



Albemarle
Broadband
Authority

Broadband Status Report

1st Quarter CY2024

March 31st, 2024

The Albemarle Broadband Authority (ABBA) reviewed and is submitting the Broadband Status Report for the first quarter of calendar year 2024 (January 1, 2024 through March 31, 2024). The report is provided to the County of Albemarle, VA Board of Supervisors as information. This report provides summary level information on all activities completed and underway by ABBA and the Broadband Accessibility and Affordability Office (BAAO). Here is this quarter's *From the Chair*:

The Albemarle Broadband Authority decided at its meeting of January 24, 2024 to take a position on the General Assembly's bill HB800 on pole make ready attachments. The Authority found that this bill seemed to shift the burden of pole attachment costs unfairly from internet provider companies to rural electric cooperatives.

At that same meeting the Authority determined that it would need to amend its agreement with Brightspeed for the VATI 2021 project to accommodate the decreased scope of work Brightspeed was willing to complete.

At the February 27, 2024 meeting the Authority received a presentation from Brightspeed indicating that many of the chronic installation and service problems that existed from the time of Centurylink had been addressed by Brightspeed and that service levels were very high. This was supported by observations from the BAAO team with regard to the citizen complaints they were aware of. All in all, this seemed to be real progress in the right direction.

Lastly the Authority determined that its planned March 27th meeting conflicted with the BOS budget meeting schedule, and moved that meeting to April 2, 2024.

Bucky Walsh
ABBA Chair



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Virginia Telecommunication Initiative 2022 Update

Make-ready and construction operations continue in the VATI 22 project in partnership with Firefly Fiber Broadband. This project represents a partnership between Albemarle's four power providers to leverage utility infrastructure to deploy a fiber network that spans 13 counties.

Connections in Albemarle County have begun in areas served by Rappahannock Electric Cooperative and Appalachian Power. Additional project areas are expected to be completed before the next reporting period including some in the Dominion service area.

Connections in the Dominion Energy portion of the build will benefit from the Dominion Middle Mile program. Work has continued by Dominion to expand its middle mile program in Albemarle County during State Corporation Commission (SCC)

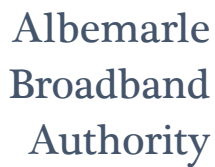
proceedings towards approval of the project. On March . 22nd 2024, the SCC issued its approval of the project.

Some portions of the Dominion build have experienced difficulties acquiring supplemental easements for extending fiber optic cable along existing power infrastructure. For portions of the project impacted by this difficulty, Firefly is investigating alternate routes.

RISE PROJECTS

Albemarle County

CARES - Albemarle	In-Service
Appalachian Power - Red Hill	Connecting Now
REC - Stanardsville (Dyke)	Connecting Now
RISE (Beaver Dam/Paddock Wood Rd)	Spring 2024
RISE (Decca Ln)	Spring 2024
RISE (Ivy Farms)	Spring 2024
RISE (St. John Rd)	Spring 2024
RISE (Thurston)	Spring 2024
RISE (Batesville)	Spring 2025
RISE (Free Union/Earlsville/Waverly)	Spring 2025
RISE (Rockfish Gap)	Spring 2025
RISE (Stony Point/Eastham)	Spring 2025
RISE (Sugar Hollow)	Spring 2025
RISE (Windrift)	Spring 2025
Appalachian Power - Keene	Summer 2025
RISE (Carters Mtn)	Summer 2025
RISE (Ragged Mtn)	Summer 2025
REC - Preddy Creek	Summer 2025
RISE (Albemarle)	TBD





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VATI 2022 Project Milestones	Progress as of February 2024 Report	Percentage Completed to Date*
Miles of Field Data Collection	367	23.47%
Miles of Fiber Design	2,181	65.59%
Miles of Make Ready Construction	1,151	58.37%
Communication Hut Placements	3	25.00%
Miles of Aerial Fiber Placement	735	37.27%
Miles of Underground Fiber Placement	327	24.17%
Miles of Splicing	547	16.74%
Number of Passings	7,715	21.30%

BAAO will continue to monitor the progress of this project and will provide guidance to residents interested in this project on how to register with Firefly to receive updates.

Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) 2021 Update

Following the letter of intent, BAAO and Brightspeed worked with counsel to prepare an amendment to the existing agreement between the Authority and Brightspeed. That agreement was executed by Brightspeed this March and will be before the Authority during the April 2nd, 2024 meeting. Construction of the promised additional 10 locations has been completed, and fiber service will soon be available for order.

An initial invoice from Brightspeed was remitted to BAAO during this reporting period, however, it did not include sufficient supporting materials for reconciliation. Brightspeed will provide a remedied invoice at a later date.

ABBA Public Meetings

The public had in-person and real time audio-visual access to ABBA regular meetings at the County Office Building and over Zoom and real time audio access over telephone on January 24th and February 28th, 2024. The



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March meeting will be held April 2nd, 2024 due to a scheduling conflict with an Albemarle County Board of Supervisors budget work session.

ABBA welcomed public comment at its meetings and invites the public to send questions, comments, and suggestions through email at broadband@albemarle.org. All public meetings held this quarter were recorded and are available for viewing through links on the County's website.

Among the topics discussed by the Authority during its meetings, but not otherwise covered in this document:

- A bill before the general assembly (HB800) that would shift the cost burden for make-ready work to electric cooperative rate payers.
- Discussions regarding continued reports of unburied cables and service issues in Brightspeed service areas
- An update on the SCC's increased scrutiny of Brightspeed telephony service following the transfer of assets

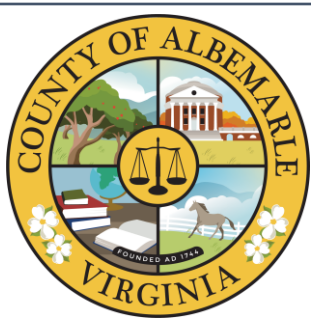
BAAO Updates

The Broadband Office continues to serve as administrators for the Authority, while also developing and engaging programs to meet the County's digital inclusion goals.

During this quarter, the Office attended the National Digital Inclusion Alliance's Net Inclusion 2024 convention in Philadelphia where it received the Digital Trailblazers award on behalf of Albemarle County for its efforts to expand broadband access and promote digital inclusion.

The Office was required to terminate grant funded activity to increase Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) enrollment following funding lapses in the federal program.

This coincides with the wind-down of the ACP program, which will cease at the end of April. The Office is shifting navigator activities to supporting residents in their transition away from ACP.

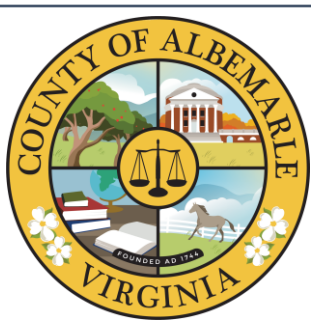


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The Office also continues to work with Firefly and support staff to reach an executed agreement for its ARPA project that will allow the County to achieve universal broadband access by 2025.



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Appendix A – ABBA Summary Budget Report

Update: 03/26/2024

4-4300-91097-491097-950030-9999 (EXPENSE CODE)

BROADBAND INCENTIVES>ALBEMARLE BROADBAND AUTHORITY

	Original budget	Encumbrances	Expenditures	Balance
VATI 22	\$4,500,000.00	\$ 4,116,593.91	\$296,406.09	\$87,000.00
Transfer to Grant Projects			\$87,000.00	-\$87,000.00
VATI 21	\$2,916,110.00	\$2,916,110.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total	\$7,416,110.00	\$7,032,703.91	\$383,406.09	\$0.00

Notes: BAAO reviewing Brightspeed VATI 2021 project close-out materials in preparation for reissuance of first invoice.