

The Basics of SCI Fiber

It's 2018, we're in the digital age, and high-speed internet is still not available in our rural areas. This is a familiar story to electric co-op members. What started out as a convenience has become a near necessity ... just like electricity. If you don't quite remember, your electric cooperative, SCI REMC, was formed by rural Hoosiers in 1939 because for-profit utilities could not make money on building and maintaining lines and poles out in the country. The same is true for internet providers. Why won't those big-name internet, phone, and cable companies bring internet to us? The answer: Because it's too expensive, and the return on their investment doesn't fit their financial model. So, just like in 1939 when we rolled up our sleeves and put our own power poles in the ground, if we want our electric members to have adequate internet service, we'll have to do the job ourselves, and bring fiber to the country to improve our quality of life.

What is SCI Fiber? SCI Fiber is a new high-speed internet solution provided by SCI REMC. Since 1939, SCI REMC has provided essential electric services, mostly in remote rural locations. Recently, our members asked us to investigate the option of providing high-speed internet to our service area. We listened and have launched SCI Fiber from SCI REMC.

Why is SCI REMC doing this? Availability of high-speed communications and internet access in the areas we serve has today become as critical to the health and prosperity of rural communities as availability of electricity service was in the 1930s. Access to a highspeed internet connection has gone from a luxury to a necessity, and most of our electric members are at risk of being left behind. We want to make sure this does not happen. We want to fulfill the cooperative's responsibility to the community as implied by Cooperative Principle #7, which states, "While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies supported by the membership."

What is FTTH? Fiber-to-the Home (FTTH) is known for being "future-proof," meaning the fiber we install today will be able to handle increased data loads as the need for more and more speed grows. Fiber is more reliable than other types of networks, less prone to interference and complications from lightning and other natural elements. FTTH also tends to raise the property value of homes by as much as 3.1%.

What speeds will you offer? Will there be a data cap/limit? SCI Fiber is bringing internet with speeds up to 1 Gbps (1,000 Mbps). We will have three internet plans, 50 Mbps, 100 Mbps, and 1 Gbps, available for residential homes or businesses, with the same speeds upload and download. We will not have a data cap on our service. It's unlimited data.

Will you offer any other/bundled services? We will be offering VOIP (voice-over-IP) telephone service that can be bundled with the internet service. A home security package will be coming soon.

How much will service cost? Pricing starts at just \$55 per month for residential internet. Check out all your options and pricing at www.sciremc.com/scifiber. NOTE: SCI Fiber will bill customers electronically, sending ebills via email in order to keep SCI FIBER costs low for its customers.

How can I get SCI Fiber? SCI Fiber is currently in the construction planning process. Member interest will help drive the construction process. To express your interest, preregistration is required through www.sciremc.com/scifiber. As we see interest grow in communities, we will set goals for how many homes and businesses need to take service before construction will begin. Preregistration goals must be met before construction plans can be finalized. The board of directors' goal is to ensure we run fiber everywhere, just like electricity.

Where will you start? Phase 1 construction has been determined by a feasibility study conducted by our engineering

consultant and will begin with the installation of the backbone service east and south of Martinsville and continue down into parts of Brown County.

How long will it take? Our fiber project will take at least 4 years to complete. We'll be installing the service to our customers as the construction of the main line "backbone" allows. More information on which areas of our territory will have service and in what timeline will be forthcoming. Everything there is to know about SCI Fiber will be posted online at www.sciremc.com/scifiber.

Are my electric rates going to go up because of this? No. We intend to keep the internet and electric rates and bills separate.

Will you be providing internet to non-SCI REMC members? At first, we will be focusing on providing service to SCI REMC members, but we may expand into these areas at some point.

If I am a member who doesn't need or want this, what is the benefit to me, of SCI doing this? High-speed internet access in the rural areas means: more economic development with businesses being able to move into our territory, potentially higher property values for our members, access to advancements like tele-health, online classes, etc. Additionally, installing fiber throughout our service territory will help modernize electric operations to meet members' growing desires to save energy through load control and other functions that require smart infrastructure.

How can we get updates on when service is available in our area? Watch for announcements on our SCI Fiber site: www.sciremc.com/scifiber.

Preregister at www.sciremc.com/scifiber.

Preregistration Details

Why is there a preregistration process? To minimize risk, SCI REMC's Board of Directors chose to move forward in a phased-in approach to protect co-op ratepayers and the financial integrity of the electric cooperative. Before any construction work takes place in an area, a specific percentage of members must preregister. This set percentage of members is called a take rate, and it ensures that SCI REMC is spending money to build a fiber network in areas where members really want it and where it can be financially sustained.

What does it mean when I preregister? By preregistering, you are expressing interest in service. At the time of preregistration, no signed contract is required. When construction begins in your area, we will contact you to complete a contract for service. This will be a 12-month contract, and a minimum package level of \$55.00 per month must be maintained at all times.

What will I have to pay when I preregister? There is no payment collected during preregistration. This process just allows you to complete a simple form to let us know what services your home or business is interested in. By preregistering now though, you guarantee a FREE installation when we first come to your area. This includes all wiring and indoor equipment. Before construction begins in your area we will contact you to complete the sign-up process.

I am not sure if my location is eligible to preregister? All SCI REMC locations are eligible to preregister. (Areas outside of the SCI REMC service territory are welcome to preregister, though service is not guaranteed.) Areas with the highest percentage of interest for service will likely get fiber the soonest—member interest will help drive the construction process.

Is there a deadline to preregister and what are the benefits of preregistering now? Preregistration is open until construction is complete in that area. (If we have to go back to your home after construction is completed in that area, there will be an installation fee of \$300.) We encourage all members to preregister as soon as possible because community interest will help drive the construction process. If an area does not show interest or very little, SCI Fiber may not be installed to that zone until the final phase of the project (which could take up to 4 years).

Can I change my package at any time or do I have to select now to guarantee my pricing? You can change your package at any time, as long as you maintain the minimum level of \$55.00 per month. Preregistration only lists your interest. If you choose to upgrade your plan, you will pay the listed price of your new package. View all packages and prices at www.sciremc.com/scifiber

Preregister at www.sciremc.com/scifiber

Having trouble preregistering online? Give us a call at 1-800-264-7362 or stop by our SCI REMC office during regular business hours.

Construction and Equipment Details

What does the construction process entail, and what is the timeline? Construction will begin by building the backbone network in the area, followed by bringing fiber to actual homes and businesses. Once we have the fiber to the home or business, we will make an appointment to complete the service installation inside. Installation will include all wiring and indoor equipment. From the construction of the backbone until service is installed in your home, you can expect the process to take four to five months.

We were told that the fiber would be run through existing conduit. What if a site has direct buried cable? SCI will work with you on an individual basis to determine the best method.

What kind of equipment (router or modem) is needed? What is the cost? As an SCI Fiber customer, you will be supplied with a wifi router that is built to handle up to 1 Gbps internet speeds. The cost of the router is included in the installation fee (FREE for those who preregister). The wireless router supports 2.4GHz and 5GHz, simultaneous dual-band. 5GHz 802.11ac certified, 802.11a/g/n compatible. 2.4GHz 802.11n certified, 802.11b/g compatible. It can support up to 64 devices wirelessly. We can even manage your router for you for an additional fee.

What is a wifi router? The wifi router will bring the service into your home and supports all high-speed internet connections. During installation, our technicians will set up and show you how to use your new wireless network. Wired connections to the router will provide the fastest speeds, but the wifi router will also create a powerful wireless network in your home or business to ensure all devices from laptops, tablets, smartphones, smart TVs, and other smart devices can connect wirelessly.

Do I own the router? No. SCI remains ownership so that we can support the device and any troubles you may experience. SCI will replace the router free of charge if the device malfunctions due to manufacturer issues.

Will I be able to hardwire devices to the router as well as wireless devices? Yes. The wifi router is equipped with four traditional ethernet ports to which you can physically connect computers and other devices.

Can I use my own router? Yes.

Will the router support a printer that is also a fax machine? Yes. The router we provide is designed to handle state-of-the-art equipment and the fastest internet speeds available.

Is the network secure? Yes. Every home and business will have its own secure connection with passwords to access the wireless network.

What kind of technical support can I expect from SCI for the router? If you experience issues with your service, SCI Fiber will be able to troubleshoot and remotely examine your router to help determine where problems may be occurring (no cost). If needed, SCI will send technicians to your location to troubleshoot (costs may be incurred). You will also have the opportunity to purchase our managed wifi plan for your router.

Will that technical support be available without charge? During installation, SCI technicians will ensure your router is properly installed, fully blanketing your home, and that you are comfortable with operating any devices – free of charge. As mentioned earlier, SCI can also remotely troubleshoot your router to help identify issues, also at no cost to you.

Do you offer maintenance packages for additional support? There is no monthly maintenance fee for troubleshooting network connectivity issues, but you will have the opportunity to purchase our managed wifi plan for \$10.00 per month.