



WHITE RIVER VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

News Release | For immediate release:

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Cooperative Addresses Easement Allegations In Fiber Deployment

Branson, Missouri – White River Valley Electric Cooperative is a member-owned and member-focused Missouri electric cooperative. Its mission is to provide members with safe, reliable, and affordable electric power while enhancing the lives of those it serves. For years, White River Valley Electric received requests from members to provide a reliable internet service option because substantial portions of its electric service area remained unserved or underserved with internet connectivity. A survey of the membership revealed overwhelming support for extending fiber-to-the-home. Ninety Six percent (96%) of its members desired internet services from the Cooperative. After a feasibility study was completed, infrastructure, optimal technology, and projected costs were evaluated, and the Cooperative then communicated with its members seeking permission to move forward with a broadband fiber to the home project—a very considerable undertaking requiring years of planning and substantial funding, a significant portion of which was provided by Federally initiated grant programs and regional support partners.

A bylaw amendment was proposed to Cooperative membership in 2022 for this purpose. The new bylaw sought to grant the Cooperative, and its subsidiaries, the right to extend commercial fiber optic communication services for high-speed internet and voice over internet protocol (VoIP telecommunications) utilizing Cooperative facilities, poles, and easements. This amendment to Article I, Section 4 of the Cooperative's bylaws passed with 95% of voting member approval before the broadband project began.

White River Valley Electric Cooperative was recently notified of a class action lawsuit filed in Stone County Missouri Circuit Court by an existing member challenging the Cooperative's rights to build out a fiber network. Although the project was member approved, the Cooperative is in the process of investigating the claims asserted in that litigation and plans to defend them vigorously. While the case is pending, public comments about the case will be reserved. The Cooperative wants to assure its members that it will continue to deliver much needed high-speed fiber internet services to the

communities it serves through its fiber subsidiary, White River Connect. Members will be at the core of decision-making to accomplish the Cooperative's mission that now includes providing high-speed fiber connectivity.

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[White River Valley Electric Cooperative](#) is a [Touchstone Energy Cooperative](#) dedicated to ensuring our members receive safe and reliable service in their homes and businesses across five southwest Missouri counties including Ozark, Taney, Stone, Christian and Douglas.
