

Satilla REMC Newsletter

Make-Ready Engineering and Fiber-Optic Construction Underway for Union School Area



Romeo Reyes
President/CEO

Dear Satilla REMC Member:

Wow! It seems like only yesterday that we were celebrating the new year, and now fall is in the air. Where has the time gone? I suppose the old adage is true, “Time flies by when you are busy.” And let me tell you, we have most certainly been busy!

As you may recall, in May of this year, Satilla REMC announced that we would be partnering with Conexon Connect on a fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) project that would make high-speed internet service available to 100% of Satilla REMC’s membership. Over the past several months, Satilla’s team has been working tirelessly with the Conexon team to get our project moving forward. We are eager to bring world-class fiber optic internet service to our Members as quickly as possible, and we are excited about the opportunities that this service will bring to the communities we serve.

The purpose of this article is to provide you, our Members, an overview of the activities surrounding the project, the sequence of these activities and the areas included in the first phase of construction.

Make-Ready/FTTH Installation Overview

The design of Satilla’s fiber-optic network has been completed, and the project has been divided into five distinct phases. The scope of each phase is defined by geographical areas associated with Satilla’s distribution system and the substations located in these areas. Below is a breakdown of the major steps necessary to complete each stage of construction:

Stage 1, Make-Ready Engineering: Field engineers must determine if modifications to any poles are required to accommodate the fiber and steel strand that they will be supporting. Existing attachments on poles may need to be rearranged to make space for the new fiber attachment. Poles may need to be replaced with stronger or taller poles to meet required spec-

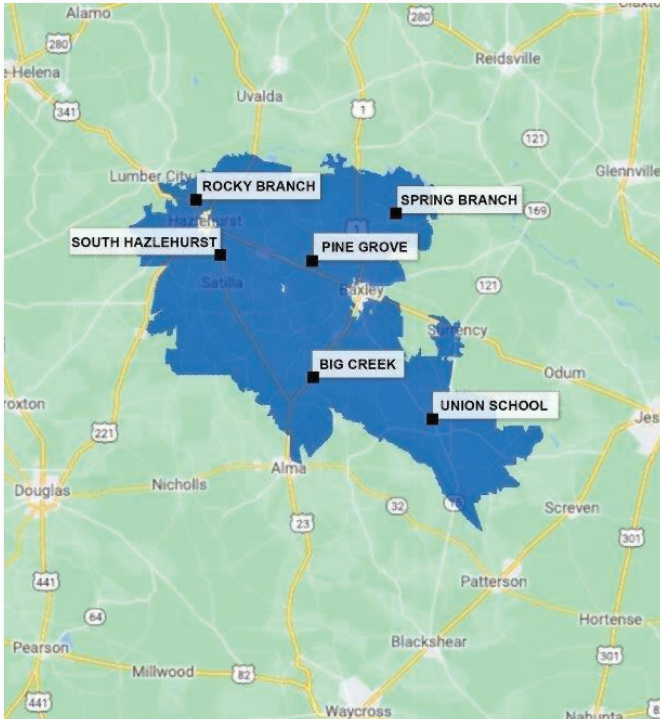
ifications. During this first stage, inspectors will “ride out” the entire phase, visiting every location and making notations of changes that may need to be made. The make-ready engineering stage for Phase 1 began in August.

Stage 2, Make-ready construction: During this phase, line crews will make the necessary pole line modifications identified in the make-ready engineering stage. To work as safe as possible, these crews may need to de-energize a transformer or line to make the necessary modifications to the poles and hardware. Phase 1 make-ready construction is scheduled to begin in early September.

Stage 3, Backbone fiber installation: Once the pole lines have been prepared, fiber-optic crews will begin the installation of the support strand and fiber-optic cable that will serve as the “backbone” of our fiber network. At the completion of this stage, the fiber cable will be in place; however, no splicing will have been completed, and the fiber will not yet be capable of providing internet service.

Stage 4, Fiber splicing: After the fiber-optic cable has been installed, fiber-optic splicing crews will perform the precision splicing necessary for the efficient transmission of light through the fibers. Once all splicing is complete, the fiber will be “lit” and undergo extensive testing to ensure that it is capable of providing the high-speed service our membership is expecting.





Fiber-Optic Construction: Phase 1

Stage 5, Service drop installation: This final step involves installing service drops at locations where the fiber-optic cable has been “lit” and tested, and where Members have subscribed for service. It is anticipated that the installation of the service drops and installation of the in-home electronic equipment will be performed by the same contractor.

Satilla REMC Service Area Included in Phase 1 of FTTH Project

As mentioned above, the Satilla and Conexon fiber project is broken into five distinct phases. We expect that completion of all five phases will take four to five years, at which time 100% of Satilla’s Members will have access to high-speed internet.

Phase 1 has begun in the communities currently served by our Union School Substation located in southeastern Appling County. Members in this area may have already seen authorized contractors from Osmose Utility Services in this area, conducting pole-by-pole surveys to determine what preparations and/or pole

replacements are needed for the fiber installation. We expect to begin installing fiber-optic cable in these communities in January 2022, with the first customers connected in the second quarter of 2022.

The complete Phase 1 construction plan includes communities served by the following substations:

- Union School (parts of southeastern Appling County)
- Big Creek (parts of southeastern Appling and northern Bacon counties)
- Pine Grove (parts of western Appling and eastern Jeff Davis counties)
- South Hazlehurst (parts of southeastern Jeff Davis County)
- Rocky Branch (parts of northern Jeff Davis County)
- Spring Branch (parts of northern Appling County)

The map included gives a clearer picture of Phase 1.

Additional phases and timelines associated with this project will be announced as the project evolves. Sometimes, weather or other factors may impact our plans, but we will continue to communicate with our membership about any changes to the schedule.

We are proud to continue the legacy of Satilla REMC with a new era of economic, educational and community growth for our area created by the transformational power of gigabit-speed internet. Thank you for being a part of our journey!

Sincerely,

Romeo Reyes, CEO
Satilla REMC

