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Franklin County Broadband Access Found Better Than Expected *Communications Specialist from Virtual IT Conducts Extensive Study*

Franklin County is expanding rapidly, from young families looking for a rural lifestyle, to Northern retirees looking for a warmer climate. And newcomers bring new demands. "The type of people moving into the area want and expect broadband access," says Sandie Terry, Director of Information Technology for Franklin County in southwest Virginia.

The pressure was on to increase county broadband access to the mountainous county. "The economic development department was constantly being asked by prospects: 'Where is broadband available?' And the supervisors were getting constant request by the citizens," she says.

Terry engaged Virtual IT communications specialist Sam Carlson to provide a detailed assessment of the County's broadband coverage and options, which entailed contacting vendors, and coaxing them into providing information. "Sometimes vendors don't [eagerly] give out extra information," she explains.

Working with the County's GIS department, Carlson took a multi-pronged approach, including:

- Eliciting and documenting the current service providers, their services and delivery methods, pricing structure, accessibility and reliability within different geographic regions within the County
- Obtaining coordinates for mapping broadband locations
- Investigating the Mid-Atlantic Trunk Line Route and any potential / future broadband deployment areas, resulting from the project
- Developing a broadband report and presenting it to County stakeholders

Terry remarked that the list of potential providers was long and included local, regional, national resellers, and T-1 providers. "We thought we'd had very little broadband coverage when we started this project," says Terry. "But Virtual IT was able to show our administrator and economic development prospects that Franklin County was not out of line with the rest of the region. We found that we were better covered than we thought we were."

Virtual IT is a full-service information technology consultancy, providing high-level strategic and tactical support for businesses, contractors and government agencies. The firm provides services in the areas of business strategy, IT strategy, and enterprise application integration and development. Headquartered in southwestern Virginia, and serving the Mid-Atlantic and Southern regions, the company provides clients with high-quality corporate services within a small company setting.

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