



- ▶ FINAL RECONNECT ROUND 1 AWARDS
- ▶ FCC AUTHORIZES MORE CAF PHASE II
- ▶ DRAFT RDOF AUCTION PROCEDURES
- ▶ USF CONTRIBUTIONS REFORM BILL
- ▶ FCC SHOULDN'T DELAY UPGRADES
- ▶ SHIFT IN STATE BROADBAND EFFORTS ...1
- ▶ COVID-19 WILL EVOLVE TELECOM INDUSTRY
- ▶ GREEN HILLS EXPANDS THROUGH ACQUISITION
- ▶ TELEHEALTH MARKET TO GROW IN 2020
- ▶ MICROSOFT BUYS METASWITCH ...1
- ▶ HOME OFFICE TECH TO EVOLVE
- ▶ T-MOBILE STANDALONE 5G TECH
- ▶ 3RD PARTY CLOUD OFFERING, HOSTED VOICE
- ▶ TELEHEALTH KEY TO COVID-19 RESPONSE
- ▶ U.S. MOVES TO CUT HUAWEI OFF ...2

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# Alexicon *insider*

INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY FOR THE  
RURAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

## Regulatory Headlines

### Final ReConnect Round 1 Awards

The USDA ReConnect round 1 has officially ended with an award of \$523,749 to Breda Telephone Corp. in rural Iowa. Breda Telephone Corp. will deploy an FTTH network to connect 113 people, 20 farms and nine businesses in Arcadia, IA, which is in Carroll County, a press release notes.

### FCC Authorizes More CAF Phase II

The FCC has authorized CAF II funding for six more network operators. The six operators will share \$7.5 million, which will go toward the cost of making broadband available to 3,100 unserved locations in seven states.

### Draft RDOF Auction Procedures

Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai shared with his colleagues draft procedures for the upcoming \$16 billion Phase I Rural Digital Opportunity Fund auction (Auction 904). The draft procedures, to be addressed at the June 9 meeting, can be found [here](#).

### USF Contributions Reform Bill

A bill, the Universal Broadband Act (H.R. 6723), was introduced in the House of Representatives, co-sponsored by Rep Collin Peterson (D-MN) and Rep. Don Young (R-AR), proposing to include broadband services in the contribution base for the Universal Service Fund (USF).

### FCC Shouldn't Delay Upgrades

Efforts from the Federal Communications Commission to expand both fixed-wireless and mobile broadband across rural America will require more granular data to reach their full potential, but deployment efforts shouldn't be delayed any longer, according to industry stakeholders and legislators testifying at a Senate hearing on Wednesday.

### Shift in State Broadband Efforts

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has inspired the birth of new state broadband programs, but it has also raised questions about funding and the longer term future for other programs aimed at bolstering connectivity.



## Market Watch

[COVID-19 Will Evolve Telecom Industry](#)

[Green Hills Expands Through Acquisition](#)

[Telehealth Market to Grow in 2020](#)

[Microsoft Buys Metaswitch](#)



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# Technology Trends

New and notable technology and services

## T-Mobile Standalone 5G Tech

The next mobile carrier technology battleground will be standalone 5G, as a T-Mobile announcement today illustrates. The carrier claims several standalone 5G “firsts” involving voice and video over 5G new radio (VoNR and ViNR). What are these “firsts”? What is voice over 5G new radio (VoNR)? What is video over 5G new radio (ViNR)?

## 3rd Party Cloud Offering, Hosted Voice

As businesses adopt hosted communications services, some historical telecom service providers are hosting their own offerings on their infrastructure. But as the allure of the cloud continues to take hold, some are now opting for third party cloud-based offerings. Ohio’s Horizon Telecom is the latest to embrace the cloud, with the launch of Horizon Hosted Voice. Horizon can trace its history back over 100 years, to when it started out as a local telephone company. Horizon has been steadily expanding its business services and now operates a 5,000-route mile fiber network...

## Telehealth Key to COVID-19 Response

Telehealth is playing a critical role in the healthcare industry’s response to COVID-19. The technology is helping a variety of organizations overcome some of the pandemic’s most common challenges. In fact, telehealth is helping organizations respond to a limited supply of personal protective equipment (PPE), increased patient flow, increased demands for testing, and the worried well, according to a recent Insights by Xtelligent Healthcare Media survey.

## U.S. Moves to Cut Huawei Off

The Trump administration on Friday moved to block global chip supplies to blacklisted telecoms equipment giant Huawei Technologies, spurring fears of Chinese retaliation and hammering shares of U.S. producers of chipmaking equipment. A new rule, unveiled by the Commerce Department and first reported by Reuters, expands U.S. authority to require licenses for sales to Huawei of semiconductors made abroad with U.S. technology, vastly expanding its reach to halt exports to the world’s No. 2 smartphone maker.

## Home Office Tech to Evolve

The new normal for work will be more remote, spur a home office innovation wave, make edge computing more mainstream and require more automation, immersive experiences and robotics. Those are just some of the takeaways from my conversation with Dell Technologies CTO John Roese. The conversation revolves around what we’ve learned so far from the great work-from-home experiment and where we’re going next.

## IN FOCUS

### The HEROES Act

On May 15, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the “Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act by a 208-199 vote. The legislation, as a follow-up to March’s CARES package, seeks to provide \$3 trillion more assistance to individuals and businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the related mitigation measures taken across the country. It should be noted up front that the Senate, in its current configuration, will not take up this bill as it was passed by the House. However, the Senate and House *could* take specific parts of the HEROES Act and consider as separate pieces of legislation. Following are some of the more important pieces of the HEROES Act related to the telecommunications industry.

- ⇒ **E-Rate Support for WiFi Hotspots and connected devices for students and library patrons** (\$1.5b). This fund is to be administered by the FCC, covers modems, routers and connected devices, and includes specific Tribal provisions.
- ⇒ **Emergency Benefit for Broadband Service** (\$4b). Eligible households (e.g., qualifies for Lifeline) can request discounted broadband internet access service, with the benefit being \$50/mo and \$75/mo for those living in Tribal areas. There is also a \$100 credit per household for connected devices.
- ⇒ **Continued Connectivity**. This provision basically makes the FCC’s [Keep Americans Connected](#) pledge mandatory during the pendency of the national public health emergency that was declared in February. This means no service terminations to customers (residential and small business) adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. While no funding is provided, the Keeping

- Critical Connections Act ([Link](#)), which would give small broadband service providers some relief for maintaining service to non-paying customers.
- ⇒ **Rural Digital Opportunity**. This section requires the FCC to expedite its Rural Digital Opportunity Fund auction to fast-track the build out of high-speed, gigabit internet service to rural America. This fast-track would only be available to uncontested applicants that can build networks that can provide service within a year of having funding authorized.
- ⇒ **Assistance to Homeowners**. \$75b to states, territories, and tribes to address the ongoing needs of homeowners struggling to afford their housing due directly or indirectly to the impacts of the pandemic by providing direct assistance with mortgage payments, property taxes, property insurance, utilities, and other housing related costs. Utility expenses include communications services.

Links:

- [Press Release](#)
- [Summary](#)
- [HR 6800 Webpage](#)
- [HR 6800 Text](#) (warning, its 1800+ pages)



## Alexicon at Work

Alexicon is currently in the middle of tariff and cost study season—tariff filings, for those not in the NECA tariff, are due, for the most part, on June 16; and cost study true-ups and annual HCLS submissions are due at the end of July.

Alexicon has also been active in both the National Tribal Telecommunications Association and WTA’s newly formed Tribal Affairs Committee.



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