

NEWS REPORT

GCISD, city invest in bandwidth

\$5 million fiber-optic system to improve connectivity

By Sherelle Black

The city of Grapevine and Grapevine-Colleyville ISD are partnering to enhance Internet and local network connectivity for both entities by investing in a more than \$5 million fiber-optic cable system.

The 57-mile-long system will save the district at least \$200,000 per year and increase the district's bandwidth from 1 gigabit to a minimum of 10GB. As part of the agreement, the city of Grapevine will serve as the contractor.

"The main reason we are doing this is because it makes sense for our taxpayers and because it will significantly decrease costs in the long run," said GCISD Superintendent Robin Ryan. "It will also significantly increase availability of resources, and that, to me, is a great equation and a great opportunity."

Grapevine City Council approved an interlocal agreement for the system June 2, almost a year after the city began investigating ways to improve high-speed connectivity within its infrastructure. The investigation led the city to contact GCISD and offer the district a partnership because the path for the fiber network runs in close proximity to the district's schools.

"We are really appreciative of the city of Grapevine for bringing this to us and allowing us to partner with them," Ryan said. "To me it's just a great example of two public entities working together for the betterment of the community and the betterment of the taxpayer."

GCISD Director of Technology Paul Aceves said the district currently has connectivity to all of its buildings

through a private vendor.

"We currently pay \$200,000 a year to our provider, but with this partnership we would be able to provide our own fiber-optic cable to our schools and be our own provider," Aceves said. "So it will save us at least \$200,000, and we are looking at a three- to five-year return on investment."

Construction of the system will be done in phases during the next five years. Aceves said construction will likely begin at Grapevine's new Public Safety Building, which is being constructed on Ira E. Woods Avenue.

"They will start [at the Grapevine Public Safety Building], and then they will come down [SH] 26 for a while," he said. "Cannon Elementary and Grapevine Middle are scheduled to be done in year one."

Although the city and the district are going to be using the same system, Ryan said the two entities will not be able to tap into one another's systems.

"[Contractors] are going to be burying a single pipe, and within that pipe there are going to be three different strands of fiber-optic cable—one pipe for the city, one pipe for the district and one pipe for [a] future growth need or opportunity," he said.

City officials said the benefits of installing the fiber-optic cable system also include enhanced public safety communication throughout the city and unlimited bandwidth for the city and GCISD. Also, options for Wi-Fi in public spaces, security camera options in facilities and public spaces will be improved, and the synchronization of traffic signals will be enhanced.

What's in the FIBER-OPTIC FUTURE for Grapevine, GCISD?

The city of Grapevine and Grapevine-Colleyville ISD are partnering to install a \$5 million fiber-optic cable system, which will enhance local network connectivity for both entities' facilities. The 57-mile-long cable system will be built in phases during the next five years.

WHAT'S BEING INSTALLED

TO BE PAID UPFRONT THE FIRST YEAR:

- MILES OF FIBER CABLE:** 57
- \$625,000 PER ENTITY**
- TOTAL COST:** \$5,003,484

The project will be completed in phases **OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS** and will be managed by the city.

- Overall bandwidth will increase from 1GB to a minimum of 10GB
- GCISD uses 47 terabytes of data a month = 9.2 million songs
- Savings are almost \$200,000 per year per 1GB of bandwidth

HOW FAST IS ONE GIGABIT?

One gigabit is 60 to 100 times faster than the speed that most schools and homes receive.

- 1GB = 1,042 = 140X FASTER** than the average connection speed in the U.S.
- 7.2 MBPS** Average connection speed in the U.S.
- 29.6 MBPS** Peak connection speed in the U.S.

Source: city of Grapevine, Grapevine-Colleyville ISD, Community Impact Newspaper

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