

## OMU Demonstrated Experience

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.

When Osage Municipal Utilities first started offering internet service in 1996, it was via dial-up service contracted via a 3<sup>rd</sup> party. In 2001 Osage Municipal Utilities installed a hybrid-fiber coax network to provide CATV, Telephone, and High-Speed internet services. The first speeds provided on this network were 256Kbps/128Kbps. Over the years as the result of hiring quality employees, and re-investing in the network consistent speed increases and service upgrades have been done. In the last 10 years our most base package has went from 5Mbps/512Kbps to 200Mbps/25Mbps while only seeing a \$5.00/month increase in cost to our customers. We now currently offer 500Mbps/50Mbps for \$99.95/month, 300Mbps/35Mbps for \$69.96/month, and 200Mbps/25Mbps for \$49.95/month.

In 2014 the decision was made to expand to a sub-division south of Osage. OMU made the decision to use the Calix FTTx platform to provide this service. OMU is also in 2021 completing a FTTx project in Mitchell, IA that was made possible by a combination of USDA and IowaCARES act grants. This new service will bring reliable high-speed internet access to the residents of Mitchell.

As our service footprint has grown, and our offerings increased, in 2017 OMU made the decision to install a fiber trunk line from Osage to the Minnesota boarder to meet up with another provider to increase our available bandwidth, while keeping costs low. OMU also has a connection to the OneNeck Data Center in Cedar Falls, Iowa, where they peer with Cedar Falls Utilities for geographically redundant data paths.

In 2020 the decision was made to discontinue CATV service to Osage. This decision was not an easy one and was discussed for several years. The driving factor was the ever-increasing cost of content contracts, as well as declining customers do to other streaming options. OMU felt that it would be better to invest more into making the broadband service more robust, rather than invest in what appears to be a dying service. At 11:59 12/31/2020, the CATV feed was pulled from OMU's network, this allowed for additional utilization of the network for broadband services. As a result, in 2021 OMU doubled customers download speeds with no additional costs to our customers.

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. OMU also has a knowledgeable staff, that allows the utility to maintain, repair, upgrade, and expand the network as needed. We have our own fiber splicers, network engineers, and technicians. This allows us to respond to issues and customer needs almost immediately in most cases. Having been providing internet service for 25 years, OMU has a proven track record in the broadband sector.

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.