



PUBLIC INFORMATION

ITEM NO. 5

DATE OF MEETING: March 16, 2015

REQUESTED BY: Kyle M. Breuer, Director, Planning and Community Development

SHORT TITLE: Presentation on Pender County's Broadband Efforts

BACKGROUND: Staff has been working with the North Carolina Broadband Division of the Department of Commerce, which has been relocated to the Office of Digital Infrastructure, under the State's Office of Information Technology Systems (OITS) to gauge deficiencies and demand of broadband infrastructure throughout the county, particularly in unserved and underserved areas. Information will be provided to the Board in regards of documented demand, current infrastructure within the County, economic development efforts, and efforts to work with Internet Service Providers (ISP's) to expand broadband infrastructure throughout Pender County.

Kyle Breuer

From: Fred Walker <fastfred@intrstar.net>
Sent: Saturday, February 28, 2015 4:36 PM
To: Kyle Breuer
Cc: Bill.Rabon@ncleg.net; Chris.Millis@ncleg.net; jason.semple@nc.gov
Subject: Message for Pender meeting on hi speed data access

Kyle M. Breuer, Director

Planning & Community Development

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Hello:

Please read the following message for me at the Pender County meeting on High Speed Data Access 03/16/2015.
Thank you for your help in this matter, Fred Walker

Hello:

I wish I could be with you at this meeting however my work has me in Texas at the moment.

Well before hurricane Floyd in 1999 the phone company stonewalled the residents of Western Pender County when asked to provide high speed Data / INTERNET access / basic DSL. After hurricane Floyd it is my understanding the State and Federal Government gave the Phone Companies Tax incentives and money to improve the phone systems in the flooded areas of Western Pender County. Where did the money go? I was told by a Bell South representative in late 2000 that we should have high speed Data / INTERNET access available within two years or less due to the improvements made after Floyd.

I have called & Emailed or used the phone company web site several times a year, every year since Floyd and heard the same excuse. High speed Data will be available soon. The truth is, the phone companies have conspired with the State Legislature to inhibit and block efforts on the part of any would be competitors be they private or Local Governments. This so called legal racketeering practice has denied the Citizenry of Western Pender County any form of affordable high speed data access.

Many third world phone & data services far exceed what is available in Western Pender County. You can however go 3 – 5 miles West or North to Bladen County and find reasonably priced high speed Data / INTERNET access.

If you take the time to check you will also note, using current rates, that by supplying high speed data (DSL) the monthly phone charges for an average phone service would go down! There is no incentive for the current phone company to supply higher speed DSL service. They make more money ripping of the Citizens of Pender County with very high billing charges for poor quality phone services that date back to the 1970s and later. If one looks at current subscription rates for high speed data service you will find the cost of such service for residents of Western Pender County are as much as 5 – 6 times higher than the service speeds for Citizens living in Burgaw or the Hampstead areas of the County. 3 Mbps Internet Speeds are available from AT&T near Currie NC. For \$30.00 per month unlimited. I have a very spotty cellular phone & data plan from Verizon that is over \$185.00 a month and is limited to 8 Gb of down loaded Data. I pay 162% more for a much less desirable phone & data service. The only other available service is by Satellite and cost much more than the Verizon wireless.

Were we to apply current thinking which attempts to justify current access to Data Service to the supplies of rural electrical service available in the same geographic areas in the 1950s we would have to light with kerosene lamps and candles!

It is time for the Government of Pender County to demand the State of North Carolina allow equal and unlimited access to High Speed Data

Services in Pender County. Competition for Data Service should be equally open to all Providers currently supplying Phone and Data service in Pender County. Free access and competition for the right to supply High Speed Data and Phone service should apply to any new provider wishing to install services in Pender County. Should the State fail to make the changes necessary and choose to not allow free open markets Pender County should provide the Data service.

The County can supply water and sewer service why not phone and data?

The current phone companies have proven they are not interested in supplying these services. Supply the Hi Speed Services and let the Courts decide if State supported racketeering practices which deny Citizens equal access are legal!

Respectfully, Fred Walker, Currie, North Carolina