



Albemarle  
Broadband  
Authority

# Broadband Status Report

## 1st Quarter CY2024

June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024

The Albemarle Broadband Authority (ABBA) reviewed and is submitting the Broadband Status Report for the second quarter of calendar year 2024 (April 1, 2024 through June 30, 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 met on April 2, 2024, rescheduled from March due to conflicts with the county budget process. We cancelled our regular meetings scheduled for April 24 and May 22 as there was no new business to consider. We met as planned on June 26.*

*During this quarter we have amended our agreements with Brightspeed for VATI 2021 to allow them more time to complete their billing process for this completed project. We have yet to authorize payments for this work and will not do so until it has been properly billed. The Authority continues to watch with great interest the progress Firefly is making on the VATI 2022 project to bring fiber to the remaining areas of the county. They now have a posted target timeline for all of the areas in the county. Tracking the successful completion of this project is the Authority's primary remaining function. It should complete by the end of 2025*

*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.

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)	Summer 2024
RISE (Decca Ln)	Summer 2024
RISE (Ivy Farms)	Summer 2024
RISE (Thurston)	Summer 2024
RISE (St. John Rd)	Fall 2024
RISE (Batesville)	Spring 2025
RISE (Free Union/Earlsville/Waverly)	Spring 2025
RISE (Rockfish Gap)	Spring 2025
RISE (Sugar Hollow)	Spring 2025
RISE (Windrift)	Spring 2025
Appalachian Power - Keene	Summer 2025
REC - Preddy Creek	Summer 2025
RISE (Carters Mtn)	Summer 2025
RISE (Ragged Mtn)	Summer 2025
RISE (Stony Point/Eastham)	Summer 2025

Connections in Albemarle County are approaching 1,000 passings, making this already the second largest project in Albemarle County so far. Revisions to project area timelines reflects adjustments based on partner progress, but the overall project remains on track for release.

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.

Easement acquisition challenges arose along Gordonsville Rd which resulted in a shift by Firefly to underground laterals for the St. John Rd project area. This moves completion for that area to later this year.





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### **Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) 2021 Update**

Construction activity for the entire VATI 2021 area has been completed, including the additional locations on Gilbert Station Rd. All addresses within this project should now be able to order Brightspeed Fiber service.

This follows the execution of the amendment to the agreement between ABBA and Brightspeed that occurred at the March regular meeting on April 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Brightspeed is continuing efforts to acquire sufficient supporting materials from Lumen, from whom the current ownership purchased these assets in 2022. The result is that no invoice has been before the Authority for this project for either the ABBA nor the Commonwealth portion of this project.

These same records issues led ABBA to request an extension of the project through early December of this year, to give Brightspeed sufficient time to prepare close out materials. DHCD approved the extension to December 2, 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 April 2<sup>nd</sup> (as the rescheduled March meeting), and June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The April and May meetings were cancelled due to lack of business before the Authority.

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



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

- Concerns over the quality of work from the VATI 2021 project, including reports of unburied cables and service issues in Brightspeed service areas
- The upcoming need for the annual reorganization meeting

### **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 has completed the wind-down of Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) related activities, including development of an ACP replacement. Albemarle County Bridge, previously ACP Bridge, will now provide up to \$30 per month to eligible households. Enrolled providers include Nelson Cable and Comcast and a template agreement will be posted on the County website when it is available.

Eligibility is based on prior enrollment in ACP during the final months of the program.

The Office continues to staff two Digital Navigator positions as part-time roles, providing support to community members seeking to address a barrier to digital inclusion. The navigators had focused primarily on ACP wind-down but have begun taking office hours at the Jefferson Madison Regional Library Central and Northside branches. An expanded role for navigators is expected within the next quarter.

The Office also completed execution of an agreement with Firefly 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: 06/19/2024

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

### BROADBAND INCENTIVES>ALBEMARLE BROADBAND AUTHORITY

	Original budget	Encumbrances	Expenditures	Balance
VATI 22	\$4,500,000.00	\$ 3,584,410.05	\$828,589.95	
VATI 21	\$2,916,110.00	\$2,916,110.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,416,110.00</b>	<b>\$6,500,520.05</b>	<b>\$828,589.95</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

**Notes:**

BAAO is anticipating Brightspeed **VATI 2021** project close-out materials in preparation for reissuance of first invoice. In May 2024, Brightspeed requested more time to gather background materials from Lumen and DHCD agreed.

**VATI 22 Expenditures** include payment of 7 invoices to TJPDC, payment of 2 TJPDC invoices received in May and June 2024; and the transfer of \$87,000 to the ARPA Grant Project (BAAO)