

**9. UPDATE ON WIRELESS BROADBAND SERVICES  
BUGGS ISLAND TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE**

As you may recall, Buggs Island Telephone Cooperative applied for \$18.9 million in federal stimulus funding in 2009 to develop a rural broadband system in a 15-county area of Southside Virginia, including Southampton County. We provided them a letter of support for the application at that time. Their grant application was approved in April 2010 and they've been working diligently towards implementation over the past two years.

I've invited their General Manager, Mickey Sims, to your meeting on Monday to discuss the planned roll-out of services. With broadband access presently limited to our towns and larger villages, rural residents have long been relegated to dial-up access, or an expensive satellite or air-card connection. Affordable broadband access is an economic game-changer for rural communities, opening doors and providing opportunities for rural residents that have long been beyond their reach.

**NO MOTION REQUIRED**

## ***You asked: High-speed Internet six months away***

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## **You asked: How long before broadband is available in Western Tidewater?**

FRANKLIN—It will be about six months before high-speed Internet could be available in Western Tidewater's outlying areas.

Construction began last month in Emporia on a network that will include the region. Doug Herrin, project manager with Mid-Atlantic Broadband Cooperative, said crews began burying cable west of Emporia and would continue to follow Route 58 into Courtland and Franklin.

"It took 12 months to get the needed permits and environmental assessment done," Herrin said. "We got through that and we're good to go."

Another line coming from Wakefield would connect with Windsor and Smithfield in Isle of Wight County, Herrin said.

The service should be offered through Buggs Island Telephone and Broadband, which will construct or lease towers to transmit the signal wirelessly, Herrin said.

Buggs Island General Manager Mickey Sims could not be reached.

The project will traverse Southampton and Isle of Wight counties, Franklin, Suffolk and Chesapeake, with interconnection points in Franklin, Windsor, Smithfield and Surry. This would allow user companies to tap into the broadband transmission.

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