6. RURAL BROADBAND INITIATIVE

As you may recall, Buggs Island Telephone Cooperative applied last summer for $18.9 million in federal stimulus funding 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. In late April, they were finally notified that the grant application had been approved.

I've invited their General Manager, Mickey Sims, to your meeting on Monday to discuss their plans and their timeline for Southampton County. While this matter has received modest media coverage, make no mistake about it - this network has TREMENDOUS implications for Southampton County. 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 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