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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Haywood County Seeks Broadband Solutions

The Haywood Advancement Foundation has received a \$10,000 grant from the Southwestern Commission Council of Governments to conduct a comprehensive broadband study. According to Mark Clasby, Executive Director of the Haywood Advancement Foundation and the Haywood Economic Development Council, "the study will provide information to help develop a master plan to assist the underserved and unserved areas of our county in obtaining internet connectivity." The Haywood Advancement Foundation is providing an additional \$10,000 in matching funds. The Council will soon issue a request for proposals to conduct the study; the study should be completed by the end of the year.

The Haywood Economic Development Council has been meeting with providers and various stakeholders since August 2014, trying to bring better service to the citizens of Haywood County. In 2014 the Council conducted a survey of broadband usage and needs in 2015 and shared their findings on demand in Haywood County with numerous broadband providers. According to Mark Clasby "Broadband internet service is a high capital investment for the providers, and being a rural community with our demographics makes it a challenge, but we are committed in making our county having high speed access to the internet for our citizens, it's a must for our future."

The chairman of the Haywood County Board of Commissioners, Mark Swanger, has been working with the committee since its inception, along with realtor Jim Blyth and the late Ron DeSimone. Swanger noted "I am grateful for the progress made towards Ron's vision, and optimistic for greater broadband coverage in the future."