

## For Immediate Release

**Date:** December 13, 2021  
**Contact:** Melissa Gay, 434-263-7638 ([mgay@mycvec.com](mailto:mgay@mycvec.com))

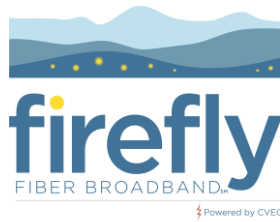
### **Firefly Fiber Broadband<sup>SM</sup> Receives \$79 Million Grant from Virginia Telecommunication Initiative to Provide Universal Broadband Service to Unserved Accounts in 13 Central Virginia Counties**

**Goochland, Va.** – Governor Ralph Northam today announced the award of \$79 million in Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) grants to Firefly Fiber Broadband<sup>SM</sup>, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Central Virginia Electric Cooperative, and its partner Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (REC). The funding will support the \$288 million project which endeavors to offer universal access to gigabit speed broadband service to 36,000 unserved homes and businesses in 13 counties in Central Virginia. Elected officials from each county in the project voted to contribute funds, totaling \$33.5 million. The fiber construction will take approximately three years to complete and will include 4,000 miles of fiber. Dominion Energy Virginia will support the extension of broadband to unserved areas by deploying middle-mile fiber that Firefly will use to connect end-customers to the internet.

The announcement was made Monday afternoon by the Governor at the Goochland Fire House to a group of county officials, local and elected officials, directors, supervisors, first responders, business partners, and Firefly employees. “Broadband access impacts every facet of our daily lives, from education to business to health care,” said Governor Northam. “It’s a necessity for navigating today’s digital world, and this new funding will close Virginia’s digital divide with universal broadband by 2024.”

Senator Mark Warner, Senator Tim Kaine, and Congresswoman Abigail Spanberger participated in the presentation and spoke about the profound impact Firefly’s plans for universal broadband will have on the 13 counties included in the proposal: Albemarle, Amherst, Appomattox, Buckingham, Campbell, Cumberland, Fluvanna, Goochland, Greene, Louisa, Madison, Nelson, and Powhatan.

Wood, Firefly president and CEO states, “Today is a landmark day for broadband in rural central Virginia. Thanks to the critical funding provided by the federal government and made available through the VATI program, we can now assure that every family and business in central Virginia will have access to reliable, affordable internet service equivalent to the best in the United States. We appreciate the hard work and support of Governor Northam, Senator Warner, Senator Kaine and Representative Spanberger as well as the support of the supervisors in each of the partner counties.”



“At Rappahannock Electric Cooperative, our goal has always been to be part of the solution to enable and facilitate broadband to the households and businesses we serve,” said John Hewa, president and CEO of Rappahannock Electric Cooperative. “Being able to partner on this endeavor with the counties, Firefly Broadband and Dominion Energy Virginia is a major accomplishment allowing each of us to further the Commonwealth’s goals of making broadband access available to everyone.”

Administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), VATI provides targeted financial assistance to extend broadband service to areas that are unserved by an internet service provider. Projects were selected through a competitive process that evaluated each project for demonstrated need and benefit for the community, applicant readiness and capacity, and the cost and leverage of the proposed project. The level of funding awarded is based on the infrastructure needs in the project area.

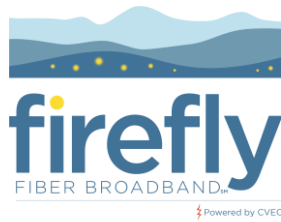
The Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) served as the lead applicant for the grant application. “The TJPDC is proud to serve as the lead applicant and grant administrator for this super-regional project, covering 13 counties and touching five different planning districts. We are grateful for the incredible partnerships that have formed to overcome obstacles to securing universal broadband coverage in our region and look forward to supporting the provision of high-speed fiber internet across the project area.” stated Christine Jacobs, Executive Director of the TJPDC.

“In a world where broadband access is more critical than ever, today’s announcements are an exciting step forward in the process of making internet access a reality for all Virginians,” said Ed Baine, president of Dominion Energy Virginia. “Partnerships like this one in Central Virginia show that when we work together, we can make a real impact, and we’re proud to work with our partners to bring this service to the communities we serve.”

Firefly’s Regional Internet Service Expansion (RISE) Project was launched this year to expand broadband to parts of 13 counties, making internet high-speed internet accessible to more than 45,000 locations and 112,000 Virginians. The RISE project includes 5,000 miles of fiber construction and will cost \$330 million to complete. The project will be executed by partnering with other area utilities to complete the fiber build, using funds secured from the VATI grants and county contributions to aid with construction costs. For more information about the RISE Project, visit <http://www.fireflyva.com/rise>.

Firefly is also the internet service provider (ISP) for the CVEC fiber build, a \$130 million plan to install over 4,500 miles of fiber-optic cable in the 14 counties it serves, providing broadband internet access to all of its 38,000 members. The fiber network will be completed in 2022 and uses laser beams and glass fibers to move data at speeds of up to one gigabit per second, delivering world-class communications to CVEC members served in their electric territory. The fiber-optic network will be installed on and adjacent to existing overhead and underground electric distribution lines, utilizing the existing infrastructure. Firefly celebrated a milestone of





connecting 10,000 customers in October. More information about areas included in this build and for pricing on internet and phone packages, visit [www.fireflyva.com](http://www.fireflyva.com).

Headquartered in Palmyra, VA, Firefly Fiber Broadband<sup>SM</sup> is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Central Virginia Electric Cooperative. Firefly offers lightning-fast internet via fiber to the premise that is reliable and priced fairly with no hidden equipment costs or special introductory pricing that increases the base cost of phone or internet later. Firefly has no contracts, no data caps or slowdowns and offers symmetrical upload and download speeds. Firefly Light offers 100 mbps for \$49.99; Firefly Flash offers 1 gbps for \$79.99; and Firefly Voice is \$34.99 with a \$5.00 discount when bundled with the internet. For more information, visit [www.fireflyva.com](http://www.fireflyva.com).

###

