



## **RURALBAND marks quarter of growth and community contribution with fiber-to-the-home network milestones**

*Prince George Electric Cooperative fiber subsidiary's broadband initiative now reaches more than 5,700 in rural eastern Virginia, sparking economic development through cooperative's rural communities*

**WAVERLY, Va., April 6, 2021** – RURALBAND, the fiber entity owned and managed by Prince George Electric Cooperative, continued its pace and progress throughout the first quarter of 2021, working diligently to build out the cooperative's fiber-to-the-home network in eastern Virginia with new construction zones and homes passed every quarter.

Today, RURALBAND high-speed internet and voice services are available to more than 5,700 homes throughout the service territory, and more than 2,000 customers are connected. Construction has started in new zones within both Prince George and Surry Counties, and new zones in Sussex County will begin construction later this year. Maps of current service availability and 2021 build plans are online at [ruralband.coop](http://ruralband.coop).

RURALBAND started construction of its 1,300-mile fiber network in 2017. In January 2020, the fiber entity received a Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) grant to further the network build within Surry County, eventually reaching 100% of residents there. RURALBAND was one of 12 broadband expansion projects to receive this grant.

The FTTH progress in Surry County resulting from the VATI grant contributed to the county's recent recognition with a Community Economic Development Honorable Mention Award from the Virginia Economic Development Association (VEDA).

The VEDA Community Economic Development award honors Surry County for its contributions to improving the local economy, with contributions from RURALBAND that included providing public wi-fi hotspots for community use during the pandemic. In 2020, within one month of the Virginia stay-at-home order in response to the spread of coronavirus, RURALBAND set up free public wi-fi access points in eight locations throughout the community. The access points were available daily in public parking lots to allow residents to safely access high-speed internet from their vehicles to facilitate remote learning, work from home, and other vital communications.

"As a cooperative, our commitment to our members comes first. The digital divide has never been more apparent than we saw during the pandemic," said Casey Logan, President/CEO of Prince George Electric Cooperative. "Whether it's educational work, online business meetings, or checking in on loved ones – our goal is to help our communities stay connected while our crews continue the broadband construction as quickly and safely as possible."

Success at the state and local levels builds on Prince George Electric's federal funding success in an effort to bring high-speed internet access to its membership as quickly as possible. In February, RURALBAND announced more than \$6 million received through the Federal Communications Commission's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) Phase I auction to expand gigabit speed-capable broadband service in portions of counties including Dinwiddie, Isle of Wight, Prince George, Surry and Sussex.

**About [Prince George Electric Cooperative](#)**

Prince George Electric Cooperative in Virginia was chartered in 1939 and today serves over 12,000 meters along 1,300 miles of power lines in 6 counties. Members include residences, small and large businesses, large load commercial and industrial accounts, and agriculture as well as public schools and churches.

**About [RURALBAND](#)**

RURALBAND is the wholly owned fiber subsidiary of Prince George Electric Cooperative, created to manage and operate the fiber-to-the-home network and service for cooperative members.