

Steuben making progress

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Activity that has taken place in our community of late shows that we are not content with the status quo.

This week, the Steuben County Council approved funding the Indiana Metropolitan Area Network fiber optic program that's run under the umbrella of the Steuben County Community Foundation.

Ironically, the name of iMAN includes metropolitan. We say it is ironic because only in metropolitan areas are we seeing the expansion of broadband capabilities like that which will be provided by iMAN. This fiber optic network will allow high speed communications in a rural setting.

This is the sort of thing that often only occurs when business is behind a push to launch technology — in order to make money.

In Steuben County, we will have this network in place in the coming 18 months and it should serve to attract business. Industry in many fields, particularly high tech, need — no, demand — high speed communication. To date, this has only been available in the immediate Angola area.

Having this network in place in all of our communities and many points in between should be an incentive for business to start here and to grow here.

“This is going to put us on the map as far as economic development,” said Steuben County Councilwoman Sara Tubergen.

So true.

Couple this with the downtown Angola revitalization project and you have two very bold statements.

Angola might be torn up, right now and in the coming weeks, but just look at the sidewalk project that was done around the Public Square this summer for evidence of what's to come.

The beautiful plantings that are part of the Public Square project are going to expand through the planted medians that will adorn the approaches to the Square and along six blocks of West Maumee Street.

The downtown work will last for decades, but in the near future this project shows that this community is willing to invest in its future.

All too often municipal government has to deal mainly with infrastructure, like water, sewers, storm drains and streets. Throw in the necessary services of fire and police protection and often tax dollars are tapped. The downtown project required little tax money — much of the work is being done by grant money and private donations. However, it took forward-thinking and much hard work from an administrative standpoint.

As one city official put it, this work shows we are a city on the move.

This can be said of all of our communities. When you look at the work being done in Orland, the work that has been done in Hamilton, the work that is on the drawing board in Fremont, you see a community that cares about not only its infrastructure backbone, but its aesthetics.

We have much to be proud of in Steuben County. We have a wonderful outdoor playground in our lakes and parks and nature preserves. Now we're adding a much needed infrastructure project in iMAN and we putting on our best Sunday duds in our towns through beautification projects.

Things are looking good, Steuben County.

And we might finally be able to say, if you build it, they will come.