

## Section 2.2.4 – Demonstrated Experience

Hawkeye Interconnect Company, LLC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Hawkeye Telephone Company (collectively referred to as HIC), and is based in Hawkeye, IA. HIC, established in 1913, has a long history of providing high quality wireline voice, wireless voice, Internet and video services to residents in Fayette County. HIC is and has always been committed to customer service and providing the latest communications services available to meet customer needs. HIC is a shareholder owned company and is managed by a board of five directors. A substantial number of shareholders live within HIC's service territory.

HIC currently employs a staff of five full-time employees and one part-time employee. HIC staff will utilize a wealth of knowledge to ensure the success of its proposed Rural Fayette 1 Gbps And Beyond Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) Expansion project. Staff directly involved with the proposed project will include two full-time customer service staff, three full-time trained FTTH technicians, and two senior key management employees. The senior managers include David Byers - GM and Craig Schmitt - Outside Plant Manager. HIC also has an existing management agreement in place with Northeast Iowa Telephone Company that provides additional experienced staff for the project; Steve Hanson - Director of Business Development, Charlie Roys – Outside Plant Manager, and Dave Lund – Network Manager. Combined, this management team has over 100 years of experience in building, operating and maintaining communications networks. When outside assistance is necessary, HIC has long-term relationships in place with numerous highly experienced telecommunications consultants and contractors, such as West Union Trenching, Mid-States Consulting Engineers, Olsen Thielen & Co., and John Staurulakis Inc.

The proposed FTTH network is designed as an Active Ethernet FTTH network. This means that the path from HIC's Central Office equipment to the customer is never shared – service is delivered to each location with one or more dedicated strands of Fiber. HIC has selected an access equipment vendor (Calix) that has a consistent history of upgrading their product offerings as technology develops. Because of these design characteristics, HIC will be able to easily upgrade the proposed network to offer speeds faster than 1 Gbps in the future. Should customers demand speeds of 10 Gbps or higher as technology is developed, the proposed network is designed such that the cable plant will support those needs and only the electronics will need to be upgraded.

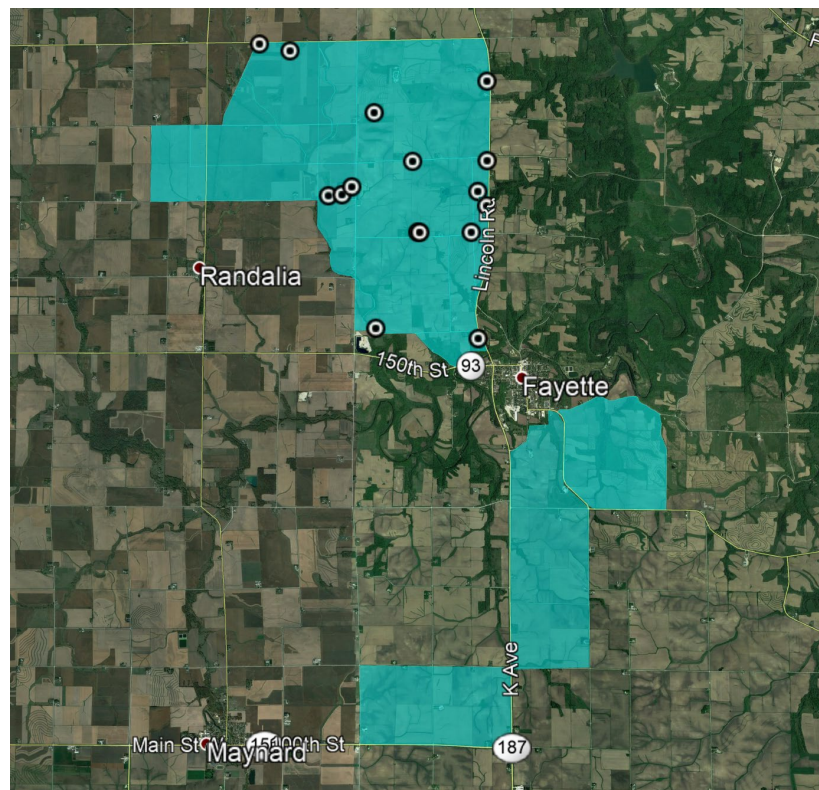
HIC constructed its first FTTH network in 2016, and since then has expanded its FTTH network to 100% of the locations within its ILEC exchange; Hawkeye (563-427). In addition to its ILEC territory, in 2019 HIC began expanding its network by adding CLEC FTTH service within the Cities of Arlington, Fayette, Lawler, Maynard, St. Lucas, Waucoma and Westgate. HIC is also nearing commencement of construction to serve 100% of locations within the city limits of West Union with FTTH. Every mile of HIC's wireline network in operation today is Fiber-to-the-Home. HIC provides Broadband service to approximately 800 subscribers via FTTH. In addition to its own FTTH networks, HIC is a partner of Community Digital Networks, which provides FTTH service within Sumner, IA.

HIC has a history of completing FTTH construction in advance of the deadlines required by funding support programs, including HIC's ILEC FTTH network which was Federally funded via ACAM-II. HIC has

also been a longtime partner of local anchor institutions. When possible, HIC provides free or discounted services to local Fire Departments, Libraries and other community service organizations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, HIC offered free Internet service for low-income families where service was available so their children could participate in remote learning efforts implemented by their schools.

The proposed Rural Fayette 1 Gbps And Beyond FTTH Expansion project fits very well from a design and geographic standpoint into HIC's existing FTTH network. HIC currently provides FTTH Broadband in areas adjacent to the project build area and is very familiar with the residents and businesses in the area. In preparation for NOFA #006, HIC performed a high-level demand study to measure interest in HIC expanding FTTH to locations in the proposed build area. The results of the survey were overwhelmingly positive. 41 survey letters were delivered to locations inside the proposed build area. A response rate of 43.9% was realized, and of those responses, 16 locations, or 89% of the responses indicated they would subscribe to HIC Fiber Broadband if HIC is successful in its grant application and extends FTTH to their locations. With a sample size of 18 locations (43.9% response rate) and a confidence level of 95%, HIC can expect that 89% of all locations in the population (entire build area) are interested in HIC FTTH Broadband, with +/- 18% margin of error.

To demonstrate the responses geographically, the positive Broadband responses are mapped below in white in relation to the proposed build area in blue/teal. The area south of Fayette shaded blue/teal is included in the proposed build area but was not included in the survey area. Hence, no responses are shown within that area:



Finally, aside from all of the experience, knowledge and dedication they bring to construction and operation of the proposed network expansion, HIC staff members live, work and play in the area that we serve, including the proposed build area. Our existing customers and prospective customers in this area are our neighbors, friends and family, and we are dedicated to bringing them the service they demand today and far into the future.