytes per second), which will reach all 99 counties.



ICN's new warehouse configuration.

The following are updates regarding the status of the project.

- ICN's Engineering Division is finalizing the implementation process and test plans.
- Major equipment components are currently located in

- All federal compliance reporting for last quarter have been completed and approved.
- IRUs (Indefeasible Rights of Use) for the dark fiber have been awarded and are in negotiations, as well as the DS-3 replacements.
- Tests will be conducted shortly to confirm estimated maintenance window timeframes are accurate. There are

currently 894 installs to be completed over the course of the two-year timeframe.

- ICN staff is preparing for a site visit from the NTIA (National Telecommunications Information Association) officials, which is tentatively scheduled for June 13-14.

To be proactive with possible service disruptions, a customer communication plan has been developed to include a general announcement, followed by two communiqués regarding the customer's specific site.

Our goal is to describe what the improvements to the Network will mean to your community.

Athletic Directors Find Alternate Use of ICN

Randy Krejci is the Principal at Harding Middle School in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He is also the Conference Commissioner of Athletic Directors for the Mississippi Valley Athletic Conference (MVC.) The Athletic Directors and coaches in the MVC have used ICN video-conferencing services for several years to conduct coach meetings. The meetings take place

periodically during the fall, winter and spring pre and post sport seasons.

Coaches use ICN services to discuss school sport related topics such as the selection of all-conference teams, business meetings as well as communication with the 14 schools in the conference.

Randy feels that using the ICN reduces the need to have the conference coaches travel since they

are located all over Iowa, and saves a considerable amount of time since driving is cut back significantly. The coaches and Athletic Directors who attend the meetings are involved in supervising several sports. The sessions normally include sites from Dubuque, Cedar Rapids, Iowa City and the Waterloo/Cedar Falls area. Randy said, "Using the ICN serves as an excellent means of communication."

**Message from
Dave Lingren,
ICN's Executive
Director**

One of the goals included in the ICN's current strategic plan is to ensure that lowans have access to essential broadband services through partnerships and sharing of resources with private sector companies. ICN has always relied on partnerships that have been created with various private sector companies to deliver services to authorized users. From FY 2001 to FY 2010, ICN paid over \$375 million for services and equipment to private sector providers, much of which would not have been available if the ICN did not exist.

ICN Completes First Part of Customer Survey

The ICN staff is in the process of surveying various groups of customer contacts regarding the satisfaction with the services and support provided by ICN staff. This year the process is being conducted in two separate steps. An initial survey was sent to various CEOs, superintendents, and directors to gain the authorized users' executive level decision maker's perception of the ICN verify the contact information for the persons in their staff that work directly with the

ICN. Following are some of the statistics gleaned from the survey.

Results regarding survey responses will be available on the ICN Website in the upcoming months.

- 2100 surveys were sent, 312 responses were received.
- 68.2 percent of the respondents were from K-12 Institutions.
- Over 80 percent of the respondents were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with ICN services.
- Over 68 percent indicated that the ICN

is an excellent or good value, with 12 percent saying that they didn't know if the ICN was a good value.

- Over 72 percent of the respondents were satisfied with ICN's overall service performance while 21 percent didn't know if they were satisfied or not.

An invitation to participate in four specialized surveys was sent on May 20, and the participation window will close June 3.



Finance Department Prepares for End of Year

Much preparation goes into closing a fiscal year (timeframe between July 1 – June 30), and nobody recognizes that better than the individuals in ICN's billing division of the Finance Department. With the close of the year on June 30, everyone will be in full-swing working with technical vendors and other telecommunication providers to close the books and tie up the loose ends on services such as dialable wide band, calling cards, and internal budgeted expenses as well as

special projects and tech labor charges.

ICN is unique from other state agencies, because we provide billable services to state agencies and authorized users. Since billing is required to continue throughout the year, to help ease the time pressure, ICN works with a "Period 13", which allows finance to bill out any projects or usage that has not already been previously billed out. This process is considered a "cleanup" of the current fiscal year. The Period 13 closing date for fiscal year

2011 ends on July 25.

During this same timeframe, the department will also ensure that accounting strings are verified from the Account Utility website so that they can be downloaded into the Netplus billing database for the new fiscal year starting July 1.

This allows for the billable service to be charged to the appropriate customer's child account.



Teaching Between Neighboring Districts

Required to pool teaching resources opened the opportunity for neighboring school districts to interact by using ICN's fiber-optic infrastructure. Brian Fessler, a Secondary Mathematics Instructor at Central Springs High School located in Manly, Iowa, has taught a variety of mathematics classes using the ICN since the 2004/2005 school year.

Central Springs High School used North Iowa Area Community College

to create courses for students and many classes have been offered using ICN's video conferencing service. "We have a goal to offer our students every opportunity possible. This means being creative in small rural schools," said Fessler.

Using the ICN was also an easy remedy to an obstacle when Nora Springs – Rock Falls entered a whole-grade sharing agreement with Central Springs. There

were eighth-grade students in need of Algebra II, so they turned to the ICN. Fessler stated, "The students adapt very well, they are generally shy during the first few classes, but very quickly adjust to speaking into the microphone. They seemed to learn quite effectively from the screen and camera."

ICN's video conferencing technology has allowed Fessler to create a teaching style of his own, and when he returned to his "regular" classroom he purchased an Elmo to obtain a similar presentation effect as if he was in a video site using the equipment.

"We have a goal to offer our students every opportunity possible. This means being creative in small rural schools"

The ICN, a state agency, is the country's premier fiber-optic Network, committed to continued enhancement of distance learning and providing lowans with convenient, equal access to education, government, and healthcare.

Employee Spotlight: Manila Bush

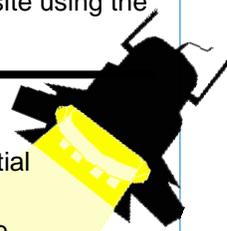
Manila Bush has been an Information Technology Specialist for ICN since January of 2007. She provides technical and administrative support to the Data Operations Group as well as the Video Field Technicians. She continually monitors the Request for Service System (RFS) and HP Service Desk applications for support requests, problems and work orders while assisting with prioritization and resolution of work requests. She tests video links to make sure they are compatible with ICN video connections.

Manila enjoys talking and interacting with customers. She works hard to identify and accomplish customer needs. This is sometimes difficult because some ICN customers reside overseas and operate in different time zones. Manila compliments her ICN team as they always pull together to help one another as well as ICN customers.

Manila has three older sisters, two younger brothers, seven nieces and six nephews. Her family gets together almost every weekend with Manila's parents. Manila enjoys movies, theater, and sports.

She loves martial arts and has a black belt. She loves to cook and bake for her husband, Dusty and her dog, Rusty. During the spring, summer, and fall months she likes working in her garden and watching the flowers grow. She enjoys exploring different ways to prepare dishes with the fruits and vegetables from her garden.

Manila has a birthday party for her dog every year and invites her nieces and nephews. Rusty always has his own special doggie cake that Manila bakes herself!



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Upcoming Video Session for Students and Educator through Iowa Public Television's Connections

Stories & More Series

Multiple sessions throughout the month of June
Audience: **Grades K-5**

Summer Stories & More sessions are correlated with the national summer reading program. The theme for 2011 is **One World, Many Stories**. Sessions consist of a story read aloud, a professional guest presenter, and an activity. Each week is a new topic and several opportunities to participate.

The Stories We Tell – Tuesday, June 7 and Thursday, June 9

Animals exist everywhere in the world, with people and without people, and they often become characters in the stories we tell. An educator from the Blank Park Zoo will be bringing a few friends from the zoo for us to learn about. We will discuss how each animal communicates in the wild.

Away We Go! – Tuesday, June 14 and Thursday, June 16

This week is all about traveling! Are any of you going to be traveling this summer? Where to? What if you could choose anywhere in the world you wanted to go? We'll talk about fun travel destinations and games that children play all over the world.

How We Live – Tuesday, June 21 and Thursday, June 23

Kids experience how other kids around the world live; how they go to school, how they travel, and the hats and shoes they wear. We'll also talk about activities from around the world, including tangram activities.

Registration Deadline – Check the events calendar for specific sessions.

For More Information about Upcoming K-12 Connections Contact:

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abby@iptv.org
www.k12connections.iptv.org

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