

## Fiber optics project being rebid

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ANGOLA — The Steuben County fiber optics project was put out for bid but they were rejected Monday by the Steuben County Commissioners.

That's because there weren't any solid bid specifications to follow.

The project was funded for up to \$2 million by the commissioners and Steuben County Council last year. Major Moves money will pay for the project, which will extend fiber optics to all Steuben County communities. The project is being managed by Indiana Metropolitan Area Network, which is an arm of the Steuben County Community Foundation.

"They were bid without specs," county attorney Don Stuckey said, "because I did not have authorization to spend the \$5,000 or so necessary to have the specs prepared."

"We could not see how you could, honestly, apples to apples, bid this project," said one of the bidders, Robert White with Direct Line Communications.

Commissioners are now going to ask for proposals from companies to create specifications for the mapping and construction of the project. Once that is done, the project will be put out for bid again.

Bill Geiger of iMAN said a company he owns could put together the specifications and it would not be a conflict of interest because he would not be bidding on the project.

Sharon Stroh of iMAN said part of the bid specifications should include the fact that fees collected by iMAN for fiber service would be returned to the Steuben Foundation and the community funds from which the fees originate.