

CTTC Brings High-Speed Internet to Goldthwaite

Bringing high-speed internet to those who will benefit from it most, Central Texas Telephone Cooperative has connected 72 Goldthwaite businesses to its fiber optic network.

Wireless internet has long been the best solution for rural communities spread over wide distances. But wireless is not as fast as other delivery methods such as DSL or the current pinnacle technology, fiber. Wireless is definitely better than dial-up, but who even remembers those days?

Most CTTC wireless customers in Goldthwaite are on the 2-4 megabit (Mbps) plans. The fiber internet now running in Goldthwaite is hauling at 100 Mbps. If you've ever stared at Netflix or YouTube videos buffering over and over again, you know what a difference this makes. What used to take hours to upload or download now takes minutes.

For residents, this kind of broadband internet enables all the lifestyle, entertainment, and educational opportunities the world wide web has to offer.

For businesses, and for the local economy, the impact is much, much bigger.

"Upgrading the internet infrastructure in Goldthwaite is very important for the future," CTTC General Manager Jamey Wigley stated. "We're proud of what fiber internet brings to the table for everybody here."

Wigley said faster internet enables greater productivity for internet-reliant local businesses. It also

paves the way for new business opportunities here in Goldthwaite.

"You could absolutely start a tech company here now," Wigley said. "Fiber internet is a way of promoting economic development. A lot of people are moving into our area who do amazing things from their homes instead of living every day in the big city. Goldthwaite has a lot going for it and we want to do all we can to add value, to add infrastructure that's important to this whole area. It's not just about what the co-op is doing, it's about what the community is doing."

The benefits of fiber are already being felt.

"Take the pharmacy and the clinic for example," Amanda Wood, Business Development and Marketing Manager for CTTC, stated. "When Dr. Rudolph would send an e-script to McMahan's, it could take as long as 20 minutes before they received it. Now it will take a matter of seconds. When you're sick, the last thing anyone wants to do is wait around for their medication."

In the near future, local clinics will be able to visit with clients over tablets and smartphones without having to come in for an office visit, thanks to technology enabled by fiber internet speeds.

Across their 3,200-square-mile service area, CTTC has connected 1,500 homes and businesses to their fiber network.

"In one year, we've come a long way," Wigley said. "It will take us several years to get the whole network built in the co-op area. Most

people don't realize how big our service area is. We provide service in 12 counties, stretching from Evant to within just a few miles of San Angelo."

Wigley said the co-op has put in about 1,400 miles of fiber so far, with a goal of around 4,500 across their service area. In Goldthwaite, the businesses are the first phase of fiber construction and CTC will be evaluating getting fiber expanded to residential customers as well. Wigley stated the reason Goldthwaite is being done different is because it is not in the co-op service area and falls under a different business model.

The co-op has used fiber in its network since the late 1980s, which provided the backbone for its long distance service. The data ring to serve its customers is now capable of 100 Gbps.

"People can't imagine what 100 Gbps is, but we have a lot of capacity to serve the needs and demands of our customers well into the future," Wigley said.

For the first 30 days, all the fiber-connected businesses in Goldthwaite will get a taste of the 100 Mbps internet plan. After that they can choose which plan will best serve their needs.

"People have forgotten what dial-up is like," Wigley said. "The difference in going from 2-4 meg to fiber, I'd nearly compare it to dial-up."

In the early days of the co-op, the founders built a telephone network to serve these rural areas where no

other company would.

"The co-op built a network with open wire strung on poles that provided party line service. Years later, that was rebuilt with copper wire to get rid of open aerial wire and provide single party service," Wigley said. "Where we are now, this is the third generation of the co-op as we work on replacing all the cable put in place in the late 70's and early 80's. People still think we're just a telephone company. We're not just a telephone company anymore, we're a technology company."

"We've got a good group. I'm excited about what we are doing and proud of the people we have that make it all happen," Wigley said.

CTTC is a non-profit cooperative that invests its profits back into facilities to serve its members. The co-op provides approximately 70 jobs in the area.

"We are a member-owned co-op. The big difference is that we turn around and make investments back into our services, not into somebody's pocket. The big companies have shareholders to make happy. It's a tough situation and I don't envy them, trying to satisfy shareholders and invest back into their service. All of our money is invested in providing service to our customers. That's why we were started."

The limits of fiber won't be reached anytime soon, Wigley said.

"Fiber is a long-term technology," Wigley said. "The only limit is your imagination."

For more information, visit www.centex.net or call 325-648-2237.

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The future of Internet service is right here, right now. Fiber technology is by far the best way to deliver the fastest, most reliable Internet service to our customers. And, we continue to expand our fiber-to-the-home network to residents and businesses all across our service area. Central Texas Telephone Cooperative, Inc., remains dedicated to providing state-of-the-art technology in order to keep Central Texans in the forefront of the communication industry. We have a firm grasp on what fiber technology holds for the future of Internet and we're busy bringing it to our customers right now.



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