

High Speed Rural Broadband Schley Grange Meeting Summary January 8, 2019



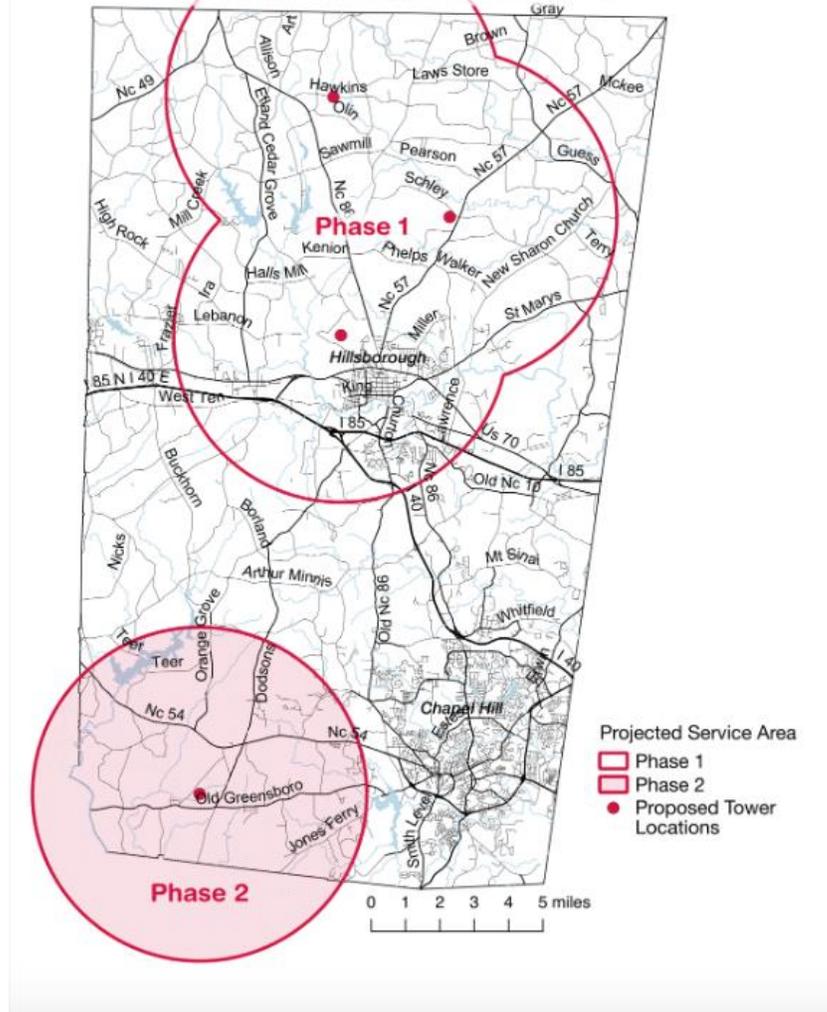
It was standing room only at the Grange last month. We had the pleasure of hosting Open Broadband, the company who Orange County has partnered with to bring high speed broadband to our rural community and Hillsborough. Our guests included NC Representative Graig Meyer, and County Commissioners Earl Mckee, Sally Greene and Jamezetta Bedford, and Jim Northrup, Orange County's project manager. Laurie Barnhardt, Legislative Chair for the NC Grange was also with us.

Orange County is investing \$500,000 in a public-private partnership to bring high speed broadband to our rural areas. With help from Grange members Tony Blake and Bonnie Hauser, the county has partnered with Open Broadband (OpenBB), an NC-based company that specializes in wireless broadband serving rural areas around the state. It was an exciting for Schley Grange, who has been working with the county and others on this for several years. Orange County will soon become the first county in North Carolina with highspeed broadband, for nearly everyone.

Kent Winrich, Chief Technology Officer for Open Broadband along with Emily Schloss, Community Outreach Director led the discussion about the service, plans, pricing and timing. Here's what we learned:

- The goal is to bring service to rural areas throughout the county, especially homes struggling with low speed or no service at all. Hillsborough and its surrounding areas will be in the pilot, so residents will have a choice to stay with their current provider or switch.
- OpenBB service will provide speeds ranging from 25 mbps to 100 mbps. There will be no data caps and no throttling. Prices start at \$40 per month for 25 mbps. The goal is to provide a minimum of 25 mbps to people in the service area; people closer to the antennae, can have higher speeds for a higher price.
- Service will be implemented in phases. A service map is provided.

Open Broadband Service Area Map: Orange County, NC



- Phase 1 will cover most of northern Orange, the town of Hillsborough and parts just south of town. Open BB is now putting tower contracts in place, and expects to start implementing the first clients in April. It will take 3-6 months to get the service installed in all the houses.
- The Phase 2 pilot covers southern Orange - mostly around White Cross. The county is working with Open BB to explore ways to expand Phase 2 to include Borland, Dodsons, and Orange Grove. When we have more information, Schley Grange will host another meeting in Southern Orange -probably in April or May. They will have better information in late spring. Phase 2 homes should be up and running by the end of the year.
- We are working with Open BB and county to plan a Phase 3, to fill service gaps in the first two phases, and possibly bring service to remaining underserved areas. Thunder Mountain, Damascus Church, Mt Sinai and areas south of Chapel Hill are not in Phase 1 or 2.

A video of the meeting is available at <https://bit.ly/2FuWk6F>

What You Can Do

If you are interested in service from Open BB, ***please sign up on their website OpenBB.net and select "Orange County"***. There is no obligation. They are using sign up information to assess interest, and plan service. Anyone who signs up will receive a newsletter with progress reports from Open BB.

For more information, please contact OpenBB at 919-205-5506

