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Governor Northam Announces \$20.1 Million to Strengthen Broadband Infrastructure in 17 Localities

Virginia Telecommunications Initiative grants awarded to 11 projects, connecting over 13,400 homes, businesses, and community institutions

RICHMOND—Governor Ralph Northam today announced the award of \$20.1 million in Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) grants to improve broadband infrastructure in 17 localities. The funding will support 11 projects, connecting more than 13,400 households, businesses, and anchor institutions to high-speed internet, and leveraging \$18.8 million in private and local investments. Since 2018, Virginia has invested more than \$73.1 million through VATI to connect a total of 76,351 Virginians to broadband service.

“Quality broadband service is key to growing our economy, and learning, competing, and succeeding in today’s digital world,” **said Governor Northam.** “This funding will have an enormous impact on thousands of unserved Virginians and bring us closer to our goal of every community in our Commonwealth having access to high-speed internet.”

Administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), VATI provides targeted financial assistance to extend broadband service to areas that are unserved by an internet service provider. This is the second round of funding for the VATI 2021 program year, and in total, more than \$49.8 million has been awarded for 28 localities, connecting over 25,000 households, businesses, and anchor institutions. Governor Northam and the General Assembly made an historic investment of nearly \$50 million in VATI funding during the

November 2020 legislative session that enabled this significant increase in Virginians served. The Governor and General Assembly maintained this historic funding in the recent budget for next fiscal year.

“With the historic investment made by Governor Northam and the General Assembly, the Commonwealth is showing its commitment to broadband expansion for areas in need,” **said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Brian Ball**. “This round of grants will support the vital infrastructure needed for high-speed internet, ensuring more communities have access to the necessities of modern life.”

Projects were selected through a competitive process that evaluated each project for demonstrated need and benefit for the community, applicant readiness and capacity, and the cost and leverage of the proposed project. The level of funding awarded is based on the infrastructure needs in the project area.

In this application year, VATI received 45 applications from 53 units of local government that partnered with 26 internet service providers, requesting more than \$105 million in funding. Five projects were announced in January in the first round of grants, and those projects were either unaffected by the Federal Communications Commission’s Phase I of Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) preliminary awards or have already been re-scoped by the applicant to remove overlap with RDOF funded areas. This second round of awards are the remaining high-ranked projects, including those that had been re-scoped and re-evaluated due to the impact of RDOF. Additional information on VATI is available [here](#).

The following projects will be awarded funding in round two of the 2021 VATI grants:

**Mount Rogers Planning District Commission and Point Broadband
\$7,870,000**

Mount Rogers Planning District Commission and Point Broadband will extend its broadband network in the counties of Smyth, Washington, and Wythe, and the town of Damascus. The new construction will bring broadband access to 5,301 serviceable units, including 110 businesses.

**Mathews County and Atlantic Broadband
\$4,201,234**

Mathews County and Atlantic Broadband will construct a regional fiber to the home network. The project will provide broadband access to 1,249 serviceable units, including 142 businesses throughout Caroline, Lancaster, Mathews, and Middlesex counties.

**Albemarle County and CenturyLink
\$2,276,110**

Albemarle County and CenturyLink will construct approximately 100 miles of fiber-optic cable. The project will provide broadband access to 1,675 locations, including 455 businesses within the Box Holly/Taylor's Gap, Campbell/Cobham, Milton Ills, Old Garth Heights, Snow Hill Lane, Tilman Road/Meriweather Hill, Advance Mills/Fray Road, Gilbert Station Road, and Jones Mills Road areas of the county.

King and Queen County and RiverStreet**\$1,482,678**

King and Queen County and RiverStreet will build upon the existing fiber to the home network in the County. The project will connect 524 serviceable units, including 12 businesses.

Augusta County and MGW/Lingo**\$1,270,413**

Augusta County, through a partnership with MGW/Lingo, will construct a fiber to the home network to provide broadband access to 1,099 total locations, including 15 businesses in the McDowell and Deerfield areas of Augusta and Highland counties.

Franklin County and Briscnet**\$1,107,700**

Franklin County and Briscnet will construct a fixed wireless network in multiple locations throughout the County. The project will provide broadband access to 1,996 serviceable units.

Montgomery County and Gigabeam**\$919,569**

Montgomery County and Gigabeam will extend its broadband network. The new construction will bring fixed wireless broadband access to 1,292 serviceable units, including 44 businesses in Allegheny Springs, Elliston, Lafayette, and Shawsville.

Goochland County and Port 80 Internet Services LLC**\$567,557.98**

Goochland County and Port 80 Broadband will construct approximately 40 miles of fiber. The project will provide broadband access to 218 serviceable units, including 10 businesses in Crozier.

Gloucester County and Open Broadband**\$342,657**

Gloucester County and Open Broadband will construct a fixed wireless network. The project will provide broadband access to 313 serviceable units, including 19 businesses in Gloucester and Mathews counties.

City of Chesapeake and Cox Cable**\$90,177**

The City of Chesapeake and Cox Cable will connect 69 serviceable units, including 16 businesses in the Land of Promise Road, John Etheridge Road, and Cedarville Road areas.

Halifax County and EMPOWER Broadband**\$65,776**

Halifax County and EMPOWER Broadband will connect 25 serviceable units to a regional fiber network in Virginia.

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