

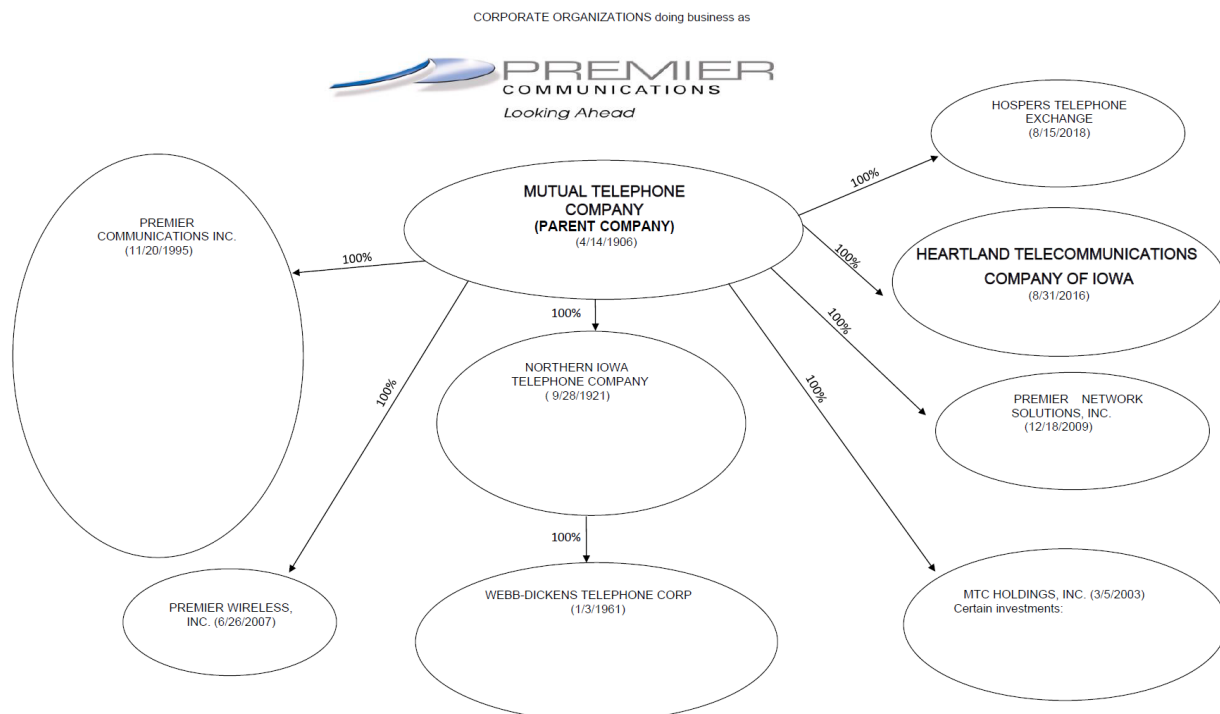
# Applicant Business Information

Project: Heartland-Akron & Hawarden (rural)

## History and Business Structure of Heartland Telecommunications Company of Iowa:

Heartland Telecommunications Company of Iowa ("Heartland"), a Minnesota corporation, was organized in 1995 when it purchased eleven Northwest Iowa properties from US West. Over the next 20 years this entity operated as Hickory Tech, then Enventis and ultimately after being purchased by Consolidated Communications changed its d/b/a to Consolidated Communications of Iowa. In these 20 years Heartland started as a voice and long-distance provider, eventually adding services such as Internet, dedicated transport, phone systems, among other services. On August 31, 2016 nine of the eleven Iowa exchanges in Northwest Iowa were purchased by Mutual Telephone Company of Sioux Center, Iowa ("Mutual") and the company's legal name again became Heartland Telecommunications Company of Iowa doing business as Premier Communications (Mutual was formed in 1906 and currently has roughly 21,000 customers at the holding company level). Today Heartland is a 100% subsidiary of Mutual. Since the purchase by Mutual, Heartland has been able to update its network in many areas and add services such as video, Ethernet, and managed Wi-Fi to its product mix.

## Organizational Chart:



Pending Litigation or Investigation:

Heartland does not have any pending litigation and is not currently under any investigations.

Prior Contract Default or Termination:

Heartland is not in default of any contracts and has not been noticed of any contract terminations due to a breach of contract.

Financial Capability:

Heartland, at the holding company level, is in a very strong financial position with an audited 2018 Operating EBITDA of over \$19,000,000 and a \$12,000,000 revolving line of credit with nothing borrowed against it as of 10/14/19 which indicates its ability to support the non-grant portion of the Project. In addition to a strong cash position, every year since Heartland was purchased by Mutual, Heartland has been included in the consolidated audit of Mutual and each year the auditor has issued a clean, consolidated audit report.

Executive Team Biographical/Professional Information:

See executive team resumes below.

# DOUG BOONE

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## EXPERIENCE

**APRIL, 2002 – CURRENT**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO), PREMIER COMMUNICATIONS**

- Responsible for the overall vision and direction of the company
- Interprets and implements board directed policies and coordinates business activities with direct reports
- Evaluates objectives and operating procedures and ensures the success of the organization within guidelines and authority established by the board
- Represents company on boards of affiliate investments of the company
- Evaluates new business growth opportunities and provides recommendations to the board
- Represents the company with federal and state legislative bodies, industry associations and regulatory agencies.

**JANUARY, 2015 - CURRENT**

**DIRECTOR, NTCA – THE RURAL BROADBAND ASSOCIATION (ARLINGTON, VA)**

- President - 2016

**MARCH, 2014 - CURRENT**

**DIRECTOR, AUREON (DES MOINES, IA)**

**JANUARY, 1990 – APRIL, 2002**

**ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER, PREMIER COMMUNICATIONS**

- Responsible for the day-to-day administration of all internal operations
- Established operating procedures and ensured the success of the enterprise within the prescribed responsibilities and authority of the position
- Participated in state association industry policy committees

**MAY, 1982 – JANUARY, 1990**

**OFFICE MANAGER, PREMIER COMMUNICATIONS**

- Supervised office and clerical staff
- Directed routine accounting, bookkeeping and customer service activities
- Served as the manager of customer service and the billing process
- Handled complex customer issues and complaints

## EDUCATION

**MAY, 1982**

**BA IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE (ORANGE CITY, IA)**

## **PROJECT RESPONSIBILITIES**

As CEO my primary responsibilities for this project are providing strategic vision, directing the allocation of financial and time resources and coordination with 3<sup>rd</sup> parties to ensure execution of our desired outcome.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

As the CEO of Premier Communications for the past 17 years, we have consistently delivered on the promise to provide exceptional services to the customers and the communities where we provide service. We have done this by annually investing millions of dollars in our network with advanced fiber infrastructure. As a member of NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association and an active member of the board of directors I understand the responsibility faced by rural companies to utilize scarce financial resources and turn that into effective investment to serve our customers with broadband.

I was also instrumental in the formation of FiberNet Communications L.C., FiberComm L.C., Northwest Communications Network, L.C. and Milford Communications, L.C. All of these entities were formed as partnerships and shows the willingness we have to work with others when moving forward alone is not practical. I view the Iowa Broadband Grant program as a partnership between the state of Iowa and the rural communications industry and look forward to utilizing my skill set to deliver on a successful partnership that will expand broadband access to hundreds of additional customers in NW Iowa.

# KENT WESTPHAL

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## EXPERIENCE

### OCTOBER 2002 – CURRENT

#### CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER (CFO), PREMIER COMMUNICATIONS

- Oversees budget process, audit functions, and all long-term investments
- Prepares financial forecasts, acquisition analysis and planning, develops financial policies and processes
- Analyzes financials and presents to CEO and/or board of directors
- Contributes to strategic planning and coordinates financing
- Administers payroll and benefit programs, risk analysis and insurance renewals
- Oversees the company safety and human resource programs
- Manages cash flow processes, tax computations and regulatory reporting
- Manages the finance and accounting functions for affiliate companies

### 16 ½ YEARS

#### CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT (CPA)

- McGladrey & Pullen LLP – 3 1/4 years (including audits of banks, retail, manufacturing and commercial companies)
- Hunzelman, Putzier, & Co – 6 ½ years (including audits of REC's, cities, counties, and attendance at several RUS and governmental accounting seminars and training programs)
- Williams & Company P.C. – 7 years (including audits of telecommunications companies, RUS and CoBank borrowers, cities, counties, colleges and school districts)

### 1 YEAR

#### CITY FINANCE DIRECTOR

- Managed accounting, budget, investments, and benefit programs for the municipality.

### 2 YEARS

#### COLLEGE CONTROLLER

- Managed accounting and financial operations of the college, including receipts and disbursements, accounting and financial record keeping and reporting, audit preparation and process, and administration of student account billing and loan programs

## EDUCATION

MAY 1982

**BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (BBA) WITH MAJOR IN ACCOUNTING,** THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA (IOWA CITY, IA)

Cum Laude

## PROJECT RESPONSIBILITIES

Since 2011 Premier Communications has invested over \$60,000,000 in fiber to the premise projects, not including 2019's projects which are budgeted at approximately \$9,000,000. My responsibilities for these past, current, and the future fiber to the premise projects are as follows:

- Prepares financial projections.
- Accounts for cash receipts and disbursements.
- Manages cash requirements and cash flows.
- Monitors project construction costs and contract retainage.
- Oversees accumulation, recording and reporting of project costs.
- Manages continuing property records and depreciation calculations.

## QUALIFICATIONS

I have been CFO at Premier Communications for the last 16 ½ years, and prior to that served as the CPA manager in charge of the company's independent audit. During this time in public accounting I attended annual continuing professional education courses in governmental and RUS accounting functions. My qualifications do not end with the oversight of Premier's day-to-day financial operations, but also include significant experience leading the financial, accounting and income tax aspects of 11 acquisitions and several start-up subsidiaries or affiliated partnerships. I have managed the financing and accounting for fiber builds each year since 2006. In addition to my own qualifications, I am surrounded by six other very qualified team members who round out the accounting department at Premier with an average tenure of over 18 years.

# RYAN BOONE

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## EXPERIENCE

**JANUARY, 2017 – CURRENT**

**CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER (COO), PREMIER COMMUNICATIONS**

- Provide overall strategy to the operations team which includes billing, customer service and outside plant operations
- Oversee compliance with federal and state regulations
- Develop team goals and establish key performance indicators to measure those goals

**DECEMBER, 2011 – CURRENT**

**DIRECTOR (CURRENTLY PRESIDENT), IOWA COMMUNICATIONS ALLIANCE (ICA)**

- Leading the effort to transform the association from a telephone focused association to a broadband association
- Developing the ICA Leadership Academy to help establish the next generation of leaders within the state of Iowa and the ICA

**MAY, 2011 – JANUARY, 2017**

**REGULATORY MANAGER, PREMIER COMMUNICATIONS**

- Oversaw all federal and state regulatory filings
- Analyzed regulatory impacts regarding potential acquisitions
- Ensured compliance with federal and state regulations
- Participated in state and national association industry policy committees

**JUNE, 2006 – MAY, 2011**

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT, KIESLING ASSOCIATES LLP**

- Managed multiple federal and state industry filings for over 100 telecommunications carriers in the Midwest
- Analyzed impacts of new regulations on telecommunications clients
- Assisted clients with Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP) applications
- Assisted companies in starting or expanding CLEC operations

## EDUCATION

**MAY, 2006**

**BA IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT (FINANCE), CENTRAL COLLEGE (PELLA, IA)**

Graduated with the following achievements: National Dean's list (2002-2006), Alpha Zeta Mu (2004-2006), Collegiate All-American Scholar (2005-2006) and Wall Street Journal Student Achievement Award awarded to top finance student in graduating class (2006).

## PROJECT RESPONSIBILITIES

Since 2017 when I became COO, Premier has invested almost \$25 million in fiber to the premise projects (including 2019 projects). My responsibilities for these past, current, and the future fiber to the premise projects are as follows:

- Oversee the site survey process we developed prior to construction beginning to ensure each property owner is fully aware of the upcoming project, the impact to their property, and to determine where the demarcation point will be at their location.
- Oversee the final step of converting customers from their existing copper facilities to the upgraded fiber network. This includes contacting the customer to set up an appointment for the installation, the home visit & installation itself, letting the customer know what services are now available to them, and ensuring we have adequate staffing to complete conversions in our established timeline.
- Act as the project manager for all aspects that include customer interaction and project completion to ensure we meet our internal goals & timelines for project completion.

## QUALIFICATIONS

My last 10 years of work experience uniquely qualify me to take on the above-listed project responsibilities for Premier's fiber to the premise project. As a consultant for Kiesling Associates I was put in the position to be involved and manage multiple grant applications at the same time requiring me to develop project management and coordination skills that are vital in a project such as our proposed fiber build. These clients depended on me, and others, to make sure their applications were complete, detailed, timely filed, AND successful. I'm pleased to say that they were all those things. Then starting my career at Premier Communications, I continued my high level of involvement in regulatory compliance which was a continuation of some of my main responsibilities at Kiesling. Both serving on the Iowa Communications Alliance (ICA) regulatory policy committee and board of directors (now serving a one-year term as board President) and also the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association (NTCA) industry policy committee for the past 7+ years has given me significant insight into both state and federal policy changes & impacts to the industry and uniquely qualified me to ensure Premier is in compliance with all the special requirements that the grant program requires of its successful applicants. Finally, in my role as Chief Operating Officer for Premier I have been able to pull together all of the qualifications listed above from my previous roles and help the rest of our very capable management team ensure our fiber to the premise projects are not only started on time, but also finished within the timeline we set out for ourselves while staying within the budget we laid out for the project. I am very confident that my prior work history, state & national association involvement, and skill set qualify me and Premier to successfully complete our proposed Iowa Broadband Grant project and bring broadband to hundreds of additional deserving customers in our proposed project area.



# FRANK BULK

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## EXPERIENCE

**JANUARY, 2017 – CURRENT**

**CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER (CTO), PREMIER COMMUNICATIONS**

- Provide technical leadership within the organization
- Lead network operations, helpdesk, and IT consulting teams
- Quote and support wholesale services
- Provide tier 2 and tier 3 Internet support
- Supervise helpdesk and IT consulting group
- Manage and support FiberNet Communications network
- Support Milford Communications network

**JANUARY, 2005 – JANUARY, 2017**

**TECHNOLOGY AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, PREMIER COMMUNICATIONS**

- Explored and investigated new products and services for use
- Quoted and supported wholesale services
- Provided tier 2 and Tier 3 Internet support
- Supervised helpdesk and IT consulting group
- Managed and supported FiberNet Communications network
- Supported Milford Communications network

**AUGUST, 2003 – JANUARY, 2005**

**TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANT, CENTER FOR EMERGING NETWORK TECHNOLOGIES**

- Met and discussed new products with wireless and mobile technology companies
- Researched, evaluated, and tested enterprise wireless equipment and software
- Contributed and co-wrote articles for Network Computing & Mobile Pipeline, highlights include:
  - VoWLAN product review
  - Distributed Wireless Security Management product review
  - Mobile Device Management product review
- Created and proctored course-related labs
- Assisted in teaching CWNA classes

**JUNE, 1999 – AUGUST, 2003**

**NETWORK ADMINISTRATOR, DORDT COLLEGE COMPUTER SERVICES**

- Supported and maintained 450+ node network including Win2K PC's and Macintoshes both for student labs and faculty and staff use
- Maintained networking equipment from 3COM desktop hubs to Cisco switches & routers, both at the core and edge
- Contacted and solved technical issues with vendors for quick resolution

- Managed student employees throughout the year
- Assisted with advanced Internet issues in relation to the college's ISP support contract
- Supported and maintained multiple Novell NetWare and Microsoft Windows servers
- Tested new technology tools and software for departmental and campus use
- Purchased and maintained software licenses for campus use

**JULY, 1997 – JUNE, 1999**

**SYSTEMS ANALYST, ARUBA DIGITAL SYSTEMS N.V.**

- Created and pursued software and hardware proposals/quotes for clients
- Researched, tested, and recommended new products for company retail store or client use
- Installed, supported and troubleshooted network servers such as Novell NetWare 3.1x - 4.x, SCO OpenServer Version V, and Windows NT Server 4.0
- Installed, supported, and troubleshooted clients running Windows as well as remote serial terminals
- Diagnosed hardware and software problems for various PC models brought in for repair or upgrade

## EDUCATION

**AUGUST, 2003 – DECEMBER, 2004**

**MASTERS OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND NETWORK MANAGEMENT STUDIES,**  
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY (SYRACUSE, NY)

GPA: 4.0 on 4.0 scale

**MAY, 1997**

**BA IN COMPUTER SCIENCE & MATHEMATICS,** DORDT UNIVERSITY (SIOUX  
CENTER, IA)

GPA: 3.72 on 4.0 scale

## PROJECT RESPONSIBILITIES

Since 2017 when I became CTO, Premier has invested almost \$25 million in fiber to the premise projects (including 2019 projects). My responsibilities for these past, current, and the future fiber to the premise projects are as follows:

- Analyze transport and access network needs
- Identify, source, and purchase products from vendors
- Supervise configuration and deployment of transport and access gear
- Provide level 2 and 3 support for networks and customers

## QUALIFICATIONS

Over the last 15 years I've supported Premier with all things technical as we grew both organically and through six acquisitions, such that over that time period the number of customers has more than doubled and the associated revenue has more than tripled. I stayed engaged with both current and

future technical topics avidly reading and listening to podcasts on a variety of data networking topics, such as IPv6. I also enjoy participating in multiple state telecom association groups, such as the Iowa Communication Alliance's Technical Training/Impact Committee, CyberSecurity Conference Committee, Catastrophic Planning/Dark Sky Working Group, and have chaired the first two. On a national level, I am part of the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association (NTCA)'s Technical Committee and CyberSecurity Working Group. I've also had the opportunity to present and participate in panels at many conferences and trade shows. I also follow ARIN and NANOG and have attended some of their meetings. Besides wearing my Premier Communications hat, I also manage and support the FiberNet Communications network, and recently added 200G of capacity for Internet traffic. I am confident that my work experience, state & national association involvement, and skill-set qualify me and Premier to successfully complete our proposed Iowa Broadband Grant project and bring broadband to hundreds of deserving customers in our proposed project area.

# SCOTT TE STROETE

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## EXPERIENCE

### JANUARY 2017-PRESENT

#### CHIEF SALES AND MARKETING OFFICER (CSMO), PREMIER COMMUNICATIONS

- Lead both residential and business sales and marketing teams
- Direct communication to all customers
- Develop new products and services

### DECEMBER 1996-JANUARY 2017

#### MARKETING AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS MANAGER, PREMIER COMMUNICATIONS

- Managed both residential and business marketing objectives
- Directed business sales
- Grew marketing and sales team from 2 to 7
- Crafted the brand and message to customer base
- Worked with local communities to attract new citizens and businesses

### DECEMBER 2014-PRESENT

#### SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER, SIOUX CENTER COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

- Part of a five-member board that oversees all functions of the district
- Led a successful \$10 million bond campaign for new elementary cafeteria and preschool
- Assisted in a successful \$24.9 million bond campaign for a new \$40 million high school

### JANUARY 1998-DECEMBER 2010

#### COUNCIL MEMBER, CITY COUNCIL OF SIOUX CENTER, IOWA

- Part of a five-member council that oversaw all local government
- Part of a five-member council that oversaw municipal utilities (water, sewer, electric and natural gas)
- Sioux Center grew from roughly 5,000 to 7,000 citizens
- Helped to develop indoor water park and ice arena, water treatment facility and the start of the Sioux County Regional Airport

## EDUCATION

### MAY, 1994

#### BACHELOR OF ARTS IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AND POLITICAL SCIENCE,

#### NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE (ORANGE CITY, IA)

- Participated in numerous campus leadership activities including Vice President of the Student Government
- As a senior was a candidate for the Iowa House of Representatives

## PROJECT RESPONSIBILITIES

As Premier Communications has grown and invested tens of millions of dollars in fiber to the premise projects, we have learned that communication with the customer is incredibly important. The responsibilities of my team include the following at various points during the FFTP project:

**Before:** Making sure the customer understands the benefit of what we are doing and why we are doing it. We also make sure the customer is well aware of the steps that will be taken. We describe every step of the process from site surveys to fiber completion.

**During:** Communicating with the customer as the project is progressing is a key objective. Letting them know the step we are currently on and making sure they fully understand its relationship to the timeline as a whole.

**After:** The project isn't complete when the fiber is in the ground or hooked up at the premise. It is complete when the customer understands the new and improved services that are now available to them.

Every customer will receive not only numerous mailings during the project but will also be visited by a Premier employee at least once. We will also conduct various "open house" opportunities before the project begins to allow customers to ask questions and address their concerns. It's always important to also include a similar opportunity at the end of the project so customers can learn about the new services available to them.

In the end we want the customer, no matter if they are a single residence or a large business, to feel at ease about the project and understand we are investing in their future. That is our first priority.

## QUALIFICATIONS

When considering the involvement I've had on the city council, school board and 23 years of work experience at Premier Communications, I feel that I have the qualifications to oversee the above project responsibilities. As both a council and school board member, I have had the opportunity to be a part of numerous multi-million dollar building projects. I believe I demonstrated the ability to not only understand these projects but also explain them to constituents in an easy to understand manner. In doing so, the constituents felt well informed and generally supportive of the various projects.

Over the last 2 ½ years, Premier Communications has invested roughly \$25 million in fiber projects very similar to the proposed project. As the Chief Sales and Marketing Officer I have overseen the communication for these projects with all customers. We have been diligent in providing easy to understand materials for the customer, whether that be in person, via mail, website or public forum.

I am confident that my experience on the city council and school board along with the work experience on previous fiber builds qualify me and the Premier team to successfully complete the proposed Iowa Broadband Grant project resulting in outstanding broadband service to hundreds of additional customers.

# LES SYBESMA

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## EXPERIENCE

**JANUARY, 2017 – CURRENT**

**CONSTRUCTION & OUTSIDE PLANT (OSP) MANAGER, PREMIER COMMUNICATIONS**

- Oversee all outside plant network construction
- Manage staking and mapping of outside plant
- Supervise building maintenance and fleet management
- Engineer greenfield and brownfield fiber networks
- Order construction materials and equipment
- Responsible for obtaining DOT, County and City permits
- Develop and maintain strategic relationships with city and county planning and zoning personnel
- Responsible for FCC filings

**APRIL, 2002 – JANUARY, 2017**

**NETWORK OPERATIONS MANAGER, PREMIER COMMUNICATIONS**

- Oversaw network and outside plant operations
- Managed field technicians
- Ordered equipment and supplies
- Oversaw and designed fiber optic plant
- Mapped and maintained CAD on outside plant
- Completed required FCC filings

**MAY, 1992 – APRIL, 2002**

**CABLE TV CHIEF HEADEND TECH/CONSTRUCTION TECH, PREMIER COMMUNICATIONS**

- Maintained and installed headend satellite equipment
- Oversaw outside plant construction projects
- Maintained buried cable TV plant
- Maintained buried telephone plant
- Located buried communications plant
- Completed required FCC filings

**FEBRUARY, 1979 – MAY, 1992**

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS TECH, PREMIER COMMUNICATIONS**

- Constructed buried communications plant
- Located buried communications plant
- Completed service orders and trouble tickets at customer premises
- Maintained cable TV plant

## EDUCATION

**MAY 1975**

**HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA**, WESTERN CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL (HULL, IA)

**FEBRUARY 1979 – CURRENT**

Various communication related classes and training:

- Fiber splicing training
- CAD training
- Network engineering & construction best practices

## PROJECT RESPONSIBILITIES

In 2006 Premier began its first fiber to the premise network overbuild and since that first project I have led the effort to engineer, design and construct over 2,500 miles of fiber to the premise projects (including estimated fiber-mile construction in 2019). My responsibilities for these past, current, and the future fiber to the premise projects are as follows:

- Oversee the design, staking and construction of the fiber optic plant
- Work with the engineer and contractor to ensure the fiber cable and equipment are placed to specification and within budget
- Oversee the fiber splicing to make sure the fiber plant is properly calibrated and tests return clean results
- As construction manager, I made sure all aspects of network construction were completed while meeting our internal goals and timelines

## QUALIFICATIONS

During my 40 years of work experience at Premier Communications, I have made sure the customer always comes first. In my role as Construction and OSP Manager for Premier, I have ensured our fiber to the premise projects are properly completed -- finished within the timeline we set for ourselves -- while also staying within the budget. I am very confident that my skill-set qualifies me and Premier to successfully construct hundreds of additional miles of fiber network and complete our proposed Iowa Broadband Grant project within the timeline and budget proposed in our application.