

## **USDA Rural Development has approved a grant of \$3,000,000**

**Program:** Community Connect Grants

**State/County:** NC/Cherokee, GA/Towns

**Congressman:** Collins, Doug (GA 09), Meadows, Mark (NC 11)

**Senators:** Burr, Richard (NC), Isakson, Johnny (GA), Perdue, David (GA), Tillis, Thom (NC)

**Recipient:** Blue Ridge Mountain Electric Membership Corporation

**Recipient Contact:** Mr. Daniel Frizzell

**Mailing Address:** 875 Main Street East Young Harris, GA 30582

**Email Address:** daniel.frizzell@brmemc.com

**Phone Number:** 706-379-3121

**Project Description:** Blue Ridge Mountain EMC (BRMEMC) will use \$3,000,000 of funds provided by Rural Development's Community Connect program to construct a high-speed fiber-optic network to all homes and businesses located within the Hanging Dog & Grape Creek, Cherokee County, North Carolina Proposed Funded Service Area. This area is a remote and rural community in the Southern Appalachian Mountains of western North Carolina. BRMEMC is a rural electric cooperative and broadband services provider headquartered in Young Harris, Towns County, Georgia and serves two North Carolina counties and three Georgia counties. This investment will enable the construction of a high-speed, active Ethernet fiber-optic network which will enable BRMEMC (and its affiliates) to offer voice, video, and data services to the 865 households and seven businesses within the area. The technology will allow for increased opportunities to access economic development, health care, educational, and quality of life resources that high quality communications services can bring to communities. A community center will also be established in a local general store where residents can access computer access terminals and WiFi service, free of charge.

**People Who Will Benefit:** 2,044

**Other Funding:** \$450,013

**Total Project Cost:** \$3,450,013

**RUS ID:** GA1403-A23

**USDA Rural Development has approved a grant of \$1,799,911**

**Program:** Community Connect Grants

**State/County:** NC/Camden, VA/Northampton

**Congressman:** Jones, Walter B. (NC 03), Taylor, Scott (VA 02)

**Senators:** Burr, Richard (NC), Kaine, Tim (VA), Tillis, Thom (NC), Warner, Mark (VA)

**Recipient:** Eastern Shore Communications, LLC

**Recipient Contact:** Ronald van Geijn

**Mailing Address:** 23120 Lankford Highway Cape Charles, VA 23310

**Email Address:** rvgeijn@esvc.us

**Phone Number:** 757-695-2080

**Project Description:** Eastern Shore Communications, LLC (Eastern Shore) will utilize grant funds to build a hybrid fiber and fixed-wireless high-speed network capable of servicing the proposed funded area with speeds of at least 25 megabits downstream and 3 megabits upstream. The program will provide access to free internet service for residents of the county through computers installed at a local community center of the art services passing approximately 3,000 households in the Camden County, North Carolina service area. A community center will also be established within a library in the service area, where residents can access computer terminals and WiFi, free of charge. This project will allow the residents and businesses in this area to access high quality voice and broadband services so that they may be better able to access the economic, health care, educational, and quality of life opportunities such services enable. Eastern Shore, headquartered in Cape Charles, Northampton, Virginia provides high-speed broadband internet services to both residential and commercial customers in numerous cities in three states, including Berlin, Ocean City, Hughesville, and Pocomoke, Maryland, Chincoteague, Wallops Island, Accomac, Exmore, Cape Charles, Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, and Norfolk, Virginia, and Elizabeth City, North Carolina.

**People Who Will Benefit:** 8,019

**Other Funding:** \$270,000

**Total Project Cost:** \$2,069,911

**RUS ID:** VA1413-A23

## **USDA Rural Development has approved a grant of \$3,000,000**

Program:	Community Connect Grants
State/County:	NC/Madison
Congressman:	Meadows, Mark (NC 11)
Senators:	Burr, Richard (NC), Tillis, Thom (NC)
Recipient:	French Broad Electric Membership Corporation
Recipient Contact:	Jeff Loven
Mailing Address:	3043 NC-213 Highway Marshall, NC 28753
Email Address:	jeff.loven@frenchbroademc.com
Phone Number:	828-649-2051
Project Description:	<p>French Broad Electric Membership Corporation (French Broad) will use \$3,000,000 of funding provided by Community Connect to bring high-speed internet to the greater Laurel community located in Madison County, North Carolina. This area in the Northwestern portion of the county includes over 1,000 homes and businesses and currently has very limited access to high-speed internet service. This project would include construction of fiber optic lines on existing power poles throughout the community. These lines would then branch off and connect each home or business directly to the internet and would be a 100% fiber solution. This is the fastest, most reliable service available and would enable people in the greater Laurel community to receive the same level of service that others enjoy in the more urban areas.</p> <p>Having high-speed broadband in this area will help retain residents and stimulate growth. It will allow business expansion, creating more jobs and also allow people to work from home. It will provide children additional educational opportunities in a technology-driven system and give the elderly more health care flexibility.</p> <p>French Broad, headquartered in Marshall, Madison County, North Carolina has been in business for 77 years, serving a five county area of Western North Carolina and Eastern Tennessee. For the past 20 years, French Broad has been building and expanding a fiber optic network, currently over 350 miles has been deployed serving 350 customers and expanding daily.</p>
People Who Will Benefit:	1,899
Other Funding:	\$450,000
Total Project Cost:	\$3,450,000
RUS ID:	NC1401-A23

## **USDA Rural Development has approved a grant of \$1,933,204**

**Program:** Community Connect Grants

**State/County:** NC/Columbus

**Congressman:** Foxx, Virginia (NC 05), Rouzer, David (NC 07)

**Senators:** Burr, Richard (NC), Tillis, Thom (NC)

**Recipient:** Wilkes Telephone Membership Corporation

**Recipient Contact:** Jody Souther

**Mailing Address:** 1400 River Street Wilkesboro, NC 28697

**Email Address:** jodysouther@myriverstreet.net

**Phone Number:** 336-973-6128

**Project Description:** Wilkes Telephone Membership Corporation will utilize Persistent Poverty funds to finance a Community Connect grant of \$1,933,204 to construct a 42.65 mile Fiber-to-the-Premises network passing 347 households located in the Fair Bluff, Columbus County, North Carolina service area. This network will support service at levels up to 1 Gbps for each subscriber. This broadband network will provide significant benefits to Columbus County by improving their economy, educational access and quality of life. A community center will be provided where residents can access the internet free of charge for at least two years.

**People Who Will Benefit:** 347

**Additional Funding:** \$290,646

**Total Project Cost:** \$2,223,850

**RUS ID:** NC1402-A51