



CHAIRMAN DANE MAXWELL
MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
SOUTHERN DISTRICT

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PSC Chairman Dane Maxwell announces George County Fiber Ring project

PSC, Mississippi Power and C Spire partnership will increase access to broadband and expand economic development opportunities

(JACKSON, MS) – On Friday, September 4, Mississippi Public Service Commission Chairman Dane Maxwell announced a major fiber project to be constructed in George County.

The project will consist of eight miles of fiber constructed by Mississippi Power tying in to existing fiber infrastructure currently owned by C-Spire to complete a fiber ring. The fiber ring will bring broadband access to 6,500 locations in the Lucedale, MS area.

Through direction of the Public Service Commission’s Rule 29, Mississippi Power and C Spire partnered to identify fiber projects that would increase access to broadband for residents, businesses, schools and industrial sites, and be mutually beneficial to each provider and its customers through enhanced infrastructure and generate cost savings.

PSC Chairman Dane Maxwell congratulated each company on their commitment to the project and remains committed to put forth policy at the PSC that empowers partnerships like this in the future.

“This project, along with others we have in the works across the state, is a great example of how public and private partnerships work to benefit the folks of rural Mississippi,” Maxwell said. “I will continue my support of these types of partnerships and any policy that removes unnecessary red tape so we can expand these much needed services across state.”

Per PSC rules, these projects must have a measurable impact on the region in areas of broadband access, economic development and overall system reliability. The George County project is estimated to increase broadband access by 6,500 premises within 5 miles of the fiber ring. In addition, there are eight schools within the vicinity who may choose to utilize their federal E-rate support to bring C Spire’s all-fiber gigabit services to their campuses thereby enhancing connectivity.

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Additionally, Mississippi Power and C Spire can agree to jointly market their assets to third-party carriers, which could further increase access and produce a future revenue stream for Mississippi Power customers.

The fiber ring will extend to include the George County Industrial Park providing it with access to high-speed, fiber-based services which will make a significant impact in future economic development efforts. The park has three premier sites, two of which are Mississippi Power Project Ready certified.

Fiber infrastructure, however, has become more of a key component in attracting and sustaining business growth. With ongoing improvements related to electricity, water, wastewater, and natural gas, fiber access is the only remaining component needed in the area.

“Including the Industrial Park as part of this project is a huge deal,” Chairman Maxwell said. “Having high-speed services available in the park will attract larger businesses that require these speeds and also make George County much more competitive in economic development and healthy growth of business in the future. I look forward to working with our partners to grow business to employ and serve George County and all of South Mississippi.”

The PSC, Mississippi Power and East Mississippi Electric Power Association are also partnering to construct a fiber ring in Meridian, MS that will result in similar positive impacts to that area.

Both fiber ring projects are planned to begin sometime in the 4th quarter of 2020 with an expected completion in 2nd quarter of 2021.

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