

COUNTY ADMINISTRATION  
botetourtva.gov

57 S. Center Drive, Suite 200  
Daleville, VA 24083

P: (540) 928-2006  
F: (540) 473-8225



## Media Contacts:



**Tiffany Bradbury**  
Director of Communications  
(540) 928-2004  
[tbradbury@botetourtva.gov](mailto:tbradbury@botetourtva.gov)



**Karen Hoch**  
Director, Marketing  
(336) 410-4209  
[Karen.hoch@lumosnet.com](mailto:Karen.hoch@lumosnet.com)

## Botetourt County and LUMOS Partner for Universal Coverage Broadband Grant

**Date: September 28, 2021 (Botetourt County, VA)** – Botetourt County and LUMOS are partnering to bring universal broadband coverage to homes and businesses by applying for a Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) grant from the Commonwealth of Virginia. Universal broadband coverage means that all residents and businesses have access to reliable internet service with speeds that meet or exceed the federal definition of 25/3 service. This particular proposal seeks to deliver Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) broadband connectivity to 1,901 addresses in Botetourt County. LUMOS is also planning additional expansion projects targeting universal fiber coverage in the area.

This VATI proposal follows two previous successful projects and a Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) funded CARES expansion project in Botetourt County serving a total of approximately 1,500 addresses and culminates the County's work to deliver broadband connectivity to every residence and business. This initiative began in 2016 after a broadband demand study was completed, and the Botetourt Broadband Commission was formed by the Botetourt County Board of Supervisors (BOS). The Botetourt Broadband Commission goal is to advocate for the broadband expansion throughout the County to better serve homes and businesses.

"High speed, dependable internet service has never been more important than it is right now," says Chairman of the Botetourt County Board of Supervisors Dr. Mac Scothorn. "The COVID-19 pandemic has made our homes into classrooms, worksites and medical offices. It is imperative that our residents and businesses in Botetourt County have access to universal broadband coverage. The Board of Supervisors is also grateful to the Botetourt Broadband Commission who spearheaded this initiative in our County, and we are now starting to see the plans set in motion coming to fruition."

"We are very excited to continue our partnership with Botetourt County," said Diego Anderson, Senior Vice President and General Manager of Lumos. "Consumers in Botetourt

need access to high-speed fiber broadband for working from home, virtual learning and other bandwidth-intensive online applications, such as video streaming, gaming, and telehealth care," Anderson said. "We've been serving this community for many years, and this new expansion project will allow us to reach every resident with scalable fiber internet and high-quality customer care."

The estimated project cost for the VATI application will be approximately \$7.9 million. Grant funding is being sought to total \$3,084,796 through the Commonwealth VATI funds. Botetourt County and Lumos are proposing to match the funding request with approximately \$4,824,937, of which \$2,602,514 will be from Botetourt County recovery act funds.

"We applaud Botetourt County for its efforts to secure additional grant funding to support rural broadband accessibility for its residents," said Frank Smith, President and CEO, Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority (RVBA). "Working collaboratively with Lumos and the RVBA is one of the best ways to achieve its goal of total broadband connectivity and set the county up for long-term success."

Grant awards should be announced sometime in December. Botetourt is exceptionally positioned for the award to bring fiber to citizens. If this project is funded, Botetourt County will have completed this effort with \$200,000 in local funding (remaining funds have been federal recovery funds) for less than \$20 per household for the approximate 10,000 homes in the service area. BARC and Dominion are still working on delivering FTTH in Arcadia and Comcast has high-speed service in Blue Ridge. For more information about Botetourt County's Broadband Strategy, [click here](#) or visit [www.botetourtva.gov](http://www.botetourtva.gov).

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**About Botetourt County:** Botetourt County (Pop. 33,494) is a 546 sq. mile community in Southwestern Virginia. The rural community is in the southwestern portion of the state in the scenic Roanoke Valley of Virginia. Strategically located on Interstate 81, and just 20 miles south of Interstate 64, Botetourt County is accessible to the markets of the Mid-West, the Mid-Atlantic, and the entire Eastern Seaboard. Botetourt County has a five-member elected Board of Supervisors which oversees most of the county's government-related operations. In addition, Botetourt County has a complete administrative staff that works under the direction of a County Administrator who is hired by the Board of Supervisors to run day-to-day operations.

**About Lumos Networks:** Lumos provides high-speed fiber internet, wall-to-wall Wi-Fi, voice, and streaming TV services to residential and business customers in VA as well as in NC, where we're known as NorthState. But we are more than your average internet company. Our customers enjoy the fastest fiber speeds available built on a network they can truly count on – all backed by local, expert customer care teams. We know that fast, reliable internet is what you need to stay connected to the things that matter. And your connection is our commitment. To learn more visit [LumosFiber.com](http://LumosFiber.com).

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