



Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Initiative

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is "broadband"?

In general, broadband refers to telecommunication in which a wide band of frequencies is available to transmit information. Because a wide band of frequencies is available, information is sent on many different frequencies or channels within the band concurrently, allowing more information to be transmitted in a given amount of time (much as more lanes on a highway allow more cars to travel on it at the same time).

Ultimately, broadband is the essential frequency required by business today and in the future.

2. What is DSL and how does broadband differ?

DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) - a technology for bringing high-bandwidth information to homes and small businesses over ordinary copper telephone lines. Assuming your home or small business is close enough to a telephone company central office that offers DSL service, you may be able to receive data at rates up to 6.1 megabits (millions of bits) per second (of a theoretical 8.448 megabits per second), enabling continuous transmission of motion video, audio, and even 3-D effects. More typically, individual connections will provide from 1.544 Mbps to 512 Kbps downstream and about 128 Kbps upstream. A DSL line can carry both data and voice signals and the data part of the line is continuously connected. DSL competes with the cable modem and satellite transmission for high-bandwidth information reception.

The bottom line is there is a limit to what DSL can provide. DSL is quickly becoming outdated and unable to keep up with the development of services that will require broadband access.

3. What is the ESVBA?

The ESVBA is a not for profit Authority created by a resolution of Northampton and Accomack counties under the Virginia Wireless Services Authority Act. The ESVBA will oversee the construction and operation of the planned high-speed Internet fiber backbone and distribution networks on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

4. What is the timeline for the Broadband Initiative?

Construction contracts have been awarded and construction will begin in February of 2009 and be completed by the end of the summer. The plan is to have the backbone "lit" (traffic traveling on it) by the end of 2009.

The community networks will be built off of the backbone (like off ramps from the highway). The design of the network to key areas such as hospitals, schools will begin early in 2009. The goal is to start construction by the end of the summer.

Plans for community networks in Cape Charles, Parksley, Onancock and Chincoteague are underway right now. The first community networks will be built after the backbone is completed. We will be designing these community networks so that they will work best for the businesses here today and those that will locate here tomorrow. Creating our action plans and committing to purchasing services today will allow each community to look how they might get involved with the overall Initiative.

Our vision is to complete the network on the Eastern Shore by the year 2012. This vision is dependent on the success of the early stages and the generation of profits to keep us building out to all the businesses and residents.

5. How will broadband benefit the town and public buildings? (EMS, schools, etc.)

The public buildings such as the Town Complex, schools and Hospice will be able to use the Broadband for a variety of uses. For example, the schools will be able to better administer standardized tests and improve current processes such as running their payroll. They will have more capacity for less cost with the ES Broadband.

Long Distance Learning is another great example for schools, businesses and individuals. With Broadband it can be readily available including watching classroom sessions over the Internet, chatting with the teacher or taking tests. It won't matter where the classroom is actually located. Train or re-train employees, become certified in your specialty or learn something new for the fun of it!

6. How will broadband benefit my business?

There are many applications that you will be able to take advantage of including the same advantages that we identified for our schools and town buildings. If you are a high volume user and therefore require large capacity, then you too should be able to take advantage of more capacity for a lower price.

For regular users more applications will be available such as Video Conferencing (Skype); applications that run over the Internet such as Payroll or Bookkeeping; security and monitoring systems with webcams; and the ability to monitor heating and cooling systems.

7. How will broadband benefit our Healthcare providers and us as Patients?

We look forward to implementing higher speed broadband in our Rural Health clinics and hospitals, which will allow us to take advantage of Telehealth and Telemedicine applications.

Any physician in the network no matter their location could read test results. For shut-ins and patients with chronic illness such as diabetes, having their health monitored from their home would be possible with the availability of Broadband.

8. I understand that broadband availability will make our area more appealing to certain businesses. What types of businesses and why would they find broadband availability appealing?

This has become a standard requirement for any medium to large business but in particular we look forward to economic growth in businesses that will provide goods and services to NASA and Wallops. High tech businesses need broadband to transmit a lot of data or information. We are also in a great area to provide locations for businesses that want to get out of the large cities where they can work in a beautiful natural setting and enjoy a great quality of life.

9. If such businesses find the Towns on the Eastern Shore more appealing because broadband is available, can we assume that there will be new jobs created and, if so, what kind of jobs?

Other rural locations that have installed Broadband have found it has attracted many kinds of businesses and jobs. We hope to attract the same kind of businesses that will be able to provide ‘regular’ skilled jobs or entry-level jobs but also some that will be highly specialized. That means anything from call centers, hotels, restaurants and healthcare.

10. How about the average Eastern Shore resident? What kind of services will be available to us?

The goal of the Broadband is to be able to provide any and all of the services that are available in the big city. Today that is video on demand and bundled services such as telephone and Internet that provide big cost savings. Tomorrow that could be security systems or monitoring home heating and cooling systems from a distance.

11. With all these new services, you must feel that there will be a lot of new service providers - companies other than Verizon and Charter. Why will all these new companies suddenly find it attractive to provide their services to us?

Definitely. We have already had interest from other companies to bring their products here on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. The service providers like our network because they don’t have to build it themselves.

Companies today have to show they can pay for what they build in a couple of years – that is hard to do with a large network like we are building. So, they can just buy space on our network and then they are up and ready to sell you all the newest and coolest Internet, movies and things they have not even invented yet.

12. What will these services cost? I mean, will my cable bill increase?

We do not expect it to for two reasons:

1. With companies competing for your business you will have choice and better rates.
2. Companies like you to buy several things from them and so they bundle products together, which means if you buy telephone, long distance, and Internet from the same company, they give you a significant discount. These are the bundles we see advertised today on television but are not available to residents or businesses on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

For more information please contact:

Cheryl Tyson
 Project Manager
 Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority
 (757) 787-1908
ctyson@esvabroadband.net

Patrick Coady
 Interim Executive Director
 (757) 787-1390
pcoady@esvabroadband.net