

Fair Park set to get fiber optic

By Amy Smith Union staff writer | Posted: Friday, April 10, 2015 8:53 am

JEFFERSON — The Jefferson County Finance Committee Thursday approved a transfer of contingency funds for the extension of fiber optics to the fair park and sheriffs office communication tower.

The county board approved Oct. 14, 2014, a bid of \$159,546 from Central Cable Contractors, Waupun, for the extension of underground fiber to the highway shop, Jefferson County Fair Park and for a sheriff's office communication tower.

The extension of cable to the new highway shop already has been completed at a cost of \$33,015. Funds for the highway shop's fiber optics were included as part of the building's construction costs.

Extension of fiber to the fair park will cost \$80,000 and the sheriffs tower extension will cost \$57,189 for a grand total of \$131,016 for the entire project. The fair park carried over \$51,007 from last year's budget in order to extend the fiber, leaving \$86,191 to be paid for by a contingency transfer.

Before the transfer, the contingency held about \$440,000. Though the sheriff's office had not budgeted for the upgrade, the fiber optics extension is something the Jefferson County Fair Park has been pushing for several years.

Currently, fair park employees are not connected to the county's server, meaning they have a separate email system and Fair Park Director Dave Diestler has to make a trip to the courthouse to work on any budget items.

An extension of fiber not only would give the fair park access to the county's server, but it would improve the overall Internet connection at the fairgrounds and provide opportunities for electronic ticket sales during fair week.

The fair park also is the designated back-up area for the entire county in case of an emergency or disaster, County Chair Jim Schroeder noted at Thursday's finance meeting.

"It needs to be wired," Schroeder added.

The fiber is to be extended to both locations sometime this year. Fiber optic cable lines use glass or plastic threads (fibers) to transmit data.

A fiber optic cable consists of a bundle of glass threads, each of which is capable of transmitting messages modulated onto light waves. Fiber optics provide a much wider bandwidth than traditional metal communications lines, which means they can carry more data, and also are less susceptible than metal cables to interference.