



PRESS RELEASE

Franklin County Broadband Authority Awarded Over \$4.5 Million in VATI Grant Funding to Expand Broadband Access

For Immediate Release: July 26, 2024

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Rocky Mount, Virginia – The Franklin County Broadband Authority is pleased to announce it has been awarded over \$4.5 million in grant funding from Virginia’s Telecommunication Grant Initiative (VATI) program. This funding will support a new project aimed at bringing broadband to additional unserved areas of Franklin County.

The VATI program, administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), is designed to extend broadband service to currently unserved areas of Virginia. The initiative helps communities build, utilize, and capitalize on telecommunications infrastructure with the goal of fostering strong, competitive communities. Franklin County received notice of the award on July 24th.

“Virginia continues to be a national leader in closing the digital divide, and today’s announcement brings us one step closer to becoming the first state in the nation to achieve statewide universal broadband coverage,” said Governor Glenn Youngkin. “In our increasingly digital world, access to high-speed broadband isn’t a luxury; it’s essential for daily life.”

The County plans to partner with Zitel to develop a new fiber network, adding approximately 2500 premises to their current coverage area. The project will involve the installation of 222 miles of fiber across northern Franklin County, extending along US 220 into southern Franklin County.

“On behalf of the Franklin County Board of Supervisors and as their Broadband Chairman, we are extremely grateful to Governor Youngkin and the VA Department of Housing and Community Development for this VATI award,” said Lorie Smith, Chairman of the Franklin County Broadband Authority. “This funding will enable us to continue our broadband initiatives to support the unserved areas of Franklin County. High-speed broadband is not a luxury; it is a necessity in today’s world.”

For more information on the County’s broadband efforts or the recently approved VATI application, please visit the Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) page or the Franklin County Broadband Authority page on the Franklin County website.

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