

## **SOUTHWESTERN POWER ADMINISTRATION PRESS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Fiber Optics Feasibility Assessment**

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### **Fiber Optics Feasibility Assessment**

Tulsa, OK – Southwestern Power Administration (Southwestern or SWPA), in conjunction with the Department of Energy’s Office of Electricity (OE) and Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), announces publication of the report, [\*Fiber Optics Feasibility Assessment: Western Area Power Administration and Southwestern Power Administration.\*](#)

The report is part of the American Broadband Initiative (ABI), which was launched in February 2019 as part of a national strategy to drive changes across Federal agencies to identify and remove barriers to broadband access and leverage public assets and resources to expand the Nation’s broadband infrastructure capacity.

Under ABI, Federal agencies recognize that Federally-owned assets could potentially be made available to lower the cost of broadband buildouts and encourage private-sector companies to expand telecommunications infrastructure to rural America.

Southwestern and WAPA were asked to conduct feasibility studies to support these initiatives, and the results are being made available to the public in the *Fiber Optics Feasibility Assessment*.

“We’ve identified approximately 100 miles of available fiber that may be marketable on Southwestern’s system,” says Southwestern Administrator Mike Wech.

Wech explains that, in implementing the ABI, Southwestern would act as a bulk fiber provider only, and the broadband provider would be responsible for building the infrastructure needed to connect to Southwestern’s existing system and also provide final delivery to its ultimate destination.

“We support the Administration and Department’s effort to build out the Nation’s infrastructure to improve broadband access,” he says, “but we also want to make sure any costs associated with the build out are assigned to the beneficiary.”

Wech goes on to assure Southwestern’s customers that the fiber identified as marketable in the assessment is not the result of an “overbuild” of Southwestern’s system. He says that when Southwestern designs and installs fiber for the various needs of bulk power system, the expectation is that the unused fiber will one day be needed as technology advancements occur.

Wech says there are still a lot of details to be worked out, but that the release of the Fiber Optics Feasibility Assessment is the first step in letting the public know of Southwestern’s availability under the joint initiative with OE and WAPA.

“We look forward to our continued work with OE and WAPA to try and find innovative ways to bring broadband to rural and underserved areas.”

The Fiber Optics Feasibility Assessment document is available on OE’s web site at:

<https://www.energy.gov/oe/downloads/fiber-optics-feasibility-assessment>