

## Going the extra mile for middle-mile solutions.



Merit is an independent, 501c3 nonprofit corporation governed by 12 of the 13 public universities in Michigan. In addition to its governing member institutions, Merit's statewide member community includes over 400 affiliate members which are comprised of private colleges, K-12 districts, library systems, healthcare providers, nonprofits, government and other public sector agencies. When Merit began their project in southeast Michigan, they sought out a trusted long-term partner that could help them scale their middle-mile broadband services in that area of the state with flexible, custom, last-mile fiber solutions.

### The Need

For Merit to grow and continue meeting communities' needs in southeast Michigan, they required:

- › A provider who could help expand their connectivity offerings with ease.
- › A flexible, cost-effective network solution enabling diverse deployment options, total control of their fiber and unified management—something many commercial providers do not offer at any price point.
- › A partner with the resources and knowledge to optimize grant funding from the National Telecommunications Infrastructure Administration (NTIA) and other sources.
- › Reduced response time to network outages.

“

Without Crown's resources and agility to respond quickly to new projects and circumstances, we would not have been done in time. I can't imagine a big carrier responding in the way that Crown did.

**JIM MORAN**

Senior Sales Engineer, Merit

Name

**Merit**

Industry

**Wholesale**

Network Size

**4,000 route miles  
of fiber**

Solutions

**Dark Fiber**

Location

**Michigan**

## The Solution

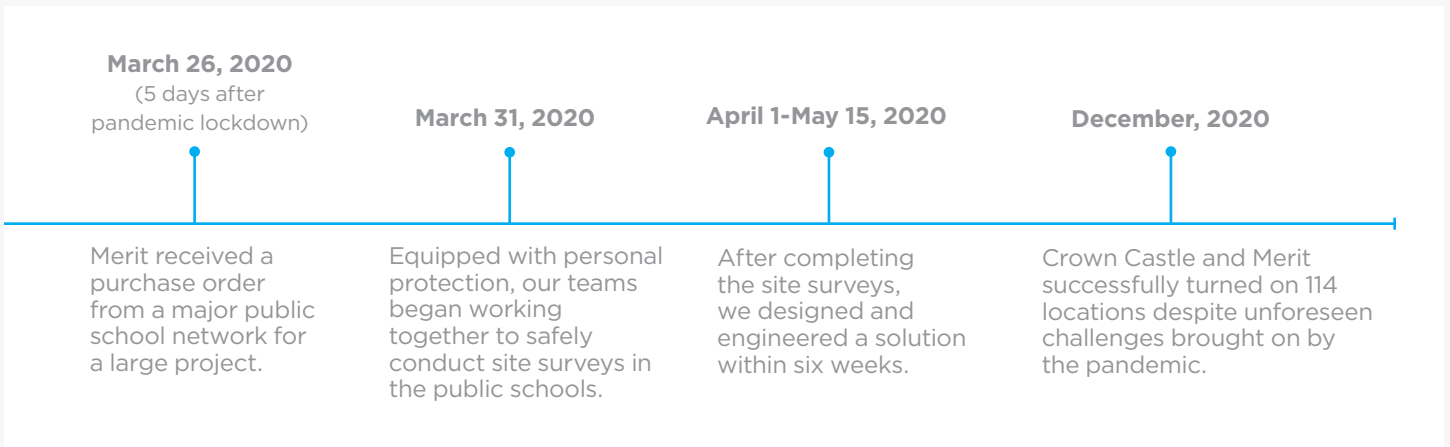
- Working together, we deployed our Dark Fiber solution in communities across southeast Michigan to drive down infrastructure costs while enabling collaboration and future broadband expansion together.
- Our Dark Fiber solution equipped Merit with a variety of connectivity options, from lighting individual strands to complex multi-site designs, fully customized to their requirements.
- Leveraging our diverse fiber routes, Merit was able to consolidate device management, again cutting maintenance costs and simplifying workflows.
- Two concentric network rings provide diverse connections and redundancy, increasing reliability and ensuring that the network remains accessible in the event of potential issues.

## The Impact

After meeting their ambitious goal of connecting each of the district's 109 schools, Merit continues to set new goals with confidence. To date, Merit has scaled broadband access and increased network resiliency by using our diverse fiber routes and 24/7 Network Operations Center. Importantly, their increased network capacity provides seamless access to teaching and learning resources. Merit also has the capacity to complete deployments and respond to grants faster and more efficiently than before, saving time and money where they matter most.

Together we're delivering the right solutions to the right organizations at the right prices, meeting Merit's needs and positioning them for continued success. Looking forward, we're continuing to partner and explore new ways our infrastructure can connect Michigan communities for years to come.

## Merit turned on 114 sites in 9 months, making this one of their most successful full-cycle projects.



Crown Castle owns, operates and leases more than 40,000 cell towers and approximately 90,000 route miles of fiber supporting small cells and fiber solutions across every major US market. This nationwide portfolio of communications infrastructure connects cities and communities to essential data, technology and wireless service—bringing information, ideas and innovations to the people and businesses that need them.