Joe Urban

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To: <editor@rapprecord.com>
Subject: Poor Broadband Access Hurting Lancaster County

To: Editor Rappahannock Record
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At the recent FY 2017-18 budget hearing one of the speakers mentioned we
have a technology gap in the county.
The Wall Street Journal on June 15 headlined : " Rural America Is Stranded
in the Dial-Up Age, High costs and lack
of access to broadband service prevent residents of far-flung communities
from joining the modern economy."
Schools are important to our local economy, but equally important is
broadband service. Most of Lancaster County lacks the 25MB/sec download
speed needed to use the modern internet, stream movies and conduct business.
Both individuals and small business are not going to relocate here if we
lack the tools needed for today's technical infrastructure. Property values
will decline if broadband is not available.

The incumbent providers in Lancaster County, primarily Verizon and Metrocast
have had decades to build out infrastructure and failed to service much of
the county. A pure "for profit" business model will not result in broadband
access for most of our county. Wireless technology can fill some of the
gaps, but is not a reliable substitute for a modern fiber optic-based
system.

Virginia is one of 21 states that has passed laws to discourage or prevent
government entities or public/private partnerships from filling the gaps.
Instead of investing 3 million dollars in an Emergency Operations Center I
urge our citizens and supervisors to think of creative ways to jump start a
broadband fiber optic network for the entire county.
Underground fiber costs about $25000 per mile to install -- $3 million would
pay for 120 miles of fiber -- now that would be an investment in our future.

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