



**WCFIBER AND UPCOUNTRY FIBER TO BRING BROADBAND INTERNET TO NEARLY 13,000 IN
UNDERSERVED AREAS OF ANDERSON COUNTY**

\$42 million project to help bridge the “digital divide” for the underserved

Abbeville and Pickens, SC – March 08, 2024 – Underserved areas of Anderson County will soon have access to broadband internet through internet service providers [WCFIBER](#), a wholly-owned subsidiary of [West Carolina Rural Telephone Cooperative](#) (WCTEL), and [Upcountry Fiber](#), a partnership between [Blue Ridge Electric Co-op](#) (BREC) and [WCFIBER](#), thanks to a \$32 million federal grant designated by the South Carolina Broadband Office (SCBBO). The grant allows WCFIBER and Upcountry Fiber to continue to fulfill their mission to help bridge the “digital divide” where little to no access exists. An additional \$10 million from WCFIBER and Upcountry Fiber will be invested to extend the reach of the project.

Nearly 3,000 Anderson County underserved addresses identified by SCBBO that currently do not have access to broadband internet service are included in the grant. Construction has begun, and by the end of 2025, those addresses included in the SCBBO grant, and an additional 10,000 addresses surrounding them, will be able to sign up for broadband internet service through either WCFIBER or Upcountry Fiber, depending on their location.

Specifically, the underserved addresses in areas of Anderson County that will soon have access to fiber internet are around Belton, Honea Path, Piercetown, Sandy Springs, La France, Broadway, Williamston, Homeland Park, and other areas throughout Anderson County. Residents will be notified of construction and order timelines in the coming weeks.

Upon completion of construction mainly funded by this grant, WCFIBER and Upcountry Fiber together will have invested approximately \$76 million in broadband to areas that have been previously underserved since 2021, resulting in construction of approximately 1,155.8 miles of fiber that will pass nearly 19,000 eligible addresses, mainly residential.

“We are so thankful to Jim Stritzinger and his team in the South Carolina Broadband Office for awarding us this grant so that more citizens of Anderson County have access to this necessary utility,” said Anderson County Council Chair Tommy Dunn.

“No matter where you are located within the grant footprint, you can expect to receive the same exceptional fiber internet service from either WCFIBER or Upcountry Fiber,” said Jeff Wilson, president and CEO of WCTEL. “Thanks to the South Carolina Broadband Office, we are able to help modernize the infrastructure in these underserved communities.”

“Utility cooperatives like ours have a long history of serving our neighbors in traditionally underserved areas,” said Jim Lovinggood, president and CEO of Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative. “This grant not only benefits people in their homes but makes it possible for them to have access to better healthcare, education and job opportunities, which helps to build a better, more competitive community for everyone.”

WCTEL has served parts of the Starr-Iva communities of Anderson County with fiber internet services for more than 15 years, and with telecommunications services since the cooperative was founded more than 70 years ago.

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About WCFIBER

The WCTEL family of companies, including [WCTEL](#), [WCFIBER](#), and [Upcountry Fiber](#), combine a tradition of service with the best technology available. Friendly, community-minded employees are committed to building a fiber network that is ready for whatever the future of technology may hold. The fiber optic network provides voice, data, video, security, and hosted business services in upstate South Carolina to include McCormick County, Abbeville County, and the city of Newberry as well as parts of Anderson County, Greenwood County, Oconee County, Pickens County, Greenville County, Spartanburg County, and Columbia County, GA. To find out more about WCTEL, visit wctel.com. WCTEL is designated as a nationally recognized Smart Rural Community and Certified Gig-Capable Provider by NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association.

About Upcountry Fiber

[Upcountry Fiber](#) is a high-speed fiber internet provider to Anderson, Greenville, Oconee, and Pickens counties. Established in Fall 2020, Upcountry Fiber is the product of a partnership between [Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative](#) and [WCFIBER](#), a subsidiary of [West Carolina Rural Telephone Cooperative](#) (WCTEL). Founded by organizations created to electrify and connect rural areas of South Carolina; decades later, Upcountry Fiber’s mission is to bridge the digital divide. Offering symmetrical internet speeds up to 10 Gbps over a fiber network, Upcountry Fiber has the fastest and most reliable high-speed internet in the area. To learn more about Upcountry Fiber, visit us at www.UpcountryFiber.com.

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