

SEPTEMBER 2020

# Carolina country

## Bridging the Digital Divide

Now more than ever, reliable internet access is a must.

### INSIDE

The latest on our joint initiative with RiverStreet Networks

The importance of building a reliable future

### BACK COVER

Request more powerful internet access in your neighborhood



PERIODICAL

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

## BROADBAND PILOT PROGRAM CONTINUES TO MAKE PROGRESS

Since Piedmont Electric and RiverStreet Networks announced the launch of their broadband pilot program in December, more than 4,300 members have expressed an interest in a better internet service. As of July 7, the total members interested by county are as follows: 158 Alamance, 651 Caswell, 669 Durham, 119 Granville, 1,975 Orange and 826 Person.

A lot has changed during the past nine months. A global pandemic has made reliable, affordable internet service more important now than ever. Our students are learning through distance education, our members are working from home, patients are using telemedicine and friends and families are keeping in touch through video chats.

During that time, both Piedmont Electric and RiverStreet have been hard at work to bring a sustainable, long-term internet solution to the unserved and underserved members of our communities.

Currently, we are looking at the placement of hotspots to give our members viable options while a long-term solution is found. RiverStreet and Piedmont Electric are engaged in conversations with local officials and are reviewing state, regional and federal funding opportunities. This is occurring while you share with us your interest in a reliable and improved broadband option.

This is a grassroots effort and will require everyone spreading the word. Remember, you do not have to be a Piedmont Electric member to let your voice be heard.

## HOW CAN I GET BETTER INTERNET SERVICE IN MY AREA?

While this project will take years to fully mature, we are working as quickly as we can to begin providing internet service to the unserved and underserved members in our communities.

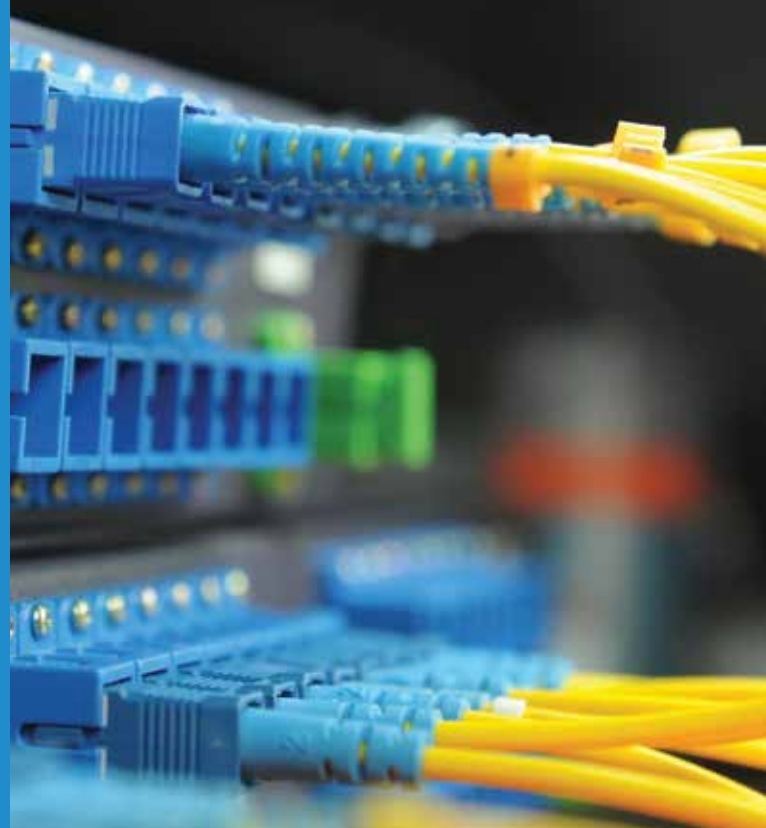
If you have not already, visit [Join.BuildPiedmont.com](https://Join.BuildPiedmont.com) to express your interest in getting a better internet service. If you do not have a strong enough internet connection at home to complete the interest form, please call **800.222.3107** and provide us with your information so we can get you registered.

There is no cost to express interest and no commitment is required. While signing up does not guarantee that we will eventually be able to serve you, it does show us where the need and interest is in our community.

If you have already expressed your interest, please tell your neighbors, friends, relatives, coworkers and anyone else in the community who you think might be interested in better internet to visit [Join.BuildPiedmont.com](https://Join.BuildPiedmont.com) or call us at **800.222.3107**.



*RiverStreet*  
NETWORKS





Partner with  
Riverstreet Networks  
to bring reliable  
internet access to  
your neighborhood!

Visit us today at  
[Join.BuildPiedmont.com](https://Join.BuildPiedmont.com)



## BUILDING A RELIABLE FUTURE

In 2020, the onset of the COVID-19 crisis made it clear that there has never been a greater need for reliable, in-home internet access.

Over these past few months, many of us have turned our dining rooms into makeshift offices and kids have been doing school work from the sofa. Members with a slow or unreliable internet connection might not be able to get work or school assignments completed on time.

What used to be considered a luxury is now an essential part of our everyday lives. However, for those of us living in rural communities, a high-speed, reliable internet connection is not always an option.

## BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

While eventually the COVID-19 crisis will pass, it could help shape the future of remote work for years to come. Some companies are expanding their work-from-home options beyond the stay-at-home orders. Similarly, many local schools are monitoring the situation throughout the 2020 school year and distant learning still may be a requirement.

Now more than ever, people are realizing how important it is to have reliable internet access at home, no matter where you live. Here at Piedmont Electric, we recognize that our members living in rural areas have been at a disadvantage for years and we are working to help close this digital divide. While there are no quick solutions, Piedmont Electric is dedicated to bringing a better internet solution to the unserved and underserved members of our community.

By teaming up with RiverStreet Networks, we're working to bring accessible, reliable, high-speed internet to rural areas in our service area. To learn more about how to bring reliable internet access to your neighborhood, visit [Join.BuildPiedmont.com](https://Join.BuildPiedmont.com).

Together, we can make reliable internet access a reality for our members. This project will take years to fully mature. We are working as quickly as we can to begin providing internet service to unserved and underserved members in our communities.

# Request More Reliable Internet Access In *Your* Neighborhood

How would you rate your current internet access? If it's unreliable or slow, Piedmont Electric and RiverStreet Networks are here to help!

*But first, you have to let us know you're interested in high-speed internet services.*



## **HOW CAN YOU LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD?**

If you'd like RiverStreet Networks to explore bringing high-speed internet to your area, all you have to do is visit **Join.BuildPiedmont.com** and enter your address information. You'll then be added to the growing list of those interested in RiverStreet's services.

Remember, the more interest shown in a particular area, the more likely RiverStreet is to bring high-speed internet access to your home. So, don't forget to spread the word and tell your friends and family members to show their interest as well.



## **WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO SHOW YOUR INTEREST?**

Currently, we're working with RiverStreet to determine where high-speed internet access is most needed in our service area. Member demand combined with member location will help RiverStreet determine where and when to provide high-speed internet services.

The more people in your neighborhood that complete the interest form and let their voices be heard, the higher likelihood that RiverStreet will bring services to your area. Remember there is no commitment when registering on **Join.BuildPiedmont.com**.



## **WHAT TO DO IF YOU CAN'T ACCESS THE SITE**

If you currently have unreliable internet in your home and you're unable to access **Join.BuildPiedmont.com**, we're here to help. Just give us a call at **800.222.3107** and let us know you're interested in high-speed internet access. We'll submit your interest for you!



## **WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE ALREADY REGISTERED**

Email or call your family and friends and ask them to express their interest. This is a grassroots effort and will require everyone spreading the word. Remember, you do not have to be a Piedmont Electric member to let your voice be heard.

*While this project will take years to fully mature, we are working as quickly as we can to begin providing internet service to unserved and underserved members in our communities.*

Visit **Join.BuildPiedmont.com**  
today to let your voice be heard!



www.pemc.coop

800.222.3107