

# Local Investors Form Fiber Company to Improve Broadband Service in Imperial

After working on a committee to improve broadband service in Imperial, a group of local business people—Ben Brophy, Bill Brophy, Russ Pankonin and John Paisley—pooled their resources and know how to form a new fiber network company, Gigabit LLC.

## Gigabit Contracts with Provider to Manage Network

Gigabit contracted with Allo to build and manage the aerial fiber network. Allo provides internet, TV and phone services over the network. Construction started in November 2019 and Allo began offering service in March 2020.



Imperial crowd. Photo courtesy of City of Imperial.

## City Streamlines Permitting and Rights of Way

The City of Imperial also worked with Allo to streamline permitting and rights of way.

## No Interest Loan Helps Finance Construction

A \$700,000 no interest loan from the city's LB480 fund helped finance the fiber-to-the-home network. "Gigabit approached the City with a proposal to provide fiber to the home and asked for an LB 840 loan, which was approved by our Citizens Advisory Committee and City Council to help the project," said Tyler Pribbeno, community development director for the City of Imperial.

## Imperial

### Nebraska

**Model:** Local investors form fiber company, contract with telecommunications provider to build and manage network

**Champions & Key Supporters:** Local investors and City of Imperial

**Funding:** \$700,000 no interest loan from LB 840 funds and private investment

### Key Takeaways

Local investors formed a fiber company and then contracted with a telecommunications provider to build and manage the network.

No interest loan from the City of Imperial's LB 840 fund helped finance construction.

Gigabit contracted with Allo to construct and manage the network.

City of Imperial streamlined permitting and rights of way.

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Link: [Allo's City Checklist](#)

## Improved Competition

“The competition has been great, other providers in the area have increased their offerings to the community,” said Pribbeno. “So competition is a blessing in that regard. It lifts up the quality of service or everybody.”



A crowd gathers in Imperial, Nebraska. Photo courtesy of City of Imperial.

### Aerial vs. Buried Fiber

While many telecommunications carriers—especially incumbent local exchange carriers—prefer buried fiber—Allo tries to build as much aerial fiber as they can on existing poles. This keeps costs down and allows for a faster buildout.

“There are arguments on both sides,” said Dwight “Doc” Winger, director of external relations for Allo. “A lot of the traditional telephone folks say that with ice and wind they want the facilities buried. But I can tell you our experience has been that we have had a lot more problems with our buried facilities than we have with our aerial facilities as far as service disruptions go.”

### Who owns the poles in your community?

In communities in Windstream’s territory, pole ownership is shared by Windstream and the municipality or public power district. This can lead to delays in getting pole attachments approved. If the delay becomes unreasonable, a municipality may file an eminent domain suit to get ownership of the poles.