



BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM **Lynches River Electric Cooperative**

Lynches River Electric Cooperative (LREC) and its subsidiary RiverNet Connect (RiverNet) provide fiber-based, high-speed internet services to consumers in Chesterfield, Kershaw, and Lancaster counties.

With eight total projects, LREC received \$800,000 in CARES Act funding to help expand broadband infrastructure in South Carolina.

Impact to Community

Receiving CARES Act funding allowed LREC to install infrastructure that delivers high-speed fiber broadband to customers. The CARES Act project installed fiber to the premises providing a minimum speed of 300 Mbps/300 Mbps up to a maximum speed of 1 Gbps/ 1 Gbps.

Access to high-speed broadband can benefit economic development. Companies looking to locate to the area now have access to fiber broadband. Small businesses now also have access to adequate broadband.

Through its Community Fiber initiative, LREC has partnered with community leaders to identify churches and community centers that serve as gathering places for citizens. LREC has prioritized these locations to receive service and has donated equipment to create free community fiber hotspots. In addition, LREC is developing community town hall sessions to educate consumers on the various benefits and components of fiber optic internet.

SUCCESS STORY

AT A GLANCE

Number of Projects: 8

Total Project Cost: \$1,600,000

CARES Act Funding: \$800,000

Households Served: 222

Households Passed*: 1,293

Businesses Passed: 4

Technology deployed:
Fiber to premises

Minimum download/upload speeds:
300 Mbps/300 Mbps

**The residence or business is eligible to subscribe to services.*



“ We have never had quality internet options living in the country so we were thrilled to learn about RiverNet Connect. Our family made the switch as soon as it was available, and we have not been disappointed as our speeds increased from 2 Mbps to 294 Mbps! With two teenage boys, this has been a life-changer for their schoolwork, gaming, and streaming.”

*Lissa Young,
Residential customer in Buford*

Helping Consumers During COVID-19

With limited access to health-care facilities, many residents previously had to travel out of their immediate area to health-care centers. LREC's CARES Act projects allow residents the ability to perform virtual telehealth visits with health-care facilities and hospitals using high-speed internet, thereby reducing the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus to others.

High-speed internet allows students to continue learning while at home.

Many students in the school districts of Chesterfield, Lancaster, and Kershaw counties are attending classes virtually. High-speed internet allows students to continue learning while at home.

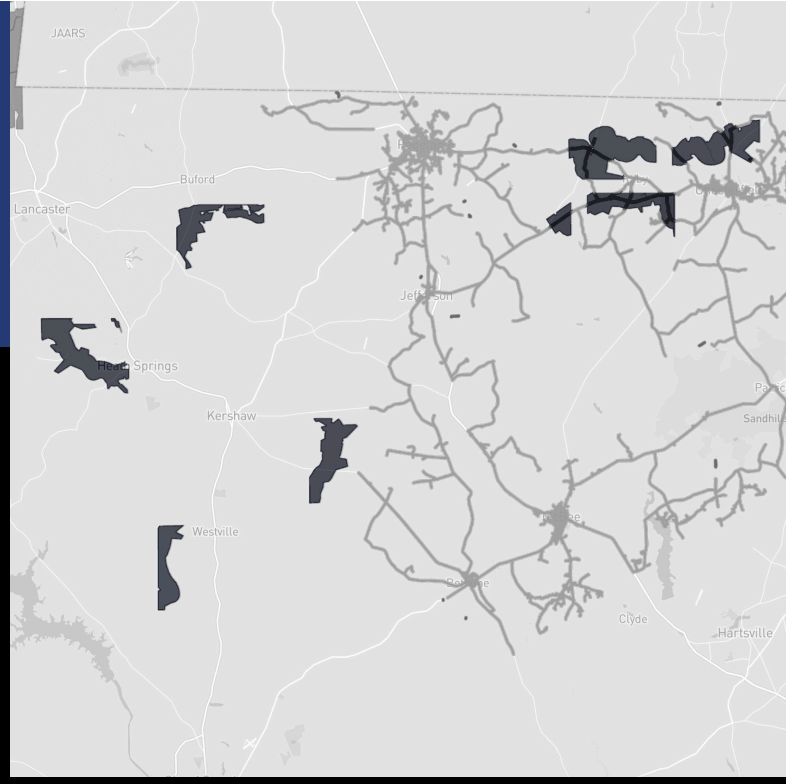
Many companies have required employees to work from home. Employees are now able to complete work previously hindered by the lack of access to broadband. Additionally, these employees are able to share bandwidth with their children who may be attending school virtually.



Project Areas

Lynches River Electric Cooperative projects were completed in the following counties:

- Chesterfield
- Kershaw
- Lancaster



Average Cost

The average cost is determined by taking the total cost of the project and dividing by the number of locations. This is the average cost based on the amount of CARES Act funding received and not what a consumer would pay.

Per Location Served: \$1,800

CARES Act

The South Carolina General Assembly passed Act 142 authorizing the ORS to expend up to \$50 million for broadband initiatives related to COVID-19. The expansion of broadband infrastructure emphasized services to rural communities and communities with a high prevalence of COVID-19 or with demographic characteristics consistent with risk factors for COVID-19.



About the Office of Regulatory Staff

The ORS represents consumers of investor-owned utilities in South Carolina before the PSC. The PSC is the state agency that sets utilities' rates. The ORS must look at the impact to the consumer and utilities' continued investment in reliable and high-quality services.

