

New CAB Funding Expands High-Speed Internet Access

The North Carolina Department of Information Technology (NCDIT) has awarded FOCUS Broadband funding through the Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) program to bring fiber optic internet service to over 700 unserved homes and businesses in Brunswick, Chowan, Columbus, Pender, and Perquimans counties.

“Access to high-speed internet is not just about connectivity; it’s about empowering individuals and communities to thrive in the digital age,” said NCDIT Secretary and State Chief Information Officer Teena Piccione.

The CAB program represents a collaborative effort between county leaders, NCDIT, and local broadband providers to connect remaining unserved and underserved locations throughout North Carolina.

Since 2019, FOCUS Broadband has been a leader in utilizing both federal and state grants to extend high-speed internet service to over 30,000 unserved addresses across 10 counties.



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Chowan County Senior Awarded National Scholarship

Jamaurie Perry, a senior at John A. Holmes High School, has been awarded a \$1,000 national scholarship by the Foundation for Rural Service (FRS). With over 2,000 applicants from across the country, he was one of 50 students selected to receive a scholarship!

Perry received the Roger Cox Scholarship, named in honor of a former FOCUS Broadband CEO. Cox was a strong advocate for rural broadband expansion and held a passion for education.

“We’re proud of Jamaurie’s achievement and excited to see where his future takes him,” said Keith Holden, CEO of FOCUS Broadband. Jamaurie plans to attend Elizabeth City State University this fall to study Biomedical Engineering.



Celebrating 70 Years of Connectivity: From Telephone Days to Broadband Growth

What began as a small, community-rooted effort has grown into a story of innovation and progress. We were reminded of just how far we've come during a recent conversation with Russell Price, who served as General Manager and CEO of FOCUS Broadband (then Atlantic Telephone) from 1985 to 1999.

"When I started, we had just 13 employees," Price recalled. "I spent 34 years working at what was then a telephone company, and within that time, we saw remarkable change."

During his tenure, Price oversaw major milestones in technology and communication services, including the launch of cable TV service — which laid the groundwork for something even bigger: *internet access*.

"Internet service started in the '90s," he said. "And it was a remarkable evolution in technology. It became the go-to and was more than we ever expected it to be."

The evolution didn't stop there. The transition to fiber optics, which FOCUS Broadband continues to expand today, marked a leap forward in both speed and reliability for customers across the region.

"When I became general manager, we had about 11,000 customers. By the time I retired in 1999, we had grown to 39,000," Price shared. "We went from being one of the smallest providers in the state to the largest telephone cooperative in North Carolina."



Watch the
interview here!

Digital Tips for a Smart Smooth Summer



As summer kicks off, your internet connection remains just as essential as ever. Whether you're traveling, working remotely, or welcoming guests, here's how to make sure your FOCUS Broadband connection works for your summer plans:

- **Support summer learning:** Apps like Khan Academy Kids, ABCmouse, and Duolingo keep young minds engaged.
- **Be travel-ready:** Download entertainment and travel tools in advance using your high-speed internet connection.
- **Prep your home:** Consider an internet speed upgrade or a mesh Wi-Fi network to support extra devices when guests arrive.

With FOCUS Broadband, your summer stays connected, wherever it takes you.

The FRS Community Grants Application Opens Soon!

The Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) is offering grant funding to support initiatives that benefit rural communities. Grants range from \$250 to \$5,000 and support projects in education, economic growth, community development, and more. The application window to apply will open on June 13th.

To learn more about the FRS Community Grants, visit frs.org.

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