

# NEWS RELEASE



Mitchell EMC  
January 11, 2023

## **Mitchell EMC Wins Grant to Expand Rural Broadband**

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Mitchell Electric Membership Corporation is a member owned Electric utility that has provided reliable electricity to rural Southwest Georgia since 1937. Our members, school systems, and local governments have expressed a need for reliable, high speed, broadband internet service.

As a cooperative, our mission and tradition is “to power communities and empower members to improve the quality of their lives.” We do this by providing services that are not readily available or by improving on our existing services. One of our “Seven Cooperatives Principles - Concern for Our Community” allows us to work with local & national leaders for the substantial development of the communities we serve.

The pandemic brought to light how great the need for reliable, high speed broadband internet service is in rural Southwest Georgia. Mitchell EMC President/CEO Tony Tucker, “Our rural members have long lacked, reliable high-speed internet access and as a commitment to the communities we serve, we will begin the process to serve these needs to our members and residents by delivering reliable and affordable broadband service.”

Mitchell EMC is partnering with Connect to launch and deploy a fiber-to-the-home network that could span up to 5,570 miles across its Southwest Georgia territory. Conexon Connect, the internet service provider formed by rural fiber-optic network design and construction management leader Conexon, has been selected by Mitchell EMC to deliver high-speed fiber internet access for rural Georgians within the cooperative’s service territory. This agreement marks Conexon Connect’s ninth fiber-to-the-home project in Georgia.

The Connect, powered by Mitchell EMC, network will deliver world-class fiber broadband services to homes and businesses primarily in Baker, Dougherty, Mitchell, and Worth counties, and in parts of Calhoun, Colquitt, Decatur, Early, Grady, Lee, Miller, Thomas, Tift and Turner counties. The goal is to ultimately expand fiber broadband access to all of Mitchell EMC’s 25,330+ members, if possible.

In January Six electric membership corporations learned that they would be receiving more than \$41 million in state grants to leverage investments the utilities are making to expand broadband service in six rural Georgia counties.

Gov. Brian Kemp announced the competitive grants as part of a \$234 million package from the Capital Projects Fund aimed at improving connectivity to all Georgians.

"High-speed internet access is critical for both academic and economic opportunities, as well as overall quality of life," he said. "These projects announced today will go a long way to helping Georgians in some of the most unserved and underserved parts of the state become better connected."

The fund is financed by monies from the American Rescue Plan Act passed by Congress in 2021. The Governor's Office of Planning & Budget and the Georgia Technology Authority advised Kemp on the competitive grants that would help the most people in areas without internet service.

The EMCs receiving the latest grants include:

Satilla Rural Electric Membership Corporation (Coffee Co.), Grady Electric Membership Corporation (Grady Co.), Mitchell Electric Membership Corporation (Mitchell Co. & Worth Co.), Irwin Electric Membership Corporation (Wilcox Co.), Middle Georgia Electric Membership Corporation (Wilcox Co.), and Oconee Electric Membership Corporation (Wilkinson Co.)

Construction will begin in January 2023, with the first members expected to be connected in May 2023. The project will take 3-4 years to complete.

### **About Mitchell EMC**

Mitchell EMC is a not-for-profit, member-owned electric cooperative that prides itself on providing reliable, competitively priced electric service. Mitchell EMC safely delivers reliable electricity to more than 25,702 residential and commercial members in Mitchell, Baker, Worth, Dougherty and 10 surrounding counties. Mitchell EMC's distribution system consists of 5,432 miles of line over 400 square miles. A community partner since 1937, Mitchell EMC is actively involved in the communities we serve, the communities in which the employees live and work. Mitchell EMC's dedication to providing a higher quality of life in the service area is measured only by the satisfaction of the members

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