

For Immediate Release
February 20, 2018

Contact: Rita Alexander,
VP of HR and Member Services
Phone: 731-562-1210
ralexander@gibsonemc.com

NEWS RELEASE

GIBSON CONNECT TO BEGIN FIBER BUILDOUT Phase 1 Includes Medina, Dyer, Three Way, and Grant Zones

TRENTON, Tenn.— Gibson Electric Membership Corporation and its not-for-profit subsidiary, Gibson Connect, LLC, announced today that the companies will begin the buildout of high-speed fiber in Medina, Dyer, and Three Way, as well as in the area covered by the Tennessee broadband grant awarded for most of Lake County and the far northwestern part of Obion County.

“Last night our Gibson Connect and Gibson EMC boards approved a resolution to design, engineer and build fiber in these areas,” said Dan Rodamaker, President and CEO of both companies. “This is an exciting time for our members,” he said. “Gaining access to high-speed, fiber-based internet service will have a profoundly positive impact on the quality of our member-owners’ lives,” Rodamaker said.

Gibson EMC’s board of trustees formed Gibson Connect in 2017 after passage of the Tennessee Broadband Accessibility Act which allowed the state’s rural electric cooperatives to provide retail broadband service. Then in mid-October Gibson Connect launched a website enabling members to register for service and guide the fiber buildout. Medina was the first of 27 zones throughout Gibson EMC’s 12-county service area to reach its participation goal. Dyer reached its goal next and Three Way is now at 96% with only 9 registrations to go. The decision was made to move forward with Three Way since it was clear that zone would meet its participation goal within days. Also, because both Medina and Three Way are served from the same substation, it is more efficient and cost-effective to move forward with both zones simultaneously. The grant, which covers underserved areas of Lake County and the far northwestern part of Obion County, will enable Gibson Connect to build out the Tiptonville, Ridgely and Samburg zones.

“Our goal is to ultimately provide access to high-speed, fiber-based service to all of our members,” Rodamaker said, “but we must use a phased approach. Phase 1 will require us to design, engineer and construct over 500 miles of fiber,” he said. “We expect that it could take a year or so to complete Phase 1. Those members who are nearest to substations will receive service first; and as we build and pass members’ homes or businesses, we can serve those locations too,” Rodamaker explained.

In addition to high-speed, fiber-based internet service, Gibson Connect will offer telephone service. And, based on member interest, Gibson Connect will offer a television/video option although that offering has not yet been finalized. Members can learn all about Gibson Connect, view the offerings, check their zone’s progress and register at join.gibsonconnect.com. Members also can call 844-859-6767 to get more information and register.

“Our members have been encouraging us for years to provide access to high-speed internet service,” Rodamaker said. “We appreciate Governor Haslam and all of our legislators who took the steps needed to enable us to provide this essential service,” he said. “I also appreciate our board of trustees; they are a progressive group who sincerely desire to meet our members’ needs,” continued Rodamaker. “Most importantly, we appreciate the support of our members. Because of their confidence and trust as demonstrated through registrations supporting the fiber buildout, we will enhance the quality of life for our members and our communities.”

Gibson EMC is a local, not-for-profit, member-owned and member-controlled cooperative serving almost 39,000 homes and businesses in eight west Tennessee counties (Crockett, Dyer, Gibson, Haywood, Lake, Lauderdale, Obion and Madison) and four west Kentucky counties (Carlisle, Fulton, Graves and Hickman).

###