



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jan H. Gardner
County Executive

News Release

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CONTACT: [Vivian Laxton](#)
Communications Director, 301-600-1315

Broadband Access to Expand in Frederick County

County Partners with Shentel to Provide Service to Several Unserved Areas

FREDERICK, Md. — Access to broadband service will soon be expanded to several rural areas as Frederick County Government partners with telecommunications company Shentel Corp. to implement an integral piece of the County's multi-year rural broadband strategy. Shentel has received a \$10 million grant from the Maryland Office of Statewide Broadband to install broadband internet for areas in the north, northeast, and southern portions of Frederick County. Funding for the grants came from the federal American Rescue Plan Act. Bringing broadband to these unserved regions was identified as a priority in the 2020 Rural Broadband Study commissioned by Frederick County Government.

"Reliable internet access is a necessity in today's world," Frederick County Executive Jan Gardner said. "Building out a system to serve all pockets of our community will take time and money, so I welcome news of this grant to help reach many of our rural areas. I want to thank our federal partners, particularly Senator Chris Van Hollen and Congressman David Trone, for making broadband a priority. Frederick County's broadband study helped to lay the groundwork for the project announced today, and we will continue to look for opportunities to encourage private companies to invest in rural areas."

"As the last few years have shown, high-quality and affordable internet access is critical for education, telehealth, and most importantly — jobs," said Congressman David Trone. "This funding, provided by the federal American Rescue Plan, is a win for investing in Frederick County's way of life while maintaining access to the essential services and economic benefits that broadband provides. By working with our state and local leaders, I remain committed to delivering the tools our communities need to thrive in the 21st century."

The project Shentel will undertake targets three distinct areas identified as being unserved in the County's Rural Broadband Study. (See map.) There are an estimated 3,000 properties in these areas without wired infrastructure to provide high-speed internet access. The project is able to move forward thanks to the newly established Office of Broadband and Enterprise Projects within the County's Division of Interagency Information Technology. Staff in the broadband office are charged with identifying potential projects and grants that could increase access to reliable broadband for residents and businesses. Frederick County Government does not intend to become a broadband provider.

Frederick County's Rural Broadband Study can be found at www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/broadband. Questions about the study or the Shentel project can be sent to broadband@frederickcountymd.gov.

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Winchester Hall • 12 East Church Street, Frederick, MD 21701 • 301-600-1100 • Fax 301-600-1050
www.FrederickCountyMD.gov