



we began the process of staking out the line and figuring out the best locations for sectionalizing cabinets so that current and future homes could be accommodated.

When the submarine cable failed and fiber was installed, this made adding duct to the project to carry any future fiber a necessity, even if it were to remain empty for years. The work you saw being done was the culmination of numerous years of thought and planning. Although, actually, culmination is not a good word as the actual elimination of the line and connection of the homes along the route will require significantly more work than what you have seen done.

Material has been here for the project for almost a year, and KS Energy Services was contracted for the plowing and boring necessary to install it. They installed the phased-in new feeder (2002, 2004, and 2017) from our shore landing to the substation as well the underground work (with the help of Tom Jordan) on Plum Island during the cable replacement project in 2018. They have done an excellent job for us and many of the same KS personnel have come back on numerous of these projects.

The process of this installation started with a survey of the route to ensure the vibratory cable plow could install the cable without compromising the now much wider blacktopping on the road. As you have seen us do before, we teamed up with the town crew and not only removed the five or so trees that would have been a hindrance to the installation, but trimmed the entire road. The chipping and cutting operation created mess #2. With the actual installation work in the ditch occurring the following week, it did not make a lot of sense to sweep the roads as we would just be turning around and doing it again.

Digger's Hotline was called (CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!) and existing phone lines that crisscrossed the entire route were located and flagged. As several road crossings were planned, we also marked the 24.9 KV feeder line since we knew that we did not want to have to de-energize it when the bore crossed it.

Your cooperative crew then staged sectionalizing cabinets, fiber hand holes, and reels of cable and duct along the road close to where they would actually be installed. Transformer pads were also placed where service could be distributed to the various homes along the route. To answer the question we got numerous times

Sectionalizing cabinet (green), fiber hand hole (white), distribution power cable in conduit (black), and fiber duct (red).



## PROGRESS IS SOMETIMES MESSY

If you traveled Lobdell Point Road during the middle of April, you are aware of the substantial activity that has gone on there. Back in the early years of the cooperative, line extension decisions were made based on straight line routes and reducing the amount of material required to get from point A to point B. While these were great immediate financial decisions, we have been paying the price for those decisions for many years. One of those routes was the one that took service from the end of Main Road to the Ferry Dock. It cuts directly across Arni Richter's swamp and then runs cross-country until it emerges on Lobdell Point Road just north of the Ferry Dock. Grass hummocks and chest-deep water make traversing this line miserable, especially at night. Think of Leonard Jorgenson, Ray Krause, and some of the Kiloren Electric crew members, wading through this mess carrying in the poles and hand digging and setting the pole. That was work.

As we have discussed, this is a problem area for us and has been for almost as long as the poles have been there. We currently have two poles out in this line that have deteriorated to the point that they will soon need to be changed. Having walked (waded) this line numerous times during outages in a myriad of conditions, I can tell you that lines down in this swamp would be a nightmare at best. This is mess #1.

We replaced the main feeder from the shore landing to the plant substation, which essentially freed up the right-of-way we occupied on the south and east side of Lobdell Point Road. The old direct buried cables were still there and we explored the idea of using two of the phases as hot and the remaining phase as a neutral to bypass the swamp but, even at the reduced distribution voltage, this idea was risky at best. The only real solution was to replace those cables with new, and



during the staging and installation: The three 2" black conduits contain fully jacketed neutral 4/0 cable for power. The two 1 1/4" red conduits were empty except for pulling rope to pull future fiber through. The green cabinets are sectionalizing cabinets that the electrical cable are terminated in, and the white concrete cabinets are "hand holes" that provide not only a place to splice fiber but storage for slack.

Rain made mess #3 and we were concerned that a long planned and schedule project would be further hindered by mud and water conditions in what is essentially still a swamp, even alongside the road, with ground water conditions

exacerbated by recent rain.

When the KS crew arrived they began stringing out the cable in conduit and fiber duct along the route. This was followed by the arrival of a hydrovac excavating truck. This truck uses high-pressure water and essentially a large vacuum cleaner to excavate around the phone and electric lines so we could have a visual location of the lines where they were going to be crossed by the new installation. By excavating around the lines in this manner, they are not damaged as they could be if we dug conventionally.

Once all the crossings were located, the KS crew, with your cooperative crew



Underground phone line exposed by hydrovac excavator.



KS vibratory cable plow arriving on the Madonna (truck driver and operator's first time on a ferry), and at work below.





ferrying full and empty cable reels, began the vibratory plowing operation. The electric cable and duct are loaded into the shoe of the plow which is then lowered into the ground, and the machine begins moving forward with a vibratory device making the shoe and plow shake to move stones and other obstructions underground out of the way as the cable and duct are buried 3 to 4 feet down. It is a slow-moving process that is occasionally stopped by heavy tree roots or larger stones (we don't have any of those up here, do we?). Tails are left on the installed cable and duct in order to allow for termination in the cabinets, and the cabinets are set.

The next operation was for KS to use their horizontal boring machine to "drill" under the roads, under trees, and through rocks in order to feed the cables and ducts where they needed to be. This machine pushed a series of rods underground which then pulled the cable and duct back with them when the rods were drawn back to the machine. The use of this machine allowed us to avoid saw cutting roads and also to get under trees

to homes without cutting and trenching. As we got closer to the ferry dock the ground became significantly more rocky and using the bore became more difficult.

Setting cabinets and termination of cable wrap up this phase of the project. It might take a while to get the lines energized and the overhead lines removed, and it might take a while to get the fiber to the home project lit up, but as the infrastructure gets in place all this work will be worth the mess.

While this project is still a fair way from being complete, we have a number of people to thank (as usual): obviously the KS crew, who are a pleasure to work with and good at their jobs; the town crew for working with us to prep the area and sweeping the roads afterwards; Tyler McGrane, who not only provided traffic control on the windy road, but who also allowed us and KS to stage



The boring machine got quite a workout in the rocky ground.

materials and equipment at Death's Door Fuel, and also opened his bathrooms for the KS crew (a brave feat considering the muddy conditions we were working in); the Washington Island Ferry Line for the use of their used conveyor belt pieces to protect the road during the plowing operation; the Fire Department and Tom Bloch, for helping fill the hydrovac excavator truck's water tank; and Julian Hagen and Tom Jordan, for access to water at the cement plant for the boring operation needs. And of course, we cannot forget to thank the many patient travelers who had to negotiate their way down the point road during the whole operation.

## VETERAN'S MEMORIAL UPDATE

### Fundraising goal close to complete

You will recall that last November we highlighted the local American Legion Post, veterans, and the local Veteran's Memorial. The Gislason-Richter Post was launching an effort to restore the memorial, which was originally dedicated in 1921.

We are pleased to report that Post Commander Dick Purinton has informed us that the donations received to date have put them very close to the goal. The post plans to have Dave Llewellyn Jr. do the masonry restoration and tuck-pointing and Tom Jordan do the concrete restoration. The hope is to have the work complete for a July 4th dedication ceremony if possible.

The Lion's Club started the ball rolling with a donation to the Gislason-Richter Post and the cooperative jumped on the bandwagon as well with our own pledge, but it really is thanks to all the individual members of the community who have donated that this 100th anniversary of the memorial dedication will be a special one.



## FIBER UPDATE: PROJECT BEGINS

The Public Service Commission of the State of Wisconsin notified Nsight that they should expect the contract for the grant award by approximately June 1, 2021, indicating that they expect the project to be complete by November of 2023. With the Lobdell Point Road underground project, our part of the project begins and we hope to beat the PSCW's completion date by a significant amount. We expect to be hanging fiber this summer. We have a meeting with our partners, Nsight and Door County, scheduled to discuss timelines.

We are working with the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative (NRTC) on the working plans for expansion beyond the initial pilot project. We have made a formal request of the Town of Washington to dedicate the Limited/Restricted Use American Rescue Plan funds towards this project and we are having discussions with the Washington Island School about how they can help with further opportunities for Island students and the community in general using their ARP funds as well. If they participate, not only will it benefit the community in general, but the public/private partnership opportunity for future grants, such as the one we just won with Nsight, will only help us continue to score high.



# COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES, CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY and COOPERATION IN THE COMMUNITY

The Sixth Cooperative Principle is Cooperation Among Cooperatives and, at least in the State of Wisconsin, there is a strong affinity towards this goal. Regular communication among cooperatives in the state strengthens the relationships and makes collaboration and exchange of ideas and information an easy thing. Some of this is facilitated by our membership in our statewide organization, WECA (responsible for this magazine), but a large amount of it is due to the various informal cooperative groups and the interactions that they have. There is a managers group, a human resources group, a member services/communications group, a line superintendents group, and then just the day-to-day communications that occur between individuals at varying locations that in many ways make decision-making easier. While our size at WIEC means that each employee fills numerous roles, the relationships that are built between operations make the cooperative community a vast resource that we can feel comfortable drawing from when questions arise.

The Seventh Cooperative Principle is Concern for Community. In our case, we take it a step further and could actually add an Eighth Cooperative Principle called Cooperation in the Community. Many of the projects (and crises) we have faced have highlighted this. We have written about it before and some refer to it as “the Island way.” We have also written about the work we have done with and for the Town of Washington and the help they have given us as well. We have even featured it in the center pages of this magazine.

For the last nearly 80 years, the cooperative and the Town of Washington have had a reciprocal agreement, informal at



WIEC and Town of Washington crews trimming and chipping together on Lobdell Point Road. (Photo by Tyler McGrane)

first, but later codified by a unanimous vote of the town board during Tim Jessen’s term as chairman probably 15 or more years ago. This is much easier for us to do because the cooperative’s territory is the Town of Washington, and the work we do together benefits both the taxpayers and cooperative members, who are mostly one and the same. Whether the work we are doing at any given time benefits the cooperative primarily, the town primarily, or both equally, the efficiencies gained benefit everyone. While certainly not a unique principle, we know it is rare because sometimes newcomers do not grasp the concept or recognize its value.

A prime recent example, as illustrated in the first article in these center pages, is the Lobdell Point Road project. In order to plow in the cables with minimal damage to the blacktop on the roadside, there were approximately five trees that needed to come down so the plow could stay away from the blacktop and so the roots, when the plow sliced through them, would not damage the blacktop. As a group crew, we not only took down these trees, but also, starting at the visitor center, trimmed both sides of the entire Lobdell Point Road, raising branches, removing dead/dying trees, and generally doing some serious preventative work.

The town also provided the cooperative with some gravel used to bed the cabinets and hand holes in the swamp, and KS used their equipment, with the cooperative’s help, to install a new culvert across Bay Point Road. We also took advantage of the boring equipment to run a service wire from the visitor center to provide for an LED light to be installed at the boat launch ramp (also supplied by the cooperative).



WIEC and Town of Washington crews worked together to install new culvert across Bay Point Road.

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