



NEWS RELEASE

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MASON CITY— Mason City officials are taking the first step to explore how a telecommunication fiber utility could help re-shape the economic future of the community. A community coalition with representation from the City, chamber, economic development corporation, and educators has committed to study the possibility of forming a municipal fiber utility to serve homes and businesses.

According to Chamber President John Michel, plant manager at Kraft Foods, the community must take action to reverse downward economic trends. "To retain and attract jobs in an information-based economy and to retain and attract young people as Iowa's next generation of workers, we must improve our connectivity."

To this end, the coalition will encourage the Iowa legislature to preserve the rights of communities to form municipal communications utilities and will work to hold a community referendum on the issue in November 2005.

The following business leaders comprise the local steering committee: John Jaszewski, Dr. Mark Johnson, Jeff Marsters, John Michel, Dr. Mike Morrison, Don Nelson, Tim Putnam, Keith Sersland, and Scott Tornquist. Robin Anderson, Dan Culhane, and Tim Moerman will provide staff support to the group. This initiative, referred to as "Opportunity Mason City" will receive technical support from Opportunity Iowa, a not-for-profit, statewide, citizen-driven movement unified in the belief that telecommunications is essential infrastructure.
