

Bids taken for iMAN fiber project

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ANGOLA — Bids for the Indiana Metropolitan Area Network fiber optics system came in about where the project manager expected.

The

bids for the project ranged from just above \$1 million to about \$1.36

million. The bids were opened Monday and turned over to project manager

Bill Geiger.

“They’re right in the hunt. I’m happy,” Geiger said.

The

bids, which were taken under advisement, are part of a \$2 million-plus

project to run fiber optic cable basically from its main hub Angola to

all municipalities in the county. It will be up to each town to then

extend the system within its boundaries. The project received approval

last year by both the Steuben County Commissioners and the Steuben

County Council.

The project works through iMAN, which is an arm of

the Steuben County Community Foundation. Fees paid for access to the

system are returned to the foundation, which then can make grants for a

variety of projects.

Steuben County government approved \$2 million for the project. Officials with iMAN had originally requested about \$2.3 million. iMAN officials have been working to raise the additional capital through other governmental agencies and grants.

The system has been running in Angola for a decade and has recently been extended to Fremont. In Angola, the system serves Angola government, medical facilities, schools and some businesses.

In the downtown area, most of the fiber has been run underground. As it leaves the community, it is run along Northern Indiana Public Service Co. poles. When it is all said and done, Geiger has said, about 10 percent of the fiber will be underground.

The project will provide fiber optic broadband technology for every community in the county. Currently the system is only in place in Angola and Fremont.

Originally it was hoped to have the project started earlier in the year.

The iMAN fiber network system was developed by efforts of the Community Foundation because there was a need for high-speed broadband yet private

business was not about to invest in such a project with a limited possibility for profitability.