

RURAL BROADBAND INSIGHTS FOR CLOSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE



WITH PARTNER JONATHAN CHAMBERS

# Co-ops Connect FYI

By Jonathan Chambers • Apr 14, 2023

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## A Personal Thanks



It has been one month since I last published an issue here. Weeks where I didn't have words to offer anyone publicly. A span of days where my

family and I needed space and time.

Last week, Firefly Broadband and Central Virginia Electric Cooperative celebrated the milestone of completing construction throughout their service territory and connecting 20,000 customers. I spoke at the event about many things broadband and CVEC's journey over the past five years. Next week, I'll share more about CVEC's accomplishments as one of Conexon's first clients.

But today, I want to focus on something more personal. *(Excerpted from my comments at the event.)*

If you have heard me speak or read my writings, you know I'm not really ever talking just about broadband.

I often use broadband as a proxy to talk about what's important in life. Community. Covenant. Faith. Redemption. Helping others. Reaching out to people who are hurting.

As many of you know, my sons and I have had a difficult month. My emotions are still raw. I am still hurting.

## Your Words to Me

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Since my wife's passing, many, many people have reached out to me. I wanted to share three comments that have resonated deeply and helped me.

**1) Something a friend said to me just last week.** I told her that I have heard from people this past month that I haven't heard from in 40 years. Her response:

*"Well, you're vulnerable now. When you are strong, people leave you alone. It's when you're vulnerable, people reach out."*

I want to thank everyone who has reached out to me in the past month. I know everyone shares basically the same comment, which is "I don't know what to say. I don't know what words to use."

It's enough that you reached out. It means so much to me.

What my friend was saying to me is: Understand that your vulnerability allows people to lean in. Keep that thought and lean in to others who are also suffering.

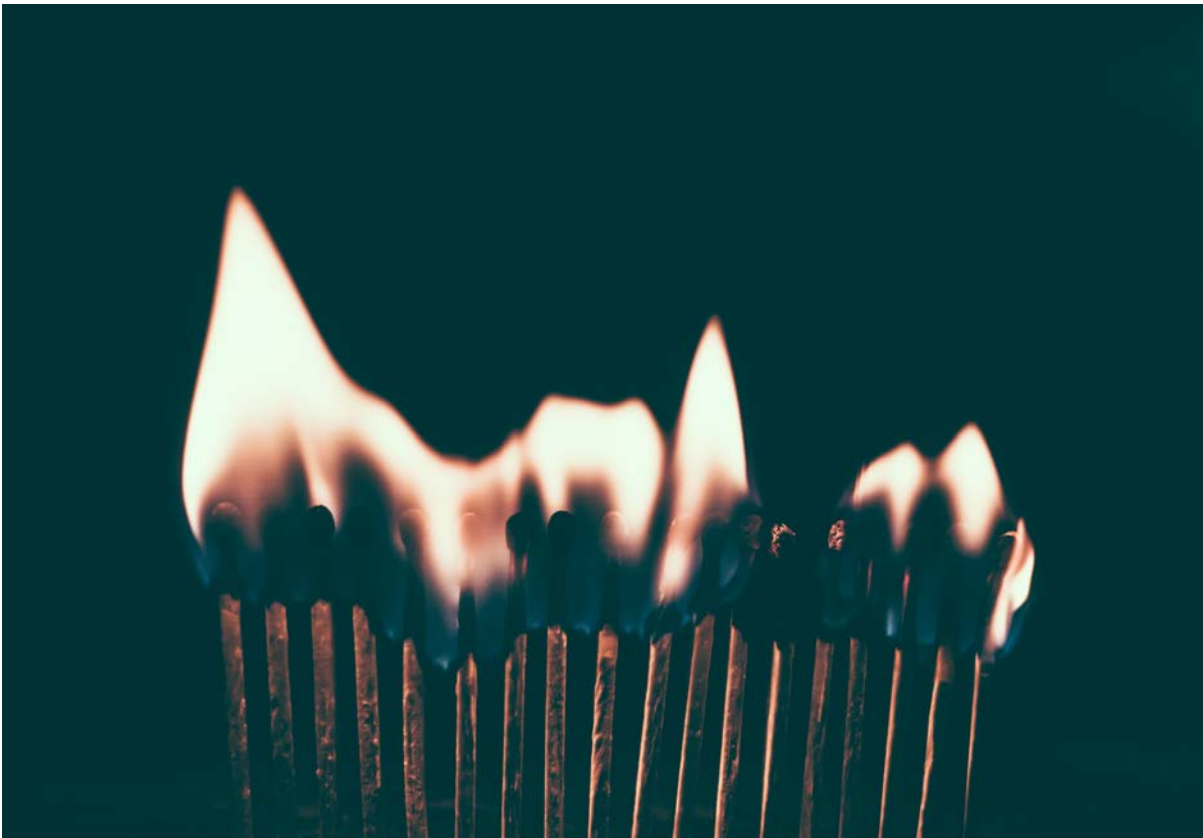
**2) A comment made to me by my philosopher son, Judah,** the day after his mother was killed. He said:

*“Dad, I’ve been living my life in the way I thought it should be lived, which is to follow that phrase, ‘Live each day as if it was your last.’ I now know I was wrong. I should have been living my days as if they were the last of the people I love.”*

**3) The words of my rabbi, who has said often:**

*“Jews don’t despair. We survive because we are inveterate optimists. We swallow the bitterness of life and pursue the sweet thereof.”*

## My Words to You



**We mourn by lighting a candle. When darkness comes, we light a candle.**

And when it’s darker still, we light another candle. And then another. And then another, and eventually there are a thousand candles or ten

thousand candles and we have enough light to see our way back to life.

I'll conclude by asking all of you to do three things:

- 1. Reach out to those who are suffering, and be present for them.**
- 2. Live each day as if it's the last of the people you love, and let them know you care.**
- 3. For my sons who lost their mother, if you might, please light a candle.**

Next week, I'll return to writing about broadband. I have found solace in the prayers of so many of this wonderful community. Thank you.

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