



# BLAND COUNTY

NEWSLETTER FALL 2022

Volume 6 Issue 4

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### Board of Supervisors

**Randy Johnson**

Chairman

Mechanicsburg Election District

**K. Adam Kidd**

Vice-Chairman

Sharon Election District

**Stephen Kelley**

Seddon Election District

**Keith Costello**

Rocky Gap Election District

**Eric Workman, Ed.D.**

County Administrator

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### APPALACHIAN POWER FILES PLAN TO EXTEND BROADBAND ACCESS IN TWO SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA COUNTIES

A proposal by Appalachian Power could make broadband access available to nearly 15,000 southwest Virginia households and businesses that lack reliable high-speed internet.

Contractors install fiber on Appalachian Power poles in Grayson County, VA in early 2022. A proposal by Appalachian Power would extend fiber in Bland and Montgomery counties.

“Our efforts to bring quality internet access to parts of Bland and Montgomery counties in many ways mirrors what we’ve accomplished in nearby Grayson County,” said Chris Beam, Appalachian Power president and chief operating officer. “Fiber-optic cable allows us to utilize new digital technology on the grid to improve electric service for customers, while also creating an opportunity to lease the excess fiber to an internet service provider for broadband.”

Appalachian Power filed its proposal in early June with the Virginia State Corporation Commission. Pending approval, the company plans to begin construction in approximately six months.

Bland and Montgomery County officials have chosen internet service provider GigaBeam Networks to collaborate on the project. GigaBeam is currently working with Appalachian Power and Grayson County to make broadband access available to roughly 6,000 customers in the rural county. The Elk Creek Volunteer Fire Department in December became the first Grayson County customer to connect to high-speed internet.

“Broadband will have a long-lasting and positive impact as businesses and households have the opportunity to operate in a technology-driven environment,” said Bland County Administrator Eric Workman, who commended Appalachian Power and GigaBeam for their efforts to find solutions to broadband deployment in rural communities.

High-speed internet benefits households by providing access to telemedicine and online education. It also aids localities with business recruitment and retention by ensuring the community is able to operate in today’s digital economy.

“As a local government, we recognize the critical importance of high-speed internet for our citizens and businesses,” said Montgomery County Administrator Craig Meadows. “With our partners Appalachian Power and GigaBeam, we’ve been able to apply for and receive grants to fund significant investment in infrastructure that will bring broadband to citizens throughout the county.”

The lengthy and costly middle-mile infrastructure required to reach customers in mountainous terrain and sparse populations often hinders broadband expansion in rural communities. Bland and Montgomery counties through the New River Valley Regional Commission received a \$39 million Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) grant late last year from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development to assist with financing the project. The state grants help localities capitalize on telecommunications infrastructure with the goal of creating strong, competitive communities.

“We’re making a difference in the lives of families and communities,” said Michael Clemons, chief executive officer for GigaBeam Networks. “We look forward to working with Appalachian Power, Bland and Montgomery counties to make reliable, high-speed internet access a reality for thousands of families who for too long have gone without the ability to tap into the digital world.”

Appalachian Power has 1 million customers in Virginia, West Virginia and Tennessee (as AEP Appalachian Power). It is part of American Electric Power, which is focused on building a smarter energy infrastructure and delivering new technologies and custom energy solutions. AEP’s approximately 16,700 employees operate and maintain the nation’s largest electricity transmission system and more than 224,000 miles of distribution lines to efficiently deliver safe, reliable power to nearly 5.5 million customers in 11 states. AEP is also one of the nation’s largest electricity producers with approximately 31,000 megawatts of diverse generating capacity, including 7,100 megawatts of renewable energy.



[www.blandcountyva.gov](http://www.blandcountyva.gov)

**Bland County is an Equal Opportunity Employer & Provider**

Bland County Treasurer's office will begin selling dog tags for 2023 on November 1, 2022.

Current tags expire on December 31, 2022.

Real Estate and Personal Property tax tickets for 2022 will be mailed in October. The due date for payment of taxes will be December 5, 2022.

If you have any questions, Please contact  
Bland County Treasurer's Office  
276-688-3741

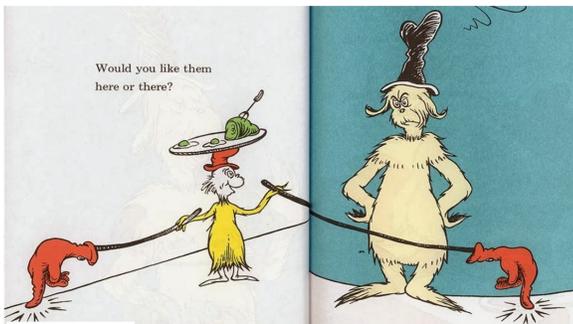
## Fuel Assistance/ Crisis Assistance Program

Fuel Assistance component is to assist eligible households in meeting their immediate home energy needs. The benefits are not intended to cover the household's total costs during the heating season.

The Fuel Assistance component will begin October 11, 2022 in all localities and will end November 11, 2022

Applications are accepted online (<https://commonhelp.virginia.gov/access/>) or by calling the Enterprise Customer Service Center at (855) 635-4370, and at Bland County Department of Social Services (276) 688 - 4111

**NEED INTERNET AT YOUR HOUSE?  
Or with a mouse? Do you need  
internet here or there?  
Do you need internet anywhere?**



**Verizon Wi-Fi Hotspots  
are now available for  
checkout at the  
Library!**



For details call 276-688-3737 or visit [www.blandcolibrary.org](http://www.blandcolibrary.org)



**Contact: Sara King at  
276-688-4111 or by email:  
[sara.king@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:sara.king@dss.virginia.gov)**

## Pre-K Storytime registration begins August 18th, 2022



Come to the library to register!



In each storytime there will be:

- Fun crafts!
- Engaging activities!
- And of course, a story!



Thursdays at 11AM beginning  
September 15th.

Programs last approximately  
45 minutes.



Give us a call  
if you have any questions.



Follow us on Facebook or visit  
our website for more details.

276-688-3737

[www.blandcolibrary.org](http://www.blandcolibrary.org)

# EVENTS CALENDAR

## **SEPTEMBER 2022**

- \* September 5—Holiday—Labor Day  
County Administration Offices Closed
- \* September 13—EDA Meeting @ 5:00 pm
- \* September 20—Children’s Services Act Meeting @ 9:30 am
- \* September 27—Service Authority Meeting @ 4:00 pm
- \* September 27—Board of Supervisors Meeting @ 5:00 pm

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## **OCTOBER 2022**

- \* October 3—Planning Commission Meeting @ 6:00 pm
- \* October 6—Wireless Authority Meeting @ 5:00 pm
- \* October 10—Holiday—Columbus Day  
County Administration Offices Closed
- \* October 11—EDA Meeting @ 5:00 pm
- \* October 18—Children’s Services Act Meeting @ 9:30 am
- \* October 25—Service Authority Meeting @ 4:00 pm
- \* October 25—Board of Supervisors Meeting @ 5:00 pm
- \* October 29—Farmers Market Closes for Season

## **NOVEMBER 2022**

- \* November 7—Planning Commission Meeting @ 6:00 pm
- \* November 8—Holiday—Election Day  
County Administration Offices Closed
- \* November 11—Holiday—Veterans Day  
County Administration Offices Closed
- \* November 15—Children’s Services Act Meeting @ 9:30 am
- \* November 22—Service Authority Meeting @ 4:00 pm
- \* November 22—Board of Supervisors Meeting @ 5:00 pm
- \* November 23, 24, & 25—Holiday—Thanksgiving Day  
County Administration Offices Closed