

Executive Summary

In 1941, the community of Osage, Iowa made the decision to start their own municipal electric utility. In 1962, the community added a municipal gas utility and in 1996 the telecommunication utility was established. Osage Municipal Utilities, (OMU), is one of the most unique utilities in the state of Iowa. OMU is one of only a few municipals who offer electric, gas and telecom services. Osage Municipal Utilities has also been a leader in energy conservation programs, has capabilities to generate 16,730 kW via generation equipment, owns and maintains a 1500kW wind turbine and a 792kW community solar farm.

The mission of Osage Municipal Utilities is to provide the community with affordable, reliable employees supported electric, gas and telecommunications now and for future generations. Osage Municipal Utilities has a strong position on the now and we are really focused on the future generation aspect of our business.

In our county we are witnessing the “have’s” and “have not’s” of connectivity. In the community of Osage, we are bandwidth rich as we recently built a 23-mile fiber trunk line from the Minnesota border to Osage. You travel a mere 4 miles north the little community of Mitchell and it is a different story. The residents in and around Mitchell are scrambling to find sources of connectivity.

Osage Municipal Utilities has a proven track record in telecommunications and has the resources to make this project a reality with the help of the USDA funding. When Osage Municipal Utilities built the 23-miles of fiber we were able to become bandwidth independent and control our own connectivity future.

In 2018 Osage Municipal Utilities was able to increase bandwidth rates to each customer in Osage without charging more. Our fiber build has saved our customers money and increased their speeds at the same time. This is how you develop rural communities- you make it about people over profits.

During the construction phase of Osage Municipal Utilities 23-mile fiber build, the Utility intentionally left the state highway right-of-way to bring a fiber vault to the community of Mitchell. This intentional detour was done with the hope that one day funding would become available to expand from that fiber vault to the homes of Mitchell community members.

As stated, Osage Municipal Utilities has been in the internet business since 1996. OMU’s telecommunications utility is debt free as of December 2018. All bonds have been paid off and our telecom department has been profitable for the last couple of years. Like any telecommunications company we have lost land line customers and witnessed the younger generation cord cutting. However, our internet customer numbers continue to grow.

One of our biggest assets as a telecommunications utility is that we are local. Osage Municipal Utilities does require customers to sign contracts and we there are no hidden fees. In addition to being local, Osage Municipal Utilities also has local technicians on call 24/7 who provide top rate customer service.