Fiber getting ready for growth to Fremont

JENNIFER DECKER - *jdecker@kpcnews.net* | **Posted: Wednesday, August 18, 2010 12:00 am**

FREMONT— Bill Geiger's goal for the last five years has been to get fiber optic cable to reach all of Steuben County that's reliable, affordable, and secure.

He's continuing to make that goal a reality.

The Fremont Town Council approved spending $2,000 at Tuesday's meeting to have Geiger, project manager of Indiana Metropolitan Area Network and owner of Clear Lake Electric, remove three poles that are on school property and remove one electrical meter at a street barn. The move will save Fremont money.

Town Manager Chris Snyder said one pole is located in the middle of a school playground.

The council also approved the use of the right-of-way along Feather Valley Road, the truck route, for more fiber optic cable installation.

Geiger said next up in Fremont is the installation of fiber to the water tower. Also, IMAN is working on connecting to the north emergency medical service station on S.R. 120 at Country Meadows Golf Course.

Another IMAN goal is to eventually connect the city of Angola, which already has the fiber optic cable installed, to the town of Fremont. IMAN has been given $200,000 to make that happen. It is requesting $2 million from the rest of Steuben County to continue to stretch the fiber further.

"I'm responsible for community fiber and to allow connections locally and make connections more cost effective," Geiger said. "You can't live without it."

The fiber optic cable installation throughout Steuben County is grant funded through the Steuben County Community Foundation. Geiger said it costs $40,000-$50,000 per mile to install the fiber. "We do not build fiber unless we have funding," he said.

In Angola, the IMAN?fiber network connects to city of Angola facilities, Cameron Memorial Community Hospital and other medical care providers and the Metropolitan School District of Steuben County. Steuben County government is in the process of getting on to

the network.

"It provides a backbone … to get data," he said. "There's more services and multiple modes of communication. The network provides connection and connects all the schools.

"The big win is the return on investment is 65 percent comes back to community endowment buckets. It's a community investment opportunity."

As an example, Geiger said 160 customers using the fiber could potentially generate a return of $425,000 a year.

"Every community stands on its own. We need to collaborate," he said. "IMAN allows for multiple providers. We don't manage the data. It's open to be leased."