

News Release

Robeson County Rallies to Rebuild Neighbor's Home Nearly a Decade After Hurricane Devastation

Brightspeed donates land to help make new home possible for Lumber Bridge resident

RALEIGH, N.C. — April 8, 2026 — Nearly a decade after hurricanes forced Darrick Virgil out of his Lumber Bridge home, he is finally returning. Not to what was lost, but to a newly built house made possible by a determined neighbor, generous partners and a community that refused to give up. What began as one neighbor's effort to help turned into a collective movement across Robeson County, bringing together local residents, organizations and Brightspeed to make Mr. Virgil's home a reality.

"I saw Darrick in a news story that laid out his challenges, and growing up in Robeson County, I wanted to do whatever I could to help," says Sarah Hill Waters, the individual responsible for leading this restoration effort. "I leveraged local relationships and advocated for Mr. Virgil while he navigated hurdles. But it would be impossible to do this alone. I'm so grateful for all the support from local lawmakers to Brightspeed — who helped make this moment possible."

Today, Robeson County residents, local leaders and dignitaries, Brightspeed and other organizations involved in the restoration project gathered for a ceremonial ribbon-cutting to welcome Mr. Virgil to his new home. Mr. Virgil's path to rebuilding was not easy. After years of setbacks, including challenges tied to land requirements, a path forward felt almost impossible.

"After everything that happened, I just kept pushing forward and trusting that something would work out. To stand here today with a new home, it's more than I could have ever imagined," says Darrick Virgil, Lumber Bridge resident. "I'm beyond grateful to everyone who stepped in."

One of the partners was Brightspeed, the nation's third-largest fiber broadband builder. Brightspeed donated a portion of the land needed to rebuild the home, removing one of the biggest barriers to making the project happen. The company also funded the required land survey, helping clear the way for construction to begin.

"It's incredible to see what neighbors will do for one another. That's what makes us passionate about the work we do every day," says Steve Brewer, state director of government affairs. "As we work to improve the lives of people and small businesses in rural areas, it's an honor to give back to the communities that make this work so meaningful."

About Brightspeed

Headquartered in Charlotte, N.C. and with assets and associated operations in 20 states, Brightspeed provides broadband and telecommunications services through a network platform capable of serving more than 7.3 million homes and businesses. Our nearly 4,000 employees are committed to building a future where more communities benefit from a more connected life, deploying a state-of-the-art fiber network and a customer experience that makes being connected as simple as it should be. For more information, please visit www.brightspeed.com.

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