



# **SIREPA**

**SOUTHEAST IOWA REGIONAL  
ECONOMIC & PORT AUTHORITY**

**March 12, 2024**

**Meeting of the Board of Directors  
8:30am**

**2495 280<sup>th</sup> St, Montrose, IA  
“Lee County Career Center”**

**Via Zoom**

**Call-In: (312) 626-6799 Meeting ID: 793 665 7959**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7936657959?omn=85798711264>

## **Agenda**

**I. Call to Order, Chair (Hickey):**

**Roll Call:**

- a. Director Mike Hickey, Chair
- b. Director, Bob Dodds, Vice-Chair
- c. Director, Bruce Hardy, Secretary/Treasurer
- d. Director Michael Dunn
- e. Director Denise Boyer
- f. Director Jack Smith
- g. Ex-Officio, Garry Seyb, Lee County Supervisor
- h. Ex-Officio, Tom Schultz, Lee County Supervisor
- i. Ex-Officio, Matt Larson, State Treasurer’s Office

**II. Approve Agenda of March 12, 2024 Meeting (Board Action)**

**III. November 1, 2023 Meeting Minutes (Board Action)**

**IV. Financial Report**

**V. Approve making application to Rep. Miller-Meeks Community Project Funding for Lee County Career Center (Board Action)**

**VI. Broadband Update (Board Information)**

**VII. Receive 2023 Annual Report (Board Action)**

**VIII. Adjourn (Board Action)**



# SIREPA

## SOUTHEAST IOWA REGIONAL ECONOMIC & PORT AUTHORITY

Minutes of the SIREPA Board of Directors  
November 1, 2023, 3:00 p.m.  
In-Person at KL Megla Building or via Zoom  
2495 280<sup>th</sup> St, Montrose, IA

I. **Call to Order** at 3:03 p.m. by Mike Hickey, Chair

Roll Call:

Members Present: Director Mike Hickey (Chair); Director Bruce Hardy (Secretary-Treasurer), Director Michael Dunn; Director Jack Smith; Garry Seyb, Ex-Officio; Matt Larson, Ex-Officio via Zoom

Members Absent: Director Denise Boyer; Director Bob Dodds

SEIRPC Staff Present: Mike Norris

Guest(s) Present: Chuck Vandenberg, Pen City Current; Tim Fencl, Danville Mutual Telephone Company; Dennis Fraise

II. **Consider Approval of Agenda (Board Action):**

Smith made a motion to approve the November 1, 2023, meeting agenda, second by Dunn. All ayes, motion carried.

III. **Consider Approval of July 26, 2023 Meeting Minutes (Board Action):**

Hardy made a motion to approve July 26, 2023 meeting minutes, second by Smith. All ayes, motion carried.

IV. **Consider Acceptance of Financial Report (Board Action):**

Dunn made a motion to approve the financial report as presented, second by Smith. All ayes, motion carried.

**V. Consider Approval of Lee County Broadband Expansion Documents with Danville Mutual Telephone Company (Board Action):**

Dunn made a motion to approve Lee County Broadband Expansion Documents with Danville Mutual Telephone Company as amended by Smith (write as county funding commitment), second by Smith. All ayes, motion carried.

**VI: Matters from the Floor**

Dunn encouraged SIREPA to find ways to build out the northwest Broadband Intervention Zone in Lee County.

**IX. Adjourn**

Dunn made a motion to adjourn at 3:29 p.m., second by Hardy. All ayes, motion carried.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bruce Hardy, Secretary/Treasurer

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# SIREPA

SOUTHEAST IOWA REGIONAL  
ECONOMIC & PORT AUTHORITY

## Memo

To: SIREPA Board of Directors  
From: Mike Norris, Administrator  
Date: March 12, 2024  
Re: Career Center Application for Community Project Funding

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### BACKGROUND

In August, 2021, SIREPA closed on the former KL Megla building at 2495 280<sup>th</sup> St, Montrose. The real estate purchase was supported by LCEDG via a funding agreement and shared account which made funds available to SIREPA to satisfy monthly payments on the 36-mo. interest-only mortgage from Connection Bank. All was in effort to establish a Lee County Career Center where high school students could explore careers and receive career-specific education and experience from Lee County businesses and manufacturers.

Much progress has been made since that time.

- For the last two years, every 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grader in Lee County has had career experiences and exposure at the center in a three-visit structure. Total students over 400 per year.
- PV Pallet, a startup solar panel pallet manufacturer has incubated at the center.
- The Lee County Robotic club headquarters for Lee Co high school students is in the building.
- Multiple career exploration days have been held for Lee Co high school students
- Fort Madison building trades class contributed \$100,000 in labor to build out offices/classrooms
- Received \$250,000 contribution from OCI Iowa Fertilizer, and \$125,000 from Southeast Iowa Medical Center to support the Career Center.

### WORKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

The career center requires additional buildout to fully realize the vision. This includes classroom spaces, industrial technology space, parking area, and training equipment for industrial technology and healthcare careers. These items total about \$2.2 million.

Feedback from Rep. Miller-Meeks office has created an opportunity to apply for Community Project Funding through the Representative's office for FY2025 federal budget (Oct 2024 – Sept 2025). The application is fairly short and nearly all the information is at hand. Please consider approving an application from SIREPA to the Representative's office for Community Project Funding, due March 15. Details on the next pages.

TABLE 1, Project Budget

<b>LEE CO CAREER CENTER CFP BUDGET</b>	
Total Interior Work	\$ 894,116
Built out four classrooms, one industrial tech space, a new entry on south side, and framing, finishes, mechanicals, and windows. Includes security upgrades (sprinkler, fire alarm, doors, access system).	
Total Exterior Work	\$ 363,137
34,000sf parking area paving, new entry and vestibule, Windows for daylight.	
Total Equipment	\$ 670,000
Ignite training equipment for industrial tech Healthcare career training equipment	
Total Engineering, Administration Contingency	\$ 190,000 4%
<b>Application total</b>	<b>\$ 2,201,943</b>

### THE FUTURE AND IMPACT OF THE CAREER CENTER

The alternative future with a completed Career Center building will provide scale to training, exposure, and space which will be a magnet attracting students and industry. The connections made at the Center will create new knowledge around student and adult learning interests, area industries, and what each group can offer the other.

Area industries and businesses need hope and evidence that a workforce will exist sufficient for their needs in Lee County and southeast Iowa. The need for continual investment in facilities, equipment, and people always reminds bears the question: Will there be enough people to work here if we make XYZ investments?

### SIREPA ROLE

SIREPA is a local government entity which is eligible to apply for HUD EDI funds (the Eligible Funding Account). If funds are received, SIREPA will be the contracting entity, and enter into contract with HUD (via Iowa Economic Development Authority) for the funds. Contracting construction projects will involve procuring for engineering, and grant administration (environmental, procurement, draws, Davis-Bacon wages, Section 3 compliance, file auditing, and closeout).

March 12, 2024  
RE: Community Project Funding  
Page 2

Please see the following exhibits for further information.

EXHIBITS

Career Center – Rendering of improved south entrance



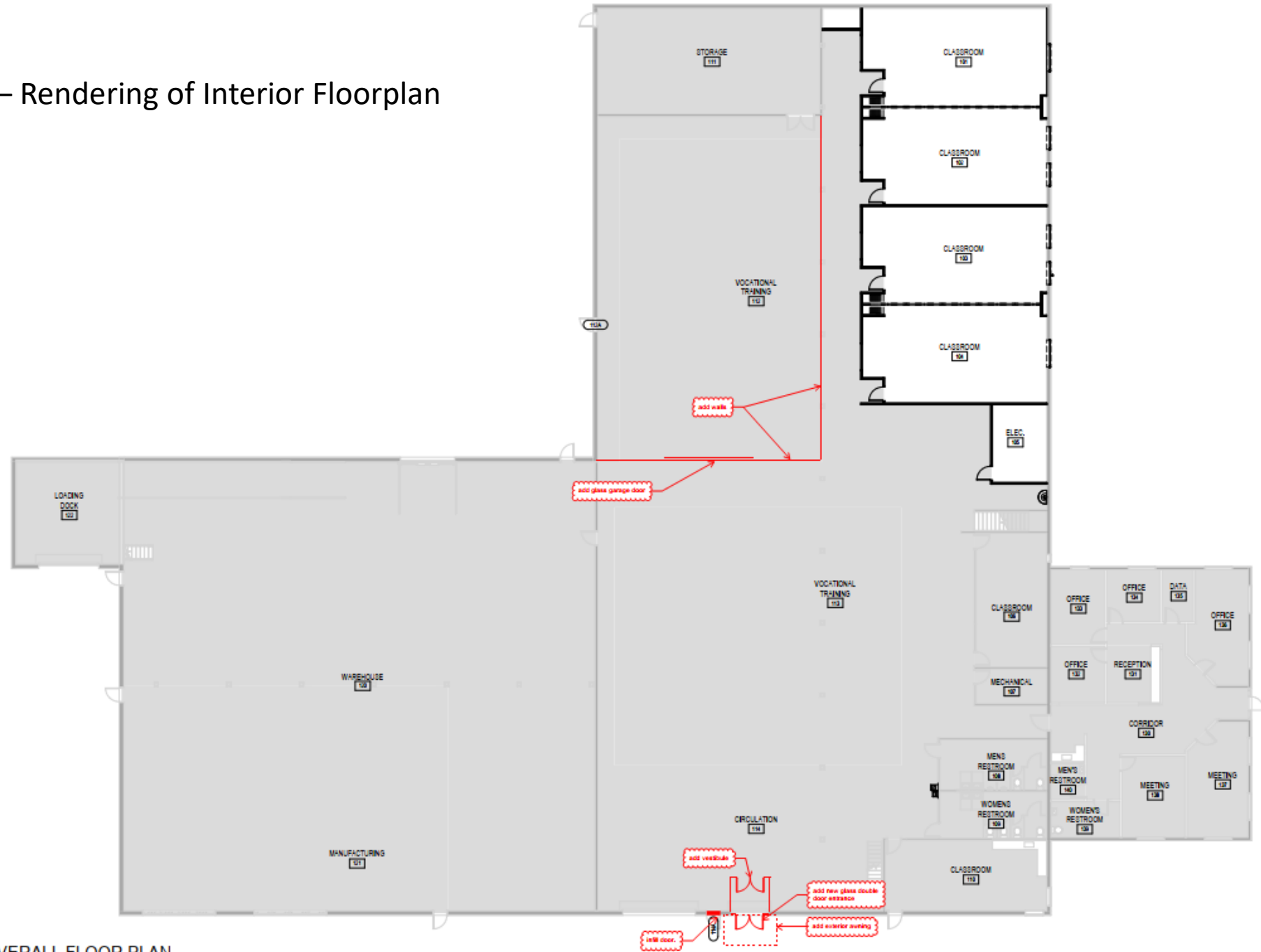


Career Center – Rendering of Interior (presently mostly open space)

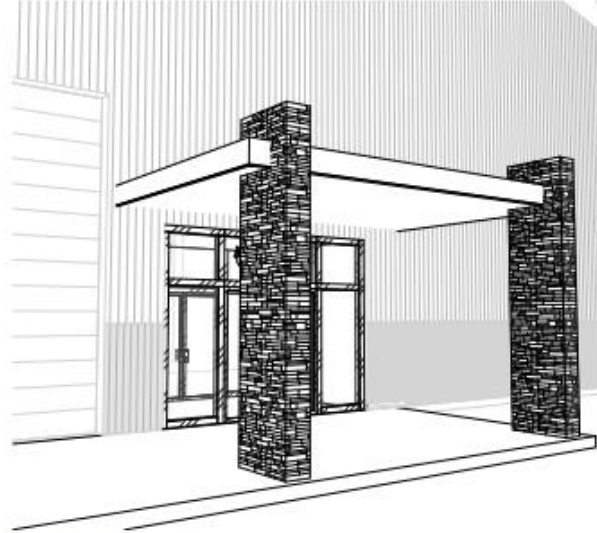




# Career Center – Rendering of Interior Floorplan



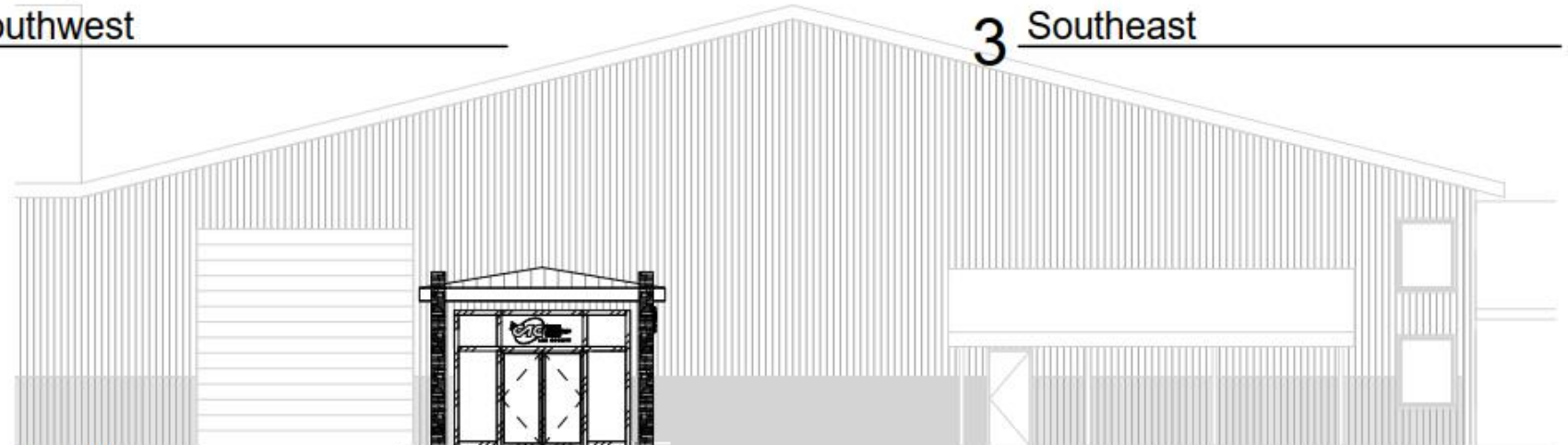
Career Center – Rendering of South entrance from different perspectives



2 Southwest



3 Southeast



1 South  
1/8" = 1'-0"



# SIREPA

SOUTHEAST IOWA REGIONAL  
ECONOMIC & PORT AUTHORITY

## Resolution No. 1-2024

### To Apply for Community Project Funding to Build Out and Equip Lee County Career Center at 2495 280<sup>th</sup> St, Montrose, IA

WHEREAS, The Southeast Iowa Regional and Economic Port Authority (hereinafter SIREPA) is a recognized Municipality of the State of Iowa under Chamber 28J, Code of Iowa, and;

WHEREAS, SIREPA has an interest and general purpose in furthering economic development and vitality, quality of life, and general resiliency of Lee County, Keokuk and Fort Madison, and;

WHEREAS, The Lee County Career Center is a worthwhile economic development initiative to benefit the future workforce and businesses of Lee County through career exploration, educational outcomes, working experiences, and future employment connections, and;

WHEREAS, The Lee County Career Center will permanently be aided by constructing additional classrooms, training spaces, entry, and parking, and purchasing industrial technology and health care training equipment, and this is possible through a Community Project Funding award, which SIREPA is an eligible applicant for through the office of U.S. Rep. Miller-Meeks, and;

WHEREAS, the cost for construction, equipment, and their associated costs are estimated at \$2,201,943, and;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED this 12th day of March, 2024

The SIREPA Board of Directors authorizes the SIREPA administrator to submit a Community Project Funding application to U.S. Rep. Miller-Meeks for \$2,001,943 to purchase training equipment and complete build out of the Lee County Career Center.

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Mike Hickey, Chair

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Attest: Bruce Hardy, Secretary-Treasurer

# Update – 4 March 2024

## SIREPA – Danville Telecom Lee County project

### Current

- Fiber Backbone Construction is complete.
- Fiber has been spliced and the redundant ring is complete.
- Electronics are installed, powered up, and lit at the Keokuk location.
- Migration of current customer to the ring to be complete by 31 Mar.
- Wever town hall meeting on Feb 6<sup>th</sup> was attended by 55 individuals.
- Permissions to install fiber received by 63 properties so far.
- Interest expressed by 14 additional locations outside the target area.
- Fiber to the home construction will begin as soon as permits are received from the county engineer.
- Mohrfeld Electric is doing all of the construction.

### Future

- Fiber construction is estimated to be complete before September.
- Fiber Lease payment to SIREPA will begin December 2024.
- Foresight of the ring is a likely solution for other grant awardee in Lee County to build faster, less expensive deployment
- Future funding for the remainder of Lee County possible by BEAD
- DOM-DOIT and NTIA to release BEAD opportunities late 2024
- Any future funding discussion is unlikely until BEAD is awarded.



# **SIREPA**

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ECONOMIC & PORT AUTHORITY

**2023 ANNUAL REPORT TO FOUNDING GOVERNMENTS**  
**City of Keokuk, City of Fort Madison, Lee County**

FEBRUARY, 2024

# BACKGROUND



- SIREPA was founded in 2006 by the Cities of Fort Madison and Keokuk and Lee County
- SIREPA is a municipality of the state authorized by Iowa Code Chapter 28J
- SIREPA is administered under contract by Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission (SEIRPC) responsive to board of directors



# BACKGROUND



**SIREPA**  
SOUTHEAST IOWA REGIONAL  
ECONOMIC & PORT AUTHORITY

- SIREPA board of directors appointed by founding governments, with 2 members each.
- SIREPA funding is sourced from founding governments, contracts, contributions or other means.
- “SIREPA exists to create new economic development opportunities in Lee County and Southeast Iowa. SIREPA seeks to encourage growth by removing obstacles to private investment and lower fixed costs for private companies by using bonding, financing, and ownership abilities.”

# 2023 RESULTS



**SIREPA**  
SOUTHEAST IOWA REGIONAL  
ECONOMIC & PORT AUTHORITY

- Successful ownership of Lee County Career Center (LCC) in partnership with Lee County Economic Development Group.



# 2023 RESULTS



**SIREPA**  
SOUTHEAST IOWA REGIONAL  
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- Every 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grader at Central Lee, Fort Madison, and Keokuk school districts visited three times in a systematic experience at the center to interact with area industries and their career possibilities





# 2023 RESULTS



**SIREPA**  
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- The LCC is incubating a startup solar panel pallet manufacturer that has secured Dept of Energy grants, venture capital, and large orders from solar panel companies.



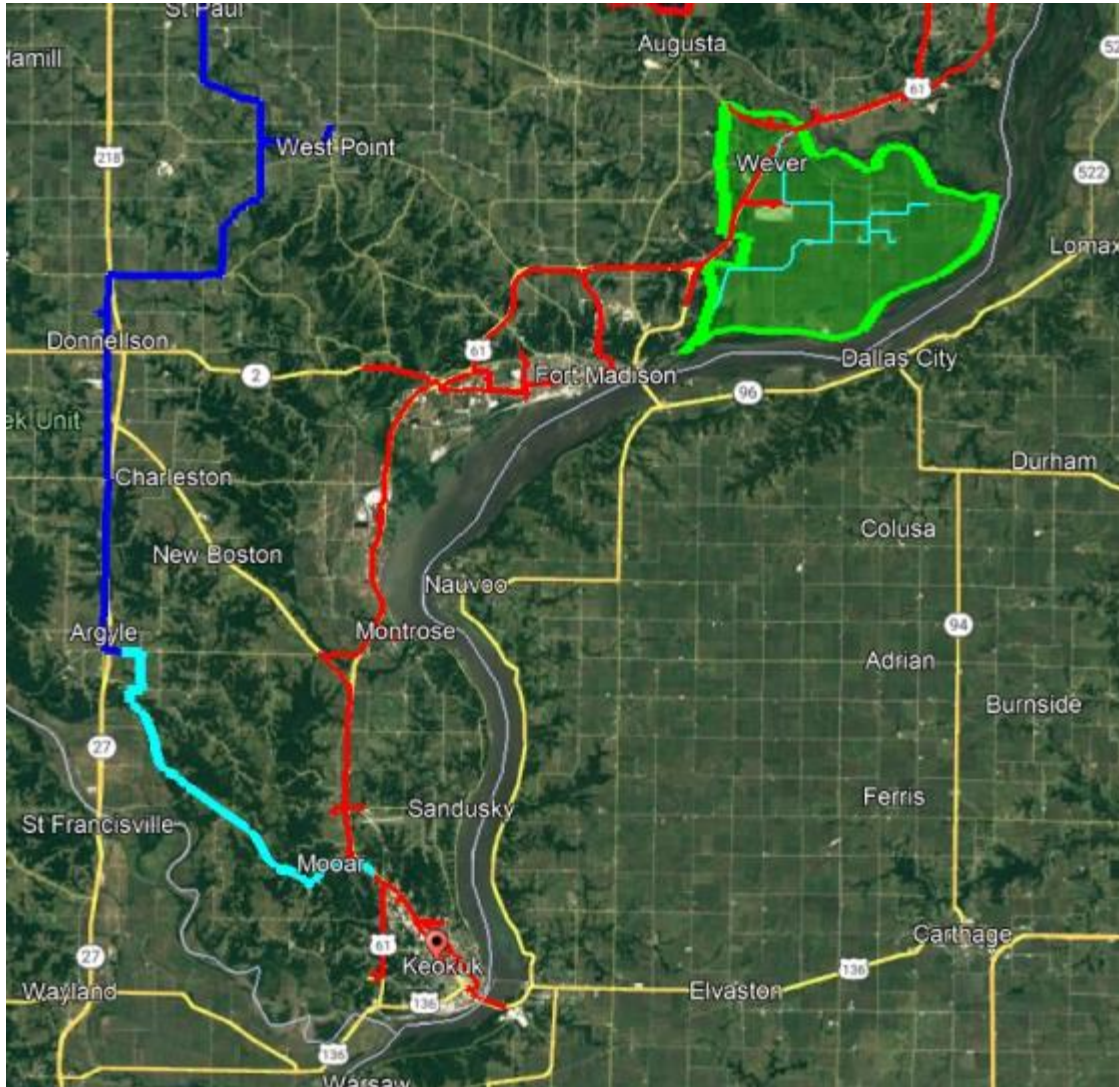
# 2023 RESULTS



**SIREPA**  
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- Lee County Broadband Expansion Program - \$1.9 million investment into Lee County for new rural services and a 14-mile fiber backbone providing redundant fiber loop for Lee County and expanded data capacity.
- Partners: Lee County, Danville Telco
- SIREPA role: Invest Lee County ARPA dollars into a public-private partnership with Danville Telco

# 2023 RESULTS



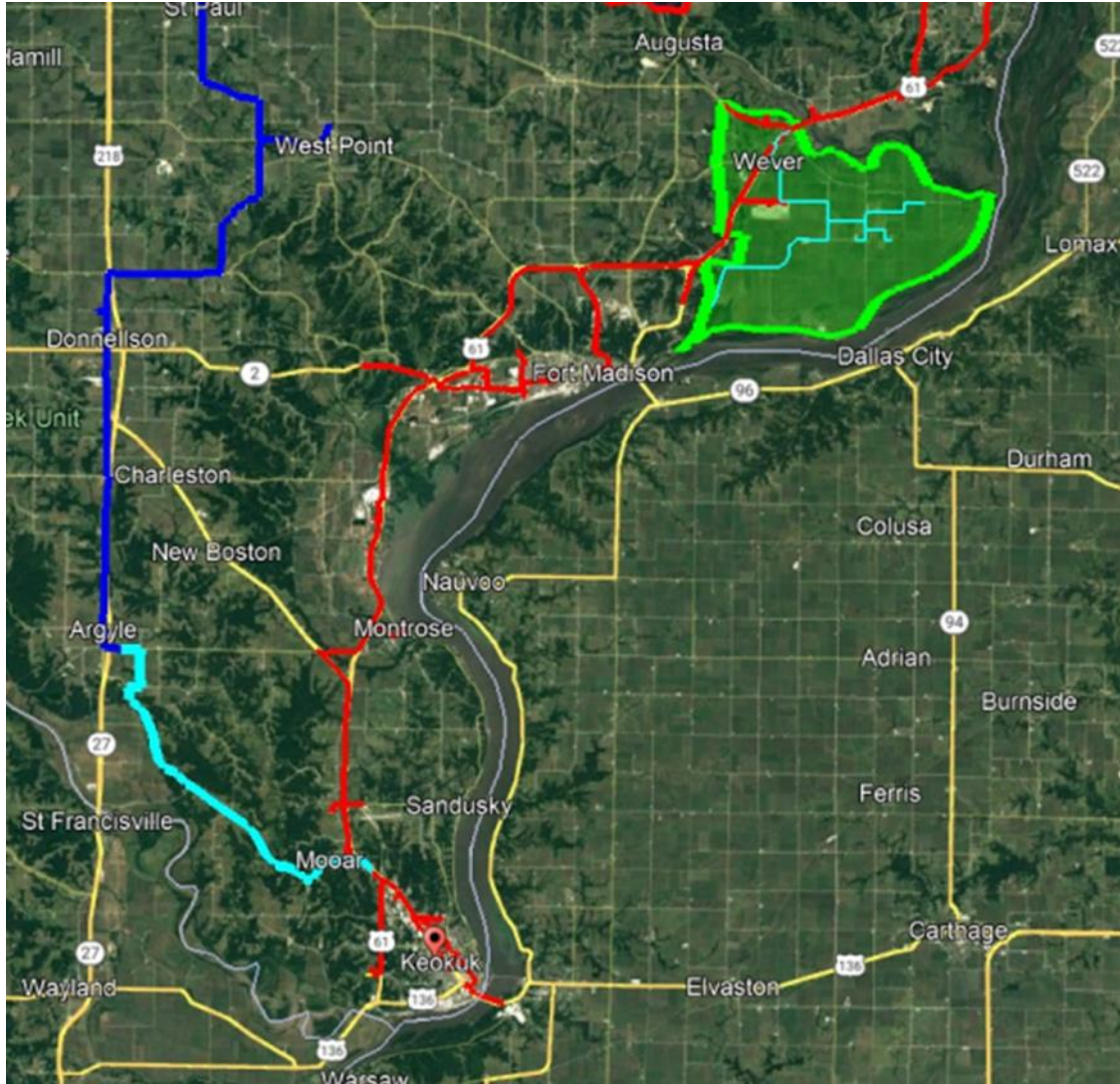
**SIREPA**  
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All of light blue is Lee County Broadband Expansion Project

The new fiber backbone can handle many, many, more new services and uses, giving Lee County more future broadband and data options than ever before.



# 2023 RESULTS



**SIREPA**  
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**SIREPA will own the 14 miles of fiber backbone** and lease it back to Danville Telco for operation.

Lease revenues can be put back into more broadband investments.

# 2024 PLAN OF WORK



**SIREPA**  
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- Monitor construction of Lee County Broadband Expansion Project
- Plan the future of Lee Co Career Center and 12 acre property with LCEDG
- Involvement in natural gas expansion and investment process
- Plan for future broadband investments with private partners
- Grow SIREPA into the most effective port authority in the Midwest
- Communicate with county stakeholders to complement development projects

# FY2024 BUDGET



**SIREPA**  
SOUTHEAST IOWA REGIONAL  
ECONOMIC & PORT AUTHORITY

## REVENUES

City of Keokuk	3,000
Lee County	3,000
City of Fort Madison	2,000
Joint account for building mort	24,706
SEIRPC via planning grant	3,500
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 36,206

## EXPENSES

Personnel	8,700
Organizational insurance	2,500
Travel	150
Meeting Expense	150
Building mortgage, interest on	24,706
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 36,206

## NET INCOME

-

SIREPA respectfully requests \$4,000 founding member dues for FY2026 (June, 2025 – July, 2026)

The SIREPA Board appreciates the outstanding support from its founding governments.



**SIREPA Board Members**



Mike Hickey,  
*Chair*  
Keokuk  
Representative



Bob Dodds,  
*Vice Chair*  
Lee County  
Representative



Bruce Hardy,  
*Secretary/  
Treasurer*  
Fort Madison  
Representative



Michael Dunn,  
*Director*  
Keokuk  
Representative



Denise Boyer,  
*Director*  
Fort Madison  
Representative



Jack Smith,  
*Director*  
Lee County  
Representative

*Ex Officio:*

Gary Seyb,  
Lee County Board of Supervisors

Matt Larson,  
State Treasurer's Office

David Varley, City Manager  
Fort Madison

Gary Schultz,  
Lee County Board of Supervisors

Cole O'Donnell, City Manager  
Keokuk



**SIREPA**  
SOUTHEAST IOWA REGIONAL  
ECONOMIC & PORT AUTHORITY

Thank you for your support!

Key SIREPA Staff:

Mike Norris, SEIRPC  
Zach James, SEIRPC  
Lori Gilpin, SEIRPC

*SIREPA is managed under contract by  
Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission  
(SEIRPC), since 2015*