

Bluefield Telegraph May 15, 2006

Region's first 'hot spot' — Bland leads VA in broadband deployment

CNHI News Service

— In an exciting technological advancement, Bland County is officially the first “hot spot” in Southwest Virginia. In a move that the county Board of Supervisors hope will lead the way for all of Southwest Virginia in terms of technology and innovation, Bland will be the first community in Southwest Virginia, and one of only three in the Commonwealth, to launch wireless Internet access free to its citizens this month — using the latest in broadband deployment technology, according to County Administrator Jonathan D. Sweet.

Sweet said the installation work on the free broadband service is scheduled for completion this week.

Sweet, and other county officials, hope the free broadband will benefit not only the residents of Bland, but also businesses in the community and traveling visitors, as well as interstate travelers and even hikers along the Appalachian Trail.

“It’s another benefit for spending time in Bland,” Sweet said. “Not only do you get the beauty, atmosphere and quality of life, but you also get wireless broadband Internet access for free.”

Sweet said the free broadband will compliment several other investments that are currently being made throughout the county, including a 22-acre commerce park, multiple water and sewer infrastructure extensions, downtown beautification efforts and tourism developments.

A second phase of the project also is planned by the supervisors. We all should be enthusiastic about Sweet’s assessment, and let’s hope that the project will benefit not only area residents, but also businesses and visitors to scenic Bland.

It’s an inspiring model for other communities in the Commonwealth. They

should follow Bland's lead in providing a free broadband deployment to area residents and businesses.

For now, Bland County is officially the first "hot spot" in Southwest Virginia.

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