

## City of Sylvester's Fiber Broadband Spurs Rural Renewal

**Partnering with ZCorum helped this Georgia City support individuals, families and the community where they needed it most.**

### INTRODUCTION

In 1893, a community known as "Isabella Station" was established when the railroad entered the region. Gradually, the community grew, and in 1894 the residents of Isabella Station changed the community's name to "Sylvester" in honor of a prominent local family.

Located in the heart of Southwest Georgia, the City of Sylvester is a laid back, historic southern municipality with the spirit of a progressive, vibrant community. In a rural region hidden between the larger towns of Albany and Tifton, Sylvester is a hometown where everyone knows pretty much everyone. And although it's a vision of small town America, Sylvester is proceeding to modernize and grow.

Surrounded by other small towns, the city was determined not to fall victim to small town decline so prevalent across America. To realize that goal, the City, relying on their own resources, began building a fiber optics network for its businesses and schools to have high-speed internet. Using infrastructure already in place, fiber optics were buried along trench ways and strung along power poles established for utilities. After purchasing their own equipment, following their own operational practices, and serving customers through their own offices, the City began seeing improvements in access for the school system, local businesses and government services.

Their foresight had them ready when suddenly high speed Internet access was not only essential for the local businesses to function, but also for the future of their residents and the community to thrive. Having access to health care and government services, closing the homework gap, and supporting a digital workforce became the City's priority and focus.

After receiving feedback from their citizens, the City had learned that third-party network providers had not stepped up to serve the community. The community wanted more options for internet service, so the City took the important first steps to expand their own high-speed fiber network to include all their residential areas. The City's fiber service, called Slytel, has the community excited about the promise of better prices and a faster connection than is available today from other services.

### AT A GLANCE

The City of Sylvester knew that high-speed fiber networks are a critical component of 21st century municipal infrastructure and set about expanding their fiber broadband network to all the City's residents. With the help of ZCorum's suite of managed services, Sylvester will have a more efficient network complete with troubleshooting diagnostics, end user support and an IPTV offering that eliminates the the high costs and contracts associated with traditional Pay TV.

### THE CHALLENGE

Autron Hayes, Sylvester's City Manager, knew that once the city's Skytel internet network went live, they would have to be ready to provide services 24/7/365 for the subscribers. They didn't want customers to experience long wait times on the phone just for someone to help them get connected or help with their internet questions. Also, they suspected that in-house staff could not keep up with the sudden large numbers of city customers calling in for help or have the technical knowledge for troubleshooting complex problems.

"When customers have a bad experience," explained Hayes, "they're discouraged and disappointed. We knew we needed to step up the services for the new, larger network that we were launching."

The challenge for Hayes and his IT team was to bridge the connectivity gap between employees in the office trying to cover all the bases, and the businesses, schools and expanded residential customers expecting great service. They also wanted to minimize the time their lean IT team spent on system maintenance, all within a tight, publicly funded budget.

“Our support staff are not dedicated IT professionals. We needed a solution that would work for all the aspects of the new broadband network and it had to be simple,” explains Hayes. “The right decisions about technology were critical. We wanted to spend less time fixing and maintaining, so we could focus on making everything easier for the entire community”.

Hayes understood the challenges he faced and that the City needed help to streamline its operations for the whole network. The question was: where to start?

## THE SOLUTION

Hayes contacted a friend in a neighboring city that already had a large fiber network running successfully for its citizens. Hayes outlined that they needed to get all the new subscribers up and connected to the new fiber internet as soon as possible. Another priority was complete end-user support ready to assist anyone that needed help. The goal was to simplify the network management while offering first class service to subscribers in order to drive growth and productivity for the network and the community.

The friend’s recommendation was for Hayes to contact ZCorum. He explained that ZCorum had been helping them for years. A suite of managed services was the answer for the City of Sylvester’s network.

After discussions with ZCorum’s teams, the City of Sylvester determined that partnering with ZCorum would be the right choice.

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-Autron Hayes, City Manager  
City of Sylvester

ZCorum worked with the City of Sylvester to plan out what they needed and went through all the steps to assure a successful turn-up of the City’s new Slytel Internet Service. ZCorum is now assisting with diagnostics applications, and technical management services for the city’s fiber network.

To assist Hayes and his team with troubleshooting issues in the fiber network itself, they will have access to TruVizion, ZCorum’s cross platform monitoring and diagnostics tool. The tool will provide critical live and historical metrics on fiber equipment and network performance from within a single web-based application.

Getting subscriber devices connected to the fiber network is an essential part of the process, and ZCorum’s Managed Provisioning service will dynamically activate the equipment at the customer premises. Network monitoring and engineering help is also part of the services suite and will help the City ensure a smooth-running network.

Sylvester is also receiving from ZCorum a fully-featured IPTV solution, including programming, at a fraction of what it would cost to deploy a traditional Pay TV service. Residents will receive a variety of TV channels over their internet connection without the need for a cable box.

Finally, having help available for the City’s internet subscribers whenever needed was fulfilled with ZCorum’s 24/7/365 End User Internet Support. The full-time help and support from ZCorum’s USA-based customer service center is available to assist all subscribers with their internet, voice and IPTV questions.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

ZCorum helped the City of Sylvester create a better fiber internet service by (a) helping their residents, businesses and schools create a better, more connected world, (b) building value for the city and (c) establishing Sylvester as a progressive small town for living and working.

“ZCorum helped us organize our team and services,” Autron explains. “Now, instead of running back and forth between the offices and the field, we have all the management services taken care of without the expense of hiring and training extra staff. We now have less maintenance work and fewer headaches across our IT team,” says Hayes. “We have ZCorum around the clock taking care of customers. Our focus has shifted to building a better and more efficient city.”



ZCorum is the leading provider of innovative diagnostics and managed broadband solutions to telecommunications companies, helping them reduce costs, increase operational efficiency and improve the subscriber experience. For more information, visit [ZCorum.com](http://ZCorum.com).