



Albemarle
Broadband
Authority

Broadband Status Report

4th Quarter CY2023

December 31st, 2023

The Albemarle Broadband Authority (ABBA) reviewed and is submitting the Broadband Status Report for the fourth quarter of calendar year 2023 (October 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023). 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 meeting of October 25, 2023 was postponed due to the other obligations of its members preventing a quorum. The meeting was held the following week on November 2. At this meeting ABBA gave final approval to a proposal from Brightspeed with regard to the VATI 2021 project wherein Brightspeed will only complete 1430 of the 1466 locations that could be served under this project and receive less in payments from the State and from ABBA. 10 of the locations will be completed in the coming months. The 36 unserved locations of the original 1466 will be connected through future funding programs. The BAAO has taken point on this.

Significant project work for VATI 2022, a joint project with other members of the TJPDC and also known as the Firefly RISE project, will commence in Spring of 2024. This project has many areas that will be reliant on Dominion providing middle mile fiber to Firefly, and much of that work is yet to be completed. It is still expected that this project will complete in 2025. When complete this project will have brought fiber to more than 5000 additional households in Albemarle and result in most folks in the county having access to broadband. Following this project's progress remains a top priority for ABBA.



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Bucky Walsh
ABBA Chair

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. The Red Hill area has already passed 900 locations with over 500 locations registered for service and 100 connections made by December 1st.

Appalachian Power – Red Hill



Current Status: Service Drop Construction
Connections Expected to Begin: Connecting Now
Map/Communications: [Click here to view](#)
Note: *This area is connecting now, [click here to register](#)*

REC – Stanardsville (Dyke)



Current Status: Connecting Now
Map/Communication: [Click here to view](#)
Note: *This area is connecting now, [click here to register](#)*

Connections in the Dominion Energy portion of the build will benefit from the Dominion Middle Mile program. The program is up for review before the State Corporation Commission in February of 2024, Broadband Office staff will monitor the proceedings and submittals. Among the expected submittals is a schedule for completion of the middle mile project.

Some portions of the Dominion Energy build, labeled RISE in the image below, are able to be served prior to completion of the overall project. Notably, the Beaver Dam/Paddock Wood Rd, Decca Ln, Ivy Farms, St. John



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Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) 2021 Update

A Letter of Intent has been prepared and agreed upon by all parties (ABBA and Brightspeed) and transmitted to DHCD for awareness, regarding the completion of the VATI 2021 project. The letter lays out a plan in which Brightspeed will accept a diminished reimbursement for the project, including nearly \$80,000 less from ABBA, and will complete construction of 10 additional locations, including 9 locations along Gilbert Station Rd.

The expected completion of construction activities is now slated for June 2024.

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 November 2nd and December 5th.

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:

- Discussions regarding the Commonwealth's plans for the \$1.48 billion BEAD allocation
- Discussions regarding the then-ongoing BEAD challenge process.
- ABBA agreed to transfer any unencumbered funds (totaling approximately \$117k) to BAAO as part of its ARPA grant efforts

BAAO Updates



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The BAAO continues to serve as administrators of ABBA, while also developing and engaging programs to meet the County's digital inclusion goals.

During this quarter, the BAAO lead efforts to provide outreach opportunities and promote engagement during Digital Inclusion Week. Held October 2nd through the 6th, BAAO, working with coalition partners, was able to provide outreach at a health fair, Simpson Park Fun Day, and an ACPS event for English-language learner families, and received proclamations from both the County of Albemarle and the City of Charlottesville.

Additionally, BAAO hired and trained four digital navigators to do ACP outreach and in-person enrollment assistance as part of its FCC grant. Outreach activities are expected to begin early in the new year.

The leadership demonstrated by ABBA, the Board of Supervisors, and BAAO staff lead to Albemarle County being recognized as a Digital Inclusion Trailblazer by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA). This commendation will be received by BAAO staff at NDIA's Net Inclusion conference in Philadelphia in February.

BAAO continues to work with Firefly Fiber Broadband to go under contract in the ARPA-funded grant effort to achieve universal access throughout Albemarle County. The grant agreement is expected to be completed early in the next quarter; in the interim, BAAO has granted Firefly permission to begin work and construction is expected to be completed by the end of 2025.



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Appendix A – ABBA Summary Budget Report

Update:11/28/2023

4-4300-91097-491097-950030-9999 (EXPENSE CODE) + ARPA 4301 Fund

BROADBAND INCENTIVES>ALBEMARLE BROADBAND AUTHORITY + ARPA Funding

	Original budget	Encumbrances	Expenditures	Balance
VATI 22	\$4,500,000.00	\$ 4,222,949.31	\$190,050.69	\$87,000.00
VATI 21	\$2,916,110.00	\$2,916,110.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Broadband Incentives	\$30,044.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$30,044.00
Subtotal	\$7,446,154.00	\$7,139,059.31	\$190,050.69	\$117,044.00
October 2023 Funds				
Transfer to BAAO				
ARPA Grant				\$ (117,044.00)
Total				\$ -

Notes: In Process: Transfer of \$117,044.00 to ARPA Grant & Payment of the 4th VATI 2022 Invoice of \$58,470.85