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○ ISSUE 9 | ○ VOL 12-23 | ○ 2019

Alexicon *insider*

INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY FOR THE
RURAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

Regulatory Headlines

[Congress Addresses Robocalls](#)

Legislation tackling robocalls has made its way through Congress with bipartisan support, as the Senate on Thursday approved a bill that enables stronger FCC action against illegal robocallers and requires carriers to provide call-authentication technology to consumers at no cost.

[Mapping Bills Passed by House](#)

Bills to improve the FCC's broadband mapping effort, something virtually everyone conceded needs improving, has passed the House by voice vote. The bills... must still pass the Senate and make it to the President's desk for his signature.

[Groups Appeal Net Neutrality Ruling](#)

A number of web companies and advocacy groups on Friday filed an appeal urging a federal court to rehear a decision upholding the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) repeal of the Obama-era net neutrality rules.

[Suicide Prevention Hotline Proposal](#)

Americans may soon be able to dial 988 to reach mental health providers if they are feeling suicidal under a new proposal approved by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

[More CAF Phase II Funding Awarded](#)

The FCC has authorized over \$89 million in Connect America Fund Phase II (CAF-II) funding to six companies, including Viasat, to bring broadband to approximately 123,000 unserved rural homes and businesses across 21 states.

[Groups Battle FCC over Dereg Order](#)

Cable operators and local franchise authorities continue to spar over the FCC's decision that in-kind considerations in franchise agreements count toward the statutory on such fees. At issue is the status of franchise agreements in place when the decision became effective and the impact of the FCC's deregulatory decision.



Market Watch

[Rural Telcos Have Gigabit Service Available](#)

[40% of U.S. Homes Passed by Fiber](#)

[Cooperatives Provide 72.7% of Rural Fiber](#)

[Connected Home Over IP Standard](#)



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Questions? Comments?
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Technology Trends

New and notable technology and services

Data Leak Exposes 3,000 Ring Users

The log-in credentials for 3,672 Ring camera owners were compromised this week, exposing log-in emails, passwords, time zones, and the names people give to specific Ring cameras, which are often the same as camera locations, such as “bedroom” or “front door.” Using the log-in email and password, an intruder could access a Ring customer’s home address, telephone number, and payment information, including the kind of card they have, and its last four digits and security code.

Dish Unveils Over-the-Air DVR

Dish Network and Sling TV today officially launched AirTV 2, a new version of its Wi-Fi-enabled over-the-air broadcast tuner and DVR. The device – which allows users to watch antenna television on smartphones and tablets, both in and out of the home – is designed to be sleeker and more powerful than its predecessor. AirTV 2 houses an 802.11ac 2x2 dual-band Wi-Fi system and adopts a more narrow, upright design than the original AirTV.

Thirty Years of Ransomware

Ransomware has been one of the most prolific cyber threats facing the world throughout 2019, and it's unlikely to stop being a menace any time soon. Organisations from businesses and schools to entire city administrations have fallen victim to network-encrypting malware attacks that are now demanding hundreds of thousands of dollars in bitcoin or other cryptocurrency for the safe return of the files.

Paying Ransomware Victims is on the Rise

The number of organisations that are giving into the extortion demands of cyber criminals after falling victim to ransomware attacks has more than doubled this year. A rise in the number of ransomware attacks in the past year has contributed to the increased number of organisations opting to pay a ransom for the safe return of networks locked down by file-encrypting malware.

Some Huawei Fears are Nonsense

Some fears surrounding Huawei Technologies are unfounded, the chief executive of France’s leading telecoms operator Orange said on Wednesday, as the concerns threaten to delay the roll-out of 5G. The United States has said that gear provided by Huawei, the world’s biggest telecoms equipment maker, contains ‘back doors’ that would enable China to spy on other countries, and has been pressing allies to block Huawei’s technology being used for fifth generation mobile networks...

a different direction.

Rural Digital Opportunity Fund. Price cap carrier CAF Phase II support, the term for which ends next year, was transformed into the RDOF and grew by \$4b over 10 years. The FCC will finalize auction procedures next year, and it is likely the auction will occur during the latter half of 2020.

Robocalls. After the FCC adopted a Robocall order and FNPRM in June (see June 12, 2019 Special Bulletin), Congress has now acted to potentially accelerate the timeline under which the SHAKEN/STIR protocol for call-authentication becomes required (see above article). If this occurs, then expect the FCC to begin actions to implement SHAKEN/STIR, including how all carriers will be forced to address the IP network-based solution.

RoR USF Budget FNRPM. In the December 2018 *RoR USF Budget FNRPM*, the FCC proposed to (1) implement competitive auctions to award support in competitively overlapped study areas, and (2) address the effect that large conversions of voice/data lines to CBOs could have on the USF budget. Expect the FCC to address these two issues in 2020 that could have substantial effects on how RoR ILECs receiving cost-based support plan for the future.



IN FOCUS Looking Forward to 2020

2019 began under the cloud of a government shutdown that raised several important issues for the rural telecommunications industry; luckily, it appears that 2020 will not begin with the same problem. However, 2020 does promise to see some fairly substantial shifts in the industry—following is a list, in no particular order:

USF Budget NPRM. The FCC received comment on an NPRM released in June that proposed to place an overall cap on the federal USF. The FCC could issue a decision on the proposed \$11.42b cap, but any action would likely see reconsideration and court activity.

USF Contributions Reform. The state members of the Joint Board on Universal Service released a recommended decision this year on steps to reform the USF contributions system. Given this, the above 20% FUSC, and congress’ continued interest, there’s an outside chance the FCC could do something this year.

ICC Rate Transition. Effective 7/1/20 the unified terminating access rates will go to bill and keep (e.g., zero), with corresponding changes to CAF ICC support.

Broadband Mapping. Expect the FCC and USAC to complete actions kicked off in the DODC order and FNPRM adopted in August to address inaccuracies in broadband data reporting. Specifically, polygon submissions are likely to start (6 months after a public notice is released announcing the availability of a new USAC-implemented portal). Also, Congress is getting in on the act (see above article), and could force the FCC to move more rapidly or in



Alexicon at Work

Alexicon’s offices will be closed on Tuesday and Wednesday, December 24 and 25 this week in observance of the Christmas holiday. Our offices will also be closed on January 1 for the New Year holiday.



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