

**Demonstrated Experience - Indianola Municipal Utilities (IMU)**

## Application 525649

Indianola Municipal Utilities (IMU) is a publicly owned utility that has served the community for over a century. A five-member Board of Trustees, appointed by the mayor and approved by City Council, oversee the operations of IMU. Local representation and control are key to providing the citizens a voice in terms of community needs, policies, and decision-making. IMU is directly accountable to the people it serves and reflects hometown values and characteristics. IMU's workforce consists of mostly Indianola residents that take pride in serving the Indianola community.

There have been many changes over the years in the way of industry standards, technology, and equipment but the ability to provide customers with the most cost-effective, reliable service possible has remained consistent. IMU's mission is to provide its citizens with reliable and affordable services while providing high-quality customer service and experiences.

IMU began serving the community beginning with electric service in 1890 and by 2011, it had three substations operational. In 1905 it began providing the water supply from the South River, in 1997 the current water treatment facility was constructed and in 2003 a fourth deep water well was drilled.

In 1997, the municipally owned broadband communications utility was created. Following is a timeline of the enhancements to the project:

- 1998 - an independent fiber optic network is constructed
- 2002 – IMU contracts with a service provider to offer wireless Internet service
- 2006 – a fiber to the premise partnership is formed
- 2010 – residential fiber build-out begins – approximately 25% of community is built out
- 2012 – first residential triple-play service activated
- 2015 – a feasibility study is conducted to bring fiber to the rest of Indianola
- 2017 – construction of fiber extension begins
- 2018 – IMU Fiber services available
- 2021 – IMU Fiber connected customer number 2,745, reaching its 5-year customer goal 22 months early
- 2023 – IMU Fiber is Indianola's largest ISP with over 3,900 customers

IMU fiber delivers an excellent broadband experience to Indianola homes and businesses. Utilizing a future-proof fiber network platform, IMU provides unmatched reliability to customers. Customers have access to state-of-the-art services that include speeds up to one Gigabit.

*Economic Development* - IMU participates in economic development under the guidelines of the Iowa Code that allow the contribution of public grants, loans, guarantees, tax incentives, and other financial assistance for the benefit of private persons. Programs available include economic development incentives, in-kind donations, and revolving loan funds. For additional information, please visit <https://www.indianola.com>.

## Key Employees

Kurt Ripperger, Communications Superintendent, 515-962-5283 [kripperger@indianolaiowa.gov](mailto:kripperger@indianolaiowa.gov)

Kurt is the Communications Superintendent for IMU. Indianola is a town of approximately 16,000 residents where Kurt helped manage the local utility launch of Fiber-to-the Home services in 2017. After a year of installing outside plant across Indianola, the utility began connecting homes and businesses in the fall of 2018 and now provides service to over 3,900 customers. Kurt manages the day-to-day operations of the utility and oversees a staff of six highly dedicated coworkers.

Christopher DesPlanques, 515-961-9444, [CDesPlanques@indianolaiowa.gov](mailto:CDesPlanques@indianolaiowa.gov)

Chris is the General Manager of IMU and oversees the electric, communications and water utilities. He was promoted to G.M. in September of 2019. Prior to this Chris was the Director of Finance for the City of Indianola from 2013. Chris graduated from the University of Iowa with an MBA and has a BA from William Penn University.

Chris Longer, 515-962-5302, [clonger@indianolaiowa.gov](mailto:clonger@indianolaiowa.gov)

Chris is the Finance and Human Resources Director at Indianola Municipal Utilities. Chris is responsible for heading the utility's annual budget and financial audit process, annual reporting to federal, state, and other regulatory authorities, coordinating the hiring of IMU employees and assisting the General Manager in developing the utility's policies and procedures.

At Simpson College in Indianola, Chris majored in business management and marketing which served her well in her many roles with IMU. She started her career in public service with the City of Indianola in 1992 as a utility billing clerk. In 2002 Chris became the Administrative Assistant to the General Manager of Utilities. In addition to these roles, Chris has overseen IMU's demand side management programs, coordinated IMU's safety program, worked in accounts payable, and has served as Utility Services Supervisor and Interim General Manager.