

Completed USDA Grant Brings Fiber to Columbus County

FOCUS Broadband completed a project which has made high-speed internet service available for more than 2,700 homes and businesses in rural parts of Columbus County. Now, many living in previously unserved areas surrounding Tabor City, Hallsboro, Bolton, Lake Waccamaw, and Whiteville have access to gigabit broadband speeds. Bringing high-speed internet access to these areas was made possible by \$7.9 million in ReConnect grant funds awarded to FOCUS Broadband by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in December of 2019.

“We know having access to high-speed internet will have a tremendous impact on these rural communities, allowing them to work remotely and connect to important resources like telehealth and eLearning,” said Keith Holden, FOCUS Broadband CEO. “We are incredibly grateful for the support of USDA, county officials, and residents of Columbus County who worked with us throughout the project.”

In other areas of Columbus County near Evergreen, Acme-Delco, Riegelwood, and Prosper FOCUS Broadband is using grant funds awarded by the North Carolina GREAT Grant program to expand high-speed internet access to even more unserved areas.



FOCUS Broadband Gives to United Way



Each year, FOCUS Broadband donates to Cape Fear United Way to help fund programs that benefit residents in need. This year, our Board of Directors and employees gave \$16,461 to support the organization through the cooperative’s annual giving campaign.

“Our team is committed to giving back to our local communities,” comments Keith Holden, FOCUS Broadband CEO. “We have a strong history of being a United Way supporter and this contribution is a testament to this commitment.”

Since the company’s first campaign, FOCUS Broadband has donated more than \$465,000 to United Way.

Community and Smart Connection Grants Application Deadline is Approaching

Applications for FOCUS Broadband’s Community Connection and Smart Connection grant programs are being accepted through Thursday, February 29th. FOCUS Broadband will award \$40,000 in community grants funds and \$40,000 in education grants to local non-profits and educators who benefit residents living in areas we serve.

For information about our grant program and how to apply, visit focusbroadband.com/givingback.

Customer Promotes Importance of High-Speed Internet Access at White House Event

FOCUS Broadband customers Edward and Emma Smith of Tar Heel were recently invited to Raleigh to speak with White House and other governmental officials about the positive impacts of having high-speed internet. Edward Smith, a retired US Army veteran, gave opening remarks at the event and introduced the President.

Mr. Smith later commented about his experience by saying, "It was an honor to be there and to represent the town of Tar Heel. If I can help put an emphasis on the importance of bringing high-speed internet to small communities like Tar Heel, then I'm happy to share my story with others."

The Smiths were one of the first residents in the Tar Heel community to receive high-speed internet from FOCUS Broadband as result of a NC GREAT Grant awarded in 2022.



FOCUS Broadband is Holding a Retired Vehicle Auction



On February 28th and 29th, FOCUS Broadband will be auctioning retired trucks, vans, and equipment via sealed bid. Individuals interested in viewing the vehicles and equipment in person may do so by contacting FOCUS Broadband at 910-755-1738 to schedule an appointment. Prospective buyers should drop off their bids in person or mail it to FOCUS Broadband's Headquarters located in Shallotte. Bids will not be accepted via phone, fax, or email and all sales are final.

For a full list of retired vehicles and more details about the auction, including a printable bid form, please visit focusbroadband.com/vehicleauction.

Spot Scams and Protect Your Information

Now more than ever, scammers are becoming persistent in their attempts to trick unsuspecting individuals into giving out personal and financial information. Sometimes they use technology to change the phone number that appears on your caller ID and they may even claim to be a representative of a trusted company like FOCUS Broadband. Your security is our priority, and we're committed to providing you with tips to help you navigate threats effectively and keep you safe from potential scams and unauthorized access to your personal information.



Here's how we'll interact with you to ensure your safety:

- We will never request personal information such as passwords or financial details through email, social media, text message or via an unsolicited call.
- We will never ask for payment in unusual forms, such as gift cards or wire transfers. Any transactions or payments to FOCUS Broadband will always be conducted through a secure channel, guaranteeing the confidentiality of your financial information.

If you encounter suspicious activity or have doubts about the authenticity of communication from FOCUS Broadband, reach out to us directly through our official contact information to verify legitimacy.