

Rose Hill joins information superhighway race

New community-wide technology improvements completed

By BRANDY MURRAY
Staff Writer



ROSE HILL, Va. — "Rose Hill now has telecommunication capabilities unsurpassed anywhere in the country," Virginia Congressman Frederick "Rick" Boucher told a sizable Rose Hill crowd at the Rose Hill Community Broadband and Rose Hill Library Expansion ribbon cutting ceremony on Monday.

"The five miles of fiber optic lines deployed directly into 150 [Rose Hill] homes and businesses means an internet speed that is lightning fast, crystal clear TV and no interruption in phone service," the Congressman told those in attendance. He explained further that the new technology improvements will enhance economic development in southwestern Virginia.

The Rose Hill Library Expansion brings about a computer lab with ten modern, updated computers with access to the new broadband connection. Congressman Boucher indicated that classes will be offered, free to the public, within the new technology center.

Virginia Senator William Wampler, Jr. made an appearance at the ceremony, and let the interested crowd know that he has familial roots in Lee County, Va., and as far West as Harrogate, Tenn. Wampler stressed that economic development is a particular concern of his, especially in rural Virginian communities. "We need to start where Virginia starts, in the Cumberland Gap area." Wampler also predicted that the technological improvements made this year will transform the economy of southwestern Virginia within the next ten years.

The \$646,048 project was funded by State and Federal Grants, as well as by other entities: USDA- Rural Utility Service; the Virginia Tobacco Commission; C. Bascom Slemple Foundation and the Lee County Board of Supervisors.

The project engineer was Lane Engineering, Inc. The project architect was J.A. Gibson & Associates, PC. Library Construction was done by Pete Sumpter General Contractors. Sunset Digital Communications is providing the broadband service. LENOWISCO Planning District Commission and Appalachian Resources, LLC were project managers. In addition to Congressman Boucher and Senator Wampler; Ronald Flanary, LENOWISCO Executive Director, Delegate Terry Kilgore, and USDA Field Representative Patrick Carey made remarks to the crowd at the ceremony. The Wilderness Road Dulcimer Club provided music and refreshments were served.

Brandy Murray is a Staff Writer for the Daily News. E-mail her at bmurray@middlesborodailynews.com.



Clockwise from above right:

Virginian Charlie James Poe was recognized publicly for his efforts in the Rose Hill Community Broadband and Library Expansion project. "Some of the staff guys started calling [Poe] 'MacGyver', if it weren't for his ingenuity, we wouldn't be here today," LENOWISCO Executive Director Ronald Flanary said when he presented Poe with the plaque that Poe is shown holding in the photo above.

Terry Kilgore, Virginia House of Delegates, speaks to the crowd at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Rose Hill Community Broadband and Library Expansion as USDA Field Representative Patrick Carey (left) and Congressman Frederick "Rick" Boucher wait their turn to address the crowd.

Virginia State Senator William C. Wampler, Jr. checks out the new technology center at Rose Hill library. "This is lightning fast," he said of the new broadband connection as he surfed the web for weather updates.