

Media Release

Contact:

Dr. Eric Workman

County Administrator

County of Bland

Phone: (276) 688-4622

Email: eworkman@bland.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

BLAND COUNTY AWARDED TELECOMMUNICATION PLANNING GRANT

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(The County of Bland, Virginia) – According to the announcement by Governor Terry McAuliffe on Friday, October 30th, \$500,000 in grants were awarded through the Virginia Telecommunications Planning Initiative (VATPI) for Albemarle, Augusta, Culpeper, New Kent, Bland, and Pulaski counties and the town of Altavista. Two joint grants were also awarded to two regional projects including one for Bath and Highland counties and another for Alleghany, Botetourt and Craig counties, the city of Covington and the town of Clifton Forge. The VATPI program provides funding for communities to develop a comprehensive community-based telecommunication plan.

Bland County will receive \$50,000 in grant funds to develop a comprehensive telecommunication plan for the county. The goal of this project will be to develop a plan that will provide the infrastructure necessary to provide better telecommunications throughout the county as well as develop agreements with carriers to provide those services. “Many communities throughout Bland County have limited or no access to high speed internet and cellular communications,” said Karen Hodock, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. “We are excited to be named in this announcement by the Governor. In order for citizens to get the services they require, we will continue to work with federal and state officials as well as the private sector. The offices of Governor McAuliffe and Delegate Morefield have been very supportive as we seek solutions to our challenges.”

The Bland County Wireless Authority has been working to obtain information associated with improving county wide telecommunications over the past year. That readiness will be helpful as the complete plan is put together. With assistance from the Wythe-Bland Foundation, the Wireless Authority and Bland County Emergency Services have been able to have a two-way emergency services propagation study and a wireless internet propagation study completed. The purpose of these studies were to determine current capabilities as well as potential for future development. “The Wireless Authority is committed to providing better and expanded service to the citizens of Bland County. This announcement will provide the Authority the resources needed to plan for the future,” said John Dodson, Chairman of the Bland County Wireless Authority. “The Wireless Authority will be working with a consultant to develop the plan throughout 2016.”

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