



# Albemarle Broadband Authority “ABBA”

*Formed by the County of Albemarle, VA Board of Supervisors*

## **Broadband Status Report** **1<sup>st</sup> Quarter CY2020**

**March 31, 2020**

The Albemarle Broadband Authority (ABBA) reviewed and is submitting the Broadband Status Report for first quarter calendar year 2020 (January 1, 2020 through March 31, 2020). 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. The highlight of this report is the award notice received for the Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) 2020 grant funded project with CenturyLink. The project completed the contracting phase and is underway. The project is intended to provide up to gigabit fiber broadband service to 837 unserved locations throughout the County.

ABBA worked on five projects to close 2019 and begin 2020. The first project included expanding who could serve on, as well as the composition of ABBA Board of Directors. With the guidance of the County legal team:

- The Board of Supervisors resolved to modify the list of County staff eligible to serve on the Board of Directors of the Albemarle Broadband Authority as follows:
  1. A Deputy or Assistant County Executive;
  2. The Director of Finance/Chief Financial Officer or designee;
  3. The Director of Community Development or designee (i.e., director of special projects, director of zoning, or other);
  4. The Director of Information Technology; or
  5. The Director of Economic Development.
- Subsequently, Mike Culp resigned his directorship on ABBA; his term will be fulfilled by Assistant County Executive Trevor Henry.
- Bill Fritz was designated as the Community Development designee.
- Rick Randolph, as a retiring BOS member, was replaced by Donna Price.

The 2020 ABBA Board:

- ABBA Chair: Bucky Walsh, Citizen Representative
- ABBA Vice Chair: Waldo Jaquith, Citizen Representative
- Liz Palmer: BOS Representative, Samuel Miller District
- Donna Price: BOS Representative, Scottsville District
- Trevor Henry: County Staff, Assistant County Executive
- Bill Fritz: County Staff, Community Development designee

ABBA also has elected officers:

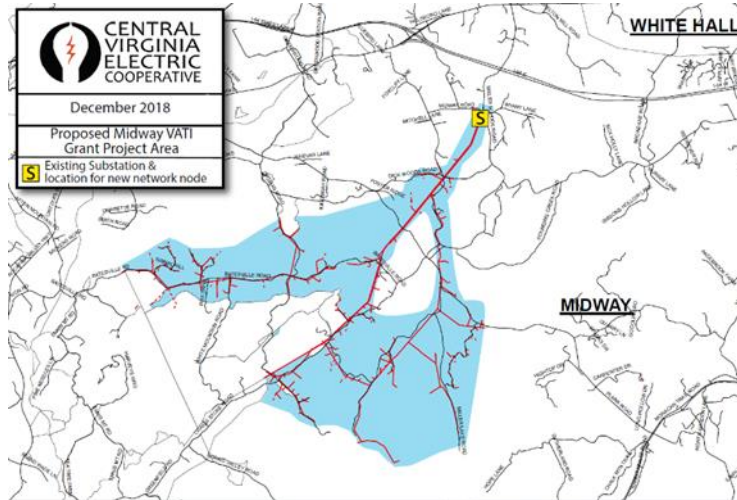
Bill Fritz is Secretary. Rick Randolph will serve out his term as Treasurer.

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The four other major projects include the continued monitoring of the VATI 2019 grant funded project with CVEC / Firefly Fiber Broadband at the CVEC Midway Electrical substation; the award offer of a VATI 2020 grant application with CenturyLink; an effort to release a Request for Information and subsequent RFP for ISP services toward project areas defined during the latest Broadband Survey effort; and the continued efforts to work with the Commonwealth in support of rural broadband expansion.

### CVEC/FireFly Project

ABBA continues to monitor the CVEC / Firefly Fiber Broadband Project. This project was funded through VATI, CVEC, and \$71,500 from ABBA. The project is underway with expected connections starting in the Spring of 2020. VATI requires that this project be complete by May 2020. When complete the project will offer 633 CVEC members access to gigabit fiber broadband internet to the home. The build out is continuing, with over 50% of the CVEC members in area pre-registered for the service.



### CVEC/ABBA VATI 2019 Project Budget

#### Project Budget Information

Please enter your Total Request: \$

Revision #: AF00002 Original Budget

| Cost/Activity Category                      | DHCD Request        | Other Funding         | Total                 |
|---|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telecommunications | <b>\$301,748.00</b> | <b>\$1,152,975.00</b> | <b>\$1,454,723.00</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Construction       | \$ 301,748.00       | \$ 1,081,475.00       | \$1,383,223.00        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other              | \$ 0.00             | \$ 71,500.00          | \$71,500.00           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other              | \$ 0.00             | \$ 0.00               | \$0.00                |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                | <b>\$301,748.00</b> | <b>\$1,152,975.00</b> | <b>\$1,454,723.00</b> |

#### Budget Narrative:

The Albemarle County Broadband Authority (ABBA) is contributing \$71,500 as a direct cash contribution. In addition, Albemarle County is issuing Tax Grants of up to \$71,500 for the new construction costs and infrastructure after the project is complete and spread over the first five years of operation. While this form of support does not provide up front project funding it is additional support from the county to CVEC in support of the project. CVEC will invoice ABBA for the construction costs and equipment costs, ABBA will verify and submit requests for payments from DHCD for the \$301,748.00.



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**CenturyLink VATI 2020 Project**

Discussed earlier as a highlight of this report, ABBA’s and CenturyLink agreement to accept VATI funds for a fiber to the home project for VATI 2020 is finalized and underway. The ABBA CenturyLink VATI 2020 project includes eight subprojects which will pass by 837 locations in various unserved areas of the County.

CenturyLink VATI 2020 Budget Summary (from approved VATI 2020 Application)

Albemarle Broadband Authority  
 ABBA CenturyLink VATI 2020

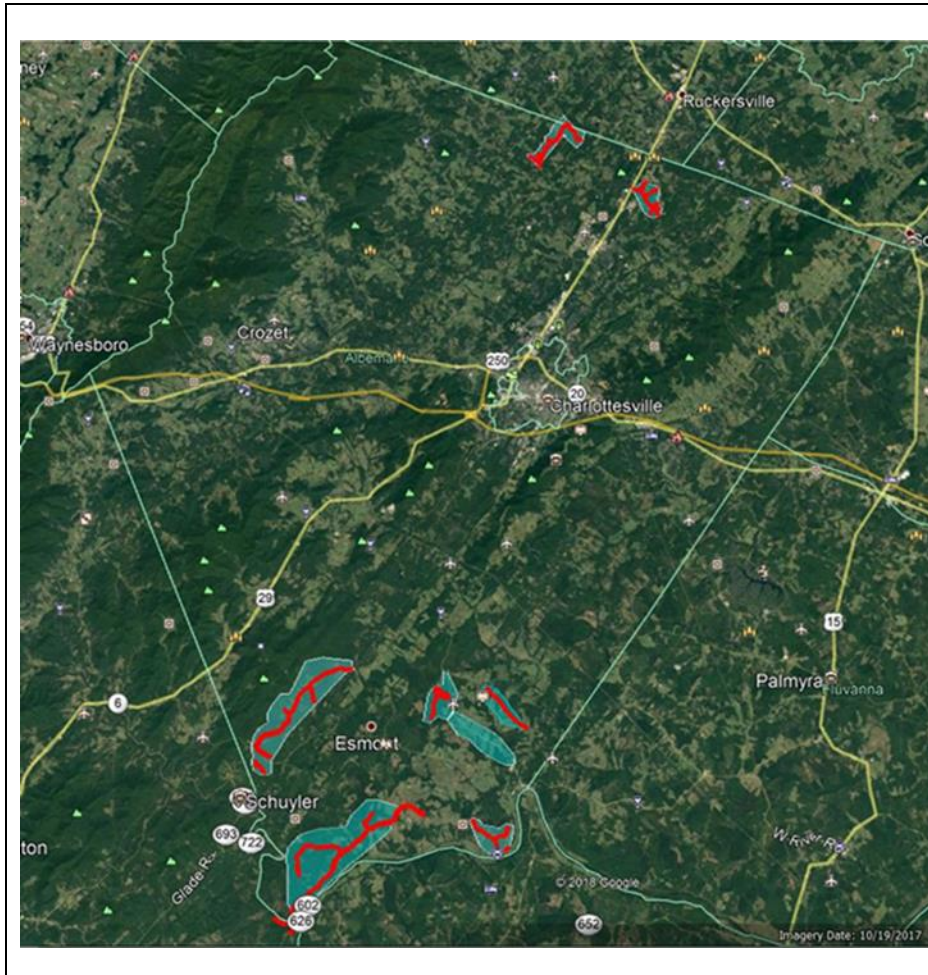
**Budget Information:**

| <b>Cost/Activity Category</b> | <b>DHCD Request</b> | <b>Other Funding</b>  | <b>Total</b>          |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Telecommunications</b>     | <b>\$291,300.00</b> | <b>\$1,650,700.00</b> | <b>\$1,942,000.00</b> |
| Other: Electronics            | \$21,750.00         | \$123,250.00          | \$145,000.00          |
| Other: Fiber                  | \$269,550.00        | \$1,527,450.00        | \$1,797,000.00        |
| <b>Total:</b>                 | <b>\$291,300.00</b> | <b>\$1,650,700.00</b> | <b>\$1,942,000.00</b> |

Budget Narrative:

The total project cost is \$1,942,000. CenturyLink is contributing 70%, or \$1,359,400. ABBA is contributing 15% or \$291,300 for a combined "Other Funding" total of \$1,650,700. The remaining 15% or \$291,300 is being requested from DHCD. The ABBA Contribution of \$291,300 is included in the Other Funding column; ABBA will be invoiced by CenturyLink on a prescribed basis. The Albemarle County Board of Supervisors lists the expansion of Broadband to the rural areas as one of its Strategic Priorities. As such, the County has dedicated staff time to these efforts; the broadband work is considered part of the expected staff accomplishments. CenturyLink Costs include their 70% of the total cost including labor (network design, etc.); equipment, and approximately 45 miles of fiber cable. Enabling 940mbps up and 940mbps down for 8 sections of unserved areas of the County. The 8 sections are (1) Buffalo Hills, (2) Watts Passage, (3) Coles Rolling Road, (4) Scottsville Road, (5) Hatton, (6) Keene, (7) Howardsville, and (8) Green Creek Road. This project provides for the placement of six (6) FTTP/GPON switches, eleven (11) Fiber Distribution Huts, 435 Fiber Distribution Pedestals and approximately 45 miles of fiber cable in Albemarle County to bring fiber based broadband services to 837 serviceable units. With the ABBA contribution; our calculations indicate a cost to VATI of \$348 per serviceable unit. Customers will be able to get speeds up to 940Mb/s while uploading or downloading data in the unserved sections noted where approximately 62% of them have no broadband service at all today and 94% have no access to speeds greater than 10M.

CenturyLink VATI 2020 Project Map



| Project Area            | ~ Cost             | Locations  |
|-------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Buffalo River Rd        | \$288,000          | 170        |
| Watts Passage           | \$336,000          | 137        |
| Coles Rolling Rd        | \$114,000          | 46         |
| Scottsville Rd          | \$106,000          | 80         |
| Hatton Ferry            | \$148,000          | 48         |
| Scottsville Rd to Keene | \$131,000          | 61         |
| Howardsville            | \$455,000          | 140        |
| Green Creek Rd          | \$364,000          | 155        |
| <b>Totals</b>           | <b>\$1,942,000</b> | <b>837</b> |

The 8 project areas are shaded in lighter green. All project areas are submitted as fiber to the home (FTTH) projects with gigabit fiber broadband as one of the service options.

The project contract was approved by DHCD/VATI on March 5, 2020. CenturyLink is starting work with an expected completion date (defined by VATI guidelines) on or before March 5, 2021.

The next project is the work necessary to develop a Request for Proposals for ABBA support toward broadband expansion. The first task was collecting speed test data and broadband reports from citizens. To accomplish the task a team from the Albemarle County Public Schools Technology Department and Albemarle County Local Government launched a new version of the County broadband survey. The new version automatically collects speed test data and has a Spanish language option. Staff developed an ESRI story map to depict the survey collection technique:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/0c7f3e1bd2944c77b04f25571ddabf5e>

The broadband survey data collection effort started on January 25, 2020 with the School Division and Local Government announcing availability. 1,000 broadband survey reports were submitted during February 2020.

## Albemarle County Broadband Survey

[Haga Clic Aquí para Español](#)

We are gathering information about internet speeds throughout the county, but we need your help!

If you're at the location where you'd like to report your internet access and speed, please click on the "Start" button. After the test is complete, you will need to click on the "Report on Broadband Access" button that will appear.

Even though we prefer you to run the speed test, if you aren't able to run the test (e.g. because you aren't at the location that you'd like to report), you can bypass the automated speed test and click on the "Bypass Speed Test" button to go directly to our brief survey where you can manually give us your internet speed information.

Start

Bypass Speed Test

Download

0.00

Mbps

Upload

0.00

Mbps

Ping

0.00

ms

Jitter

0.00

ms

IP Address:



*Screenshot of the Albemarle County Broadband Survey entry page with speed test.*

After the speed test completes (or the submitter can bypass the speed test) a brief survey displays:

Report Broadband Access in Albemarle County, VA



Thank you for taking the speed test. The Albemarle Broadband Authority and Albemarle County Public Schools are working together to collect comprehensive data about internet speeds throughout the County.

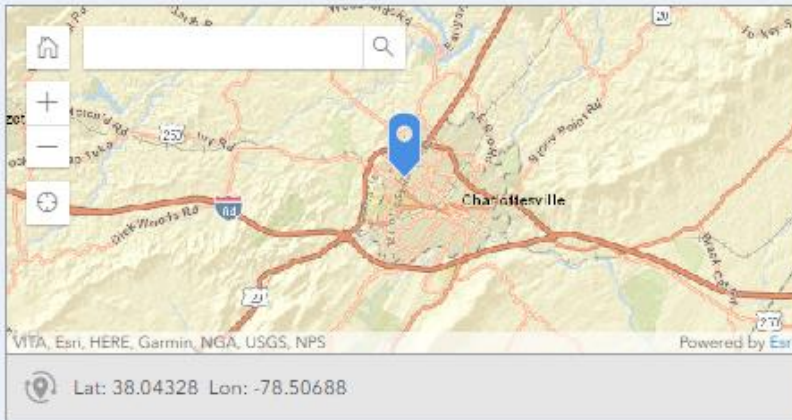
We want to collect as many speed tests as practical. Providing additional information below will help us with grant applications; especially for those areas with limited or no internet access.

Para español, por favor cambie el idioma predeterminado en la parte superior de la página.

Please use the map below to more accurately pinpoint your location for this report.

Select Location\*

Enter an address into the search bar below. You can then click and hold within the map frame to pan to a more accurate position if needed.



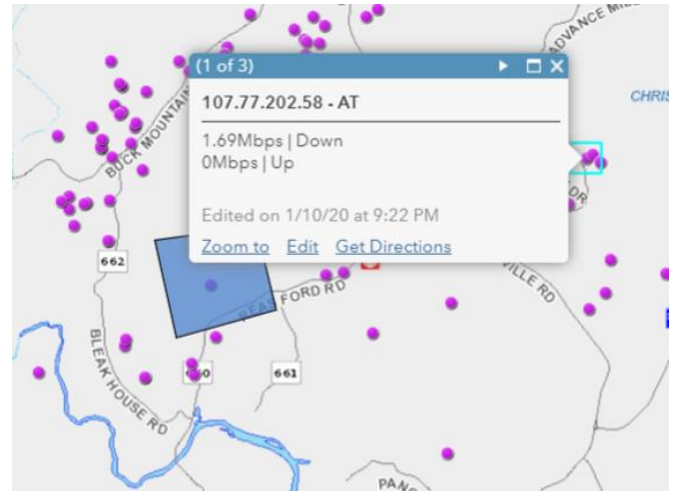
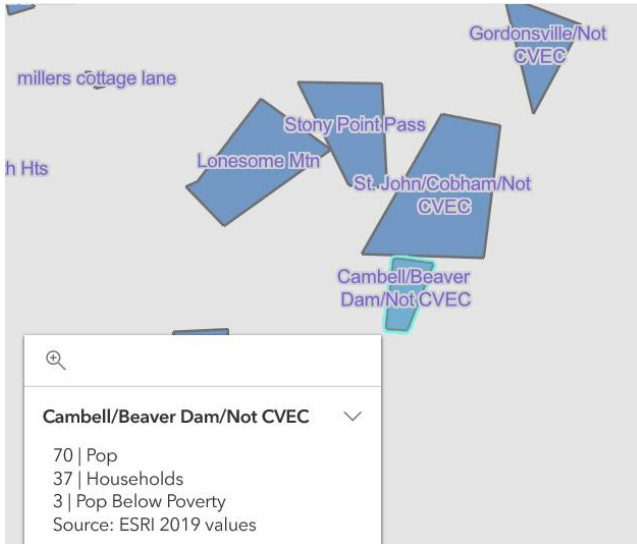
Would you like to provide more detail on your recorded speed test?

Yes

Enter Information

Name of Business/Home Owner/Occupant

Next, ABBA evaluates the submittals defines broadband project areas.



The data collection and definition of broadband project areas is now expanded to show the number of households in each project area, the population of the area, and the number of residents in the area listed as below the poverty level.

The collected data is a valued resource in aiding ABBA’s intent to identify areas of need from direct citizen input. The data can be used for grant application endorsement and in working with ISPs to fill gaps in coverage.

In March 2020, ABBA identified 25 broadband project areas with an estimated 2,100 locations total. The broadband project areas are included in a Request for Information sent to Internet Service Providers (ISPs) on March 27, 2020.

The results from the Request for Information process will be incorporated in a Request for Proposals (RFP). The RFP process will allow ISPs to “bid” on any of the proposed broadband project areas. ABBA will then review the proposals/bids; and competitively negotiate with the top submitters (ISPs.)

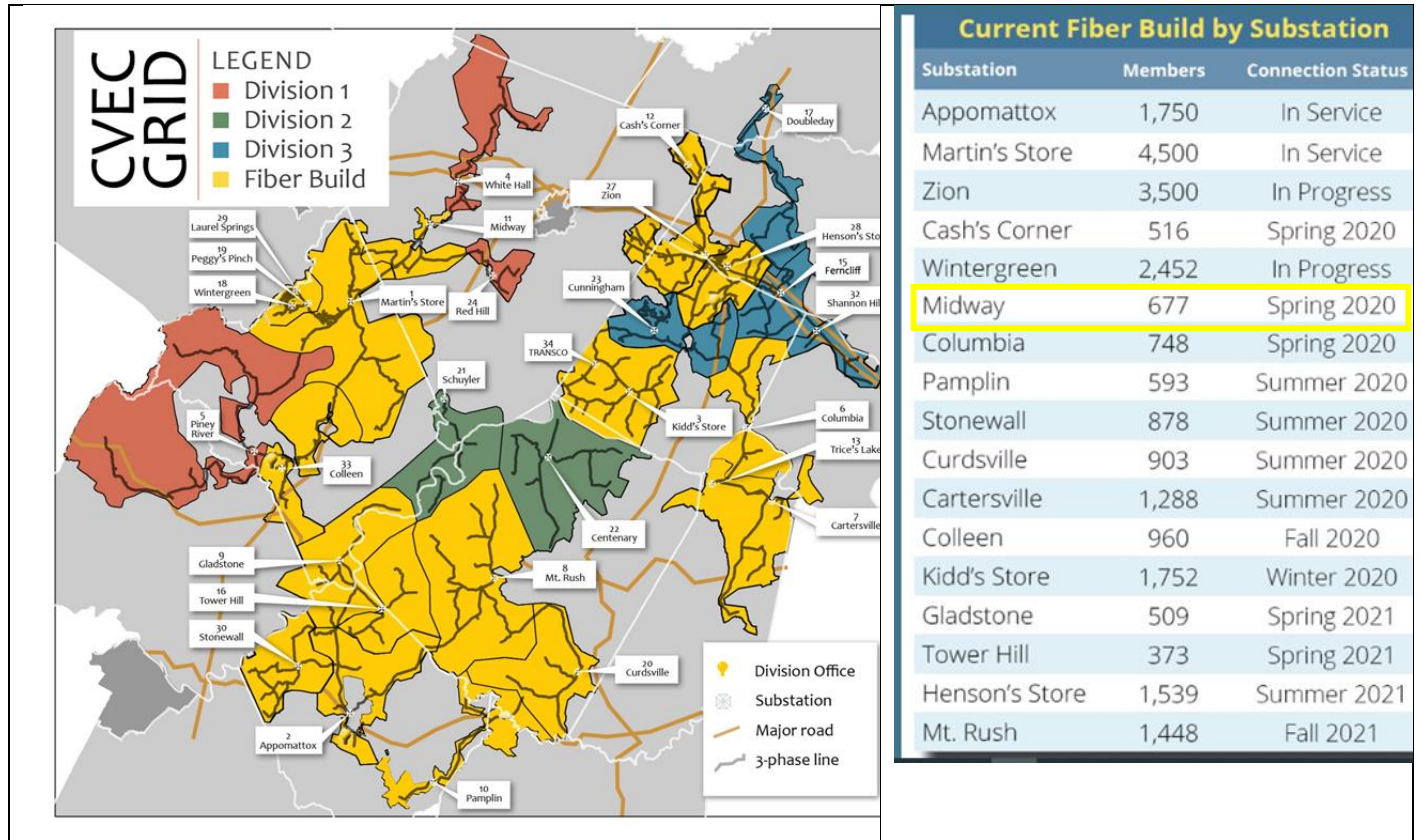
The final project to report on this quarter is ABBA’s support for Commonwealth Initiatives. ABBA was notified by the Commonwealth Connection Coalition of interest in Albemarle County hosting a day long Broadband Summit on behalf of the Governor’s office. Albemarle County is hosting the Commonwealth Connect Broadband Forum on Thursday, June 4, 2020 from 9:00 am - 5:00 pm at Albemarle County Office Building 401 McIntire Rd, Charlottesville, VA 22902. And during the legislative session in February 2020; ABBA approved an expression of support for the Governor’s \$35mil budget line item for the VATI grant program. Individual letters for each legislative representative were emailed / delivered to administrative assistants in the administrative office. The \$35mil budget for VATI was approved.

As means of an update on other items, on February 28, 2020 Ann Mallek, Supervisor for the White Hall District, Bucky Walsh, and Mike Culp attended the USDA ReConnect announcement of a \$28mil Broadband Project grant/loan for one of our ISP partners CVEC/Firefly. Albemarle County is included in this newly funded broadband project. We’re excited because the ReConnect grant/loan will help CVEC continue forward momentum and add White Hall to its FireFly Current Fiber Build by Substation List.

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We’re encouraging people who are interested in learning more about the CVEC FireFly schedule to visit the <http://fireflyva.com> website. The USDA grant/loan will accelerate White Hall and add it to this current fiber build by substation map and list from the FireFly website:



CVEC has not provided a schedule for the ReConnect (White Hall) work and is staying in contact. The Midway project is proceeding on schedule.

### Plans for Next Quarter

ABBA is monitoring the deployment of FirstNet (the US wide public safety network), 5G, and SpaceX’s low earth orbit satellite efforts.

ABBA will continue work to identify ISPs willing to partner with us to address the unserved areas of Albemarle County. The ABBA mapping and data collection tool is frequently used and continues to help ABBA pinpoint unserved areas. The primary project is responding to ISPs who comment on our RFI and the potentially release of an RFP for broadband expansion. The RFI/RFP process sets ABBA forward for VATI 2021 which kicks off in April 2020 with the first major deadline set for July 13, 2020.

We hope you continue to find this broadband report useful and informative.