

## Owners/Last-Mile Broadband Providers



## About the Alabama Fiber Network

### Fiber Lease Partner/Owner



### Fiber Lease Partner



- Doing Business As (DBA) name of the corporate Fiber Utility Network Inc. — will establish crucial middle-mile very high speed fiber optic connection points throughout rural and urban parts of Alabama, enabling the rollout of Governor Kay Ivey's 'Be Linked' broadband initiative across the state.
- With a plan to reach all of Alabama's 67 counties, over 5,000 miles of new and existing fiber lines; the state will be more connected than ever before.
- AFN is owned by electric co-ops that have contributed fiber. In addition, other partners have leased dark fiber strands and contributed engineering and planning resources.
- These entities have collaborated to create a robust and scalable middle-mile network that will serve last-mile broadband providers and other large-scale broadband users (Government, Education, Healthcare, Public Safety, Large Businesses).
- AFN will extend overall operational/upstream broadband capabilities through its fiber assets.
- AFN's use of mostly existing fiber will allow a significant part of the network to be ready for customers in Summer 2024 — avoiding the extensive time it takes to construct a new fiber network. This also will allow a majority of the network to be customer ready by February 2025.

## How is AFN funded?

- In July 2021, Gov. Kay Ivey signed the Connect Alabama Act into law, creating a formal structure to drive broadband expansion throughout the state. In 2022, the State of Alabama allocated \$85 million of ARPA funds for the creation of a statewide middle mile network. AFN was awarded a competitive grant of \$82.4 million in September 2022 from this funding source.
- In February 2024, Governor Ivey announced an additional \$128.8 million in funding to extend AFN's network by 1,776 miles. The award will fund five middle-mile projects connecting 438 anchor institutions in Bibb, Butler, Chilton, Choctaw, Conecuh, Dale, Dallas, Geneva, Greene, Hale, Henry, Houston, Jefferson, Lowndes, Marengo, Monroe, Perry, Pickens, Sumter, Tuscaloosa, and Wilcox counties.
- Funds to establish the AFN were received through Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) with US Treasury State Fiscal Recovery Funds.

## What will AFN do?

- Without middle-mile connectivity, last-mile providers — such as member co-ops, cable and telecoms companies — ultimately could not bring broadband service to rural or unserved Alabama businesses and individuals.
- AFN middle-mile interconnection points will be designated physical facilities that house interconnecting fiber pathways, which will allow an enormous amount of broadband traffic to be shared among various last-mile service providers and select community anchor institution customers.

## Why does middle-mile matter?

- **EDUCATION:** Alabama Fiber Network's innovative middle-mile network backbone will enhance high-speed internet capacity needs in communities large and small. Remote learners of all ages will have access fast, reliable internet — equalizing educational opportunities and creating more dynamic learning environments.
- **HEALTHCARE:** With better broadband connectivity will come better opportunity and capabilities for remote healthcare consulting. The delivery of healthcare services remotely through telehealth will offer enormous potential to improve access to care in rural communities.
- **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** Private companies in all business sectors and governments today rely on fiber infrastructure to connect their workforce regardless of their location; monitor their supply chain; integrate all their facilities onto a common, secure backbone network and to expand their markets. AFN is the first and only expansive, open access fiber network in Alabama capable of meeting the needs of these entities now and into the future.