



Linn County NEWS



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Linn County speeds up messaging with fiber optics

By Alex Paul

Communications Officer

ALBANY — Vendors at the upcoming Linn County Fair in July will see a marked improvement in their Internet service, due to the installation of high-speed fiber optics.

Linn County partnered with LS Networks to install fiber optic cable from the courthouse servers to the fairgrounds, according to IT Director Steve Braaten.

“We have had a problem with Internet speed at the Fair & Expo Center for years,” Braaten said. “It really came to light when the county set up a temporary fire evacuation center there in 2020 and when we used the fairgrounds for our COVID-19 vaccination clinics.”

The new system is 100 times faster than the current system, Braaten said.

“This project would have been terribly expensive, really almost impossible, if we hadn’t been able to partner with LS Networks, which already has fiber optic lines set up in the city,” Braaten said.

The project was completed in late April and cost about \$20,000 plus \$500 per month.

“This will make videoconference, such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams, so much better,” Braaten said.

Braaten said the line is secure and dedicated to Linn County traffic only.

“No one else can listen in, or communicate on, this line,” he said.



“High-speed Internet will mean that our clients will be able to do business much more efficiently,” Fair & Expo Center Director Randy Porter said.

He said the annual Christmas Bazaar is an example.

“It was really tough for folks to make multiple transactions at once, but with fiber optics, that won’t be a problem,” Porter said. “It will benefit our stay daily, but it will really be noticeable and useful for our customers and their events.”

The Fair & Expo Center project is one of several fiber optic upgrades undertaken by Linn County in recent years.

In late June, the Willamette Health Center will upgrade to fiber optics and the Health Department will change over later this year, Braaten said.

“We already worked with Peak Internet to set up fiber optics at the

Lebanon Health Center and the Juvenile Detention Center.

“This is something that has taken a lot of time, in part due to the pandemic, restrictions on the supply chain and labor shortages,” Braaten said. “It’s been a complete team effort by the IT department folks. It’s been a major feat to get here.”

Why is fiber optics so fast?

Information is transported by light carried over thin glass or plastic fibers, that is not “vulnerable to electromagnetic frequencies” according to LS Networks.

Traditional communication lines — made of copper wire — can be affected by high-power electrical lines and lightning.

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