



Commonwealth of Kentucky
Kentucky Communications Network Authority (KCNA)

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KentuckyWired Means Kentucky Hired

FRANKFORT, Ky. (March 5, 2019) –When the KentuckyWired broadband project began building its 3,350-mile network of high-speed fiber optic cable, the Commonwealth ensured that at least 60 percent of work-hours used for construction would be from local labor, and included that requirement in the state’s contract with its builder. Three years into the project that promise has not only been kept, but exceeded. The latest report from KentuckyWired’s primary contractor, NG-KIH Design-Build LLC, shows 80 percent of construction work-hours to date have been performed by Kentucky citizens. This news comes in concert with the Kentucky Cabinet for Education and Workforce Development’s notice that the 2018 unemployment rate in Kentucky dropped to 4.3 percent, the lowest annual jobless rate in the Commonwealth since 2000.

Phillip Brown, Executive Director of the Kentucky Communications Network Authority (KCNA), which oversees construction of the network says, “A key goal of the KentuckyWired network is to enable job creation and a better economy, so it makes sense for KCNA to see to it that KentuckyWired is built for Kentuckians by Kentuckians. The project is an enormous undertaking, and that means that we’re forced to find some construction labor from beyond the Commonwealth’s borders. But we’re proud to say that so far eighty percent, not just sixty, of our construction work-hours are from folks right here in Kentucky.”

The KentuckyWired network is the largest public-private partnership (P3) telecommunications project in the United States, and is connecting government offices and institutions, universities, state and community colleges, state police

posts, and state parks in all 120 counties. Anywhere along the network, private companies may attach to the network and lease its fiber. KentuckyWired will enable private internet and cellular companies to bring better service to many underserved locations. It will help boost the economy, attract companies to locate in Kentucky, and bring more jobs to the Commonwealth.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the median annual wage for line installers and repairers is \$64,190 per year, and demand for trained workers in this field is projected to grow by 8 percent per year between 2016 and 2026.[1] Linemen and line construction crews who desire to work on the KentuckyWired project should contact NG-KIH Design-Build LLC at <https://www.kentuckywiredproject.com/contact-us/>.

In addition, The Center for Rural Development in Somerset, KY, a key investment partner of the KentuckyWired project, offers grant programs that provide tuition assistance for those that are unemployed, underemployed or impacted by the decline of coal. Various programs including lineman and fiber-optics training are available for participants. These programs are offered through multiple colleges within the Kentucky Community & Technical College System. Contact Patti Simpson at The Center to see if you qualify for tuition assistance at psimpson@centertech.com or 606-677-6000.

[1] <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/installation-maintenance-and-repair/line-installers-and-repairers.htm>

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