



CORNING

## Why Go It Alone? There's Power in Partnerships

### TWN Communications & Mohave Electric Cooperative

Founded in 1988, TWN Communications is a long-time provider of voice services, including long-distance and calling card services, to rural electric cooperatives' customers. With the advent of dial-up internet in the early 1990s, TWN found itself in the internet business.

Its evolution to a leading rural fixed wireless internet provider began in 2005 when TWN was recruited to acquire and operate a small, fixed wireless network with a cooperative partner in Southeastern Arizona.

Since then, TWN has acquired and built numerous networks, operating fixed wireless and fiber optic networks in six states, from outside of Las Vegas through the Texas panhandle and all the way up to Northern Indiana. Today, TWN is an internet service provider that targets unserved and underserved rural communities. As TWN has expanded into fiber networks, it has also deepened its relationship with Corning.



## The Challenge

Recognizing the growing need for increased bandwidth while fielding numerous requests for fiber deployment from co-ops, TWN deployed its first fiber network in Northern Indiana in 2019. Just before the pandemic, TWN approached Mohave Electric Cooperative (MEC) about bringing fiber to its members.

MEC operates in the Northwest corner of Arizona, specifically in Mohave County, and is one of TWN's largest co-op partners. TWN first deployed a fixed-wireless network to the area alongside MEC more than a decade ago. Currently operated by TWN, the network now delivers broadband service to many of MEC's 40,000 members across this sprawling county. In 2019, MEC wanted to take advantage of smart solutions (i.e., remote meter reading), and its customers needed more bandwidth – pushing the co-op to explore fiber network solutions. The increased use of various applications and increased bandwidth requirements also drove TWN to consider the transition to fiber.

## The Solution

While fiber-only networks are a new venture for TWN, the company has decades of experience designing, building, and operating broadband networks. If an electric cooperative needs or wants to offer broadband to its customers, TWN can help. It has the infrastructure and experience to deliver broadband to cooperatives and their members – allowing the cooperative to focus on its core business of providing electricity. In addition, TWN has operational departments and resources in place to handle billing, marketing, and customer care. This arrangement reduces risks to electric co-ops while expanding the scale and scope of their offerings.

“When business development decided to transition some of our networks to fiber deployments, we approached MEC and they asked us ‘what took you so long?’ – they were all in,” explains TWN’s VP of Sales/Marketing & Business, Ami Rodriguez.

“MEC had a desire to not only improve broadband services and increase bandwidth, but they also wanted to utilize the fiber network for several of their own infrastructure improvements.”





Joint MEC/TWN fiber launch press event, Bullhead City, AZ

By introducing fiber as an alternative to fixed wireless, TWN is helping MEC and its fellow cooperatives meet ever-increasing bandwidth demand while ensuring internet technologies are future-ready. Providing every user with access to fiber also prepares MEC for inevitable smart grid developments and advancements.

“Fiber is more expensive short term, but the long-term benefits, especially when used for infrastructure improvements, actually level the playing field in terms of affordability because of maximized efficiencies,” says Rodriguez.

“The networks we are building now are created with the future in mind and should be scalable for years to come. While fixed wireless is a great and affordable solution, the equipment we have deployed will require pretty extensive and expensive upgrades in the next few years.”

TWN is early in the construction phase for the Arizona fiber deployment with 40,000 fiber drops complete and now ready for service as of June this year. Every single MEC wireless customer will be migrated to fiber.

“Most of our projects are slated for a five-year rollout,” explains Rodriguez.

“But I would anticipate that the recent pandemic revealed just how much bandwidth is needed, speeding up timelines.”



## The Impact

“To meet short- and long-term bandwidth, we believe that fiber solutions are the gold standard for broadband,” says TWN’s CEO Colin Wood.

“But for many of our cooperative partners, a full fiber deployment just isn’t feasible. Sometimes, we can help co-ops cross that financial divide by deploying fixed-wireless initially, then replacing with fiber later in the project after they start monetizing parts of the network.”

Customers who have migrated to the fiber network often relay stories about how it has changed or enriched their lives.

“We had a young family man let us know that ‘he got his wife back and the kids got their mom back,’” says Wood.

“His wife was unable to do her work from home because of inadequate internet speeds so she had a two-hour commute each way to her office and missed out on sporting events, recitals, and family dinner times. Hearing this and multiple other stories can’t help but make me realize the importance sufficient broadband has on our customers’ lives.”

While the pandemic has made the value of broadband more apparent and increased demand, it has also come with supply chain issues for a wide variety of materials. Reflecting on how Corning still delivers on TWN’s needs, Wood explains, “We share with Corning our project forecasts and predicted fiber requirements. They’ve continued to meet our customer demand and project deadlines, even during a pandemic. Corning has a well-deserved reputation for quality and ongoing innovation, both keys for networks in rural settings.”

“We’ll be approaching our communities about transitioning to fiber in the coming years,” explains Rodriguez. “For those ready to make the transition, we’re thrilled to have an ally in Corning to provide best-in-class fiber solutions.”

For more information about TWN Communications, visit [www.twncomm.com](http://www.twncomm.com), or email [arodriguez@twncorp.com](mailto:arodriguez@twncorp.com).

To schedule a free project analysis and cost estimation for your community, connect with Corning at [www.corning.com/community-broadband](http://www.corning.com/community-broadband).

The Corning logo is displayed in white, uppercase letters on a solid blue rectangular background.

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