

September 25, 2020

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INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY FOR THE  
RURAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

## Regulatory Headlines

### [Mapping Hinders Broadband Funding](#)

Ever since Rep. Dave Loebsack, D-Iowa, was first elected to the House in 2006, he has sought to ensure that Iowans and other rural Americans can access the internet. But Loebsack, who is set to retire at the end of the 116th Congress, remains frustrated that the federal government still lacks accurate data showing where Americans can get a signal — and where they can't.

### [RDOF Auction Bidder Map](#)

Close to 500 network operators could be bidding in the upcoming Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) auction, which will award up to \$16 billion in funding for rural broadband.

### [Congress Calls for Broadband Expansion](#)

Bipartisan lawmakers on Wednesday called for bridging the digital divide to help stimulate employment and workplace equity.

### [Community Connect Grants—FY2021](#)

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development Bette Brand today announced that USDA is accepting applications to provide broadband service in unserved rural areas. USDA is making grants available under the Community Connect Grant program for Fiscal Year 2021.

### [AK Plan Population Distribution Model](#)

The FCC's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (Bureau) has adopted a methodology for estimating numbers of Alaskans receiving mobile service in remote areas of Alaska.

### [Rural Call Completion Improving](#)

The Federal Communications Commission's (FCC or Commission) Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB or Bureau) has released a report concluding that the rules adopted in the Commission's Second Rural Call Completion Order (Second Order) have been effective in improving rural call completion across the country.



## Market Watch

[Copper Valley Brings Broadband to AK Village](#)

[Google Fiber Gears up for 2 Gig Trial Run](#)

[Windstream Exits Chapter 11 Bankruptcy](#)

[Remote Work is Here to Stay](#)



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# Technology Trends

New and notable technology and services

## Tech: Preparing for the Future

If ever there was a decade that announced itself so defiantly in the first year, it's the 2020s. With so much change and volatility already, 2020 has proven this decade will be dramatically different than the one before it. It's imperative that IT and business leaders prepare for 10 years unlike any others. For IT and business leaders, success in the 2010s meant capitalizing on innovative commercial IT (think cloud and mobile).

## Who's Responsible for IoT Security?

It's hard to beat being able to tell your sound system to select and play a particular song, or order something online using just your voice, or have your refrigerator tell you when you're running short of food, or have your office printer diagnose itself and demand service automatically from the vendor. Features like this are driving the demand for smart offices, smart homes, smart appliances, smart buildings, and smart cities -- all connected through the Internet of Things (IoT).

## Microsoft to Test mmWave Network

Microsoft is seeking FCC authorization to test "a private wireless mobile network" using spectrum currently owned by all three of the nation's big 5G operators: T-Mobile, AT&T and Verizon. According to the company's filings with the FCC, the tests are scattered across Microsoft corporate campus locations in Bellevue and Redmond, Washington. The company did not provide any further details about the tests, and requested that the FCC keep some of the documents related to the tests confidential.

## WISPs: CBRS Range of 6 Miles at 100meg

Some wireless internet providers (WISPs) are seeing fixed wireless speeds of at least 100 Mbps in rural areas over distances as great as six miles using CBRS spectrum. Of two WISPs on a webcast with press and analysts today, Watch Communications – a WISP operating in several midwestern states – is seeing the greatest CBRS range.

## Section 230 Revisions Proposed

The U.S. Justice Department on Wednesday unveiled a proposal to reform a legal immunity for internet companies and follows through on President Donald Trump's bid from earlier this year to crack down on tech giants. The proposal aims to curb Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which offers big tech platforms like Alphabet's Google and Facebook protections from liability over content posted by users.

## IN FOCUS

### FCC Action on Spectrum and 5G

The FCC is continuing its focus on 5G and spectrum-related issues that it sees as one of the keys to future broadband access expansion. Two spectrum-related items will be addressed at the September 30 open meeting; the FCC recently concluded an important spectrum auction and have more in the works; and they are moving forward with the "5G Fund for Rural America" (a/k/a Mobility Fund Phase II).

On the schedule for the next FCC meeting are two spectrum-related items:

- **Facilitating 5G in the 3.45-3.55 GHz band.** The FCC will eliminate the non-federal radiolocation service allocation in this band of spectrum. Eventually the plan is to have this spectrum available for flexible use wireless service, including 5G, throughout the U.S. by early 2022. In an FNPRM, the FCC will seek comment on a number of issues, including an appropriate regime to coordinate non-federal and federal use.
- **Expanding access to and investment in the 4.9 GHz band.** The 4.9 GHz band is currently used for public safety, and, in the FCC's estimation, is underused outside of major metropolitan areas. Ultimately, the FCC hopes allow states with statewide licenses to lease some or all of its spectrum rights to third parties. The FCC will also seek comment on various items, including the creation of a voluntary State Band Manager to coordinate and authorize new public safety operations.

This spectrum is in addition to the [3.5 GHz](#) (CBRS) spectrum auc-

tioned last month that brought in \$4.5 billion to the U.S. Treasury, and the 2020 auction of [3.7 GHz](#) in the adjacent C band.

Finally, the 2.5 GHz (educational broadband service) [Rural Tribal Priority Window](#) recently closed, and the remaining available spectrum will be auctioned in the first half of 2021.

**5G Fund.** Originally called "Mobility Phase II", the program has now morphed into the "[5G Fund for Rural America](#)" mostly due to the poor quality 4G/LTE coverage data provided by the major carriers. The Rural 5G fund calls for \$9b in USF support over 10 years for 5G wireless mobility, and will be awarded via a competitive (reverse) auction. The FCC is still trying to determine how to figure out where the funding should be targeted—based on either currently available (and fairly inaccurate) data or updated data that will result from the Digital Opportunity Data Collection (DODC) proceeding.

Phase I of the 5G fund, worth around \$8 billion, is earmarked for rural areas unlikely to see timely deployment of 5G networks. Phase II will add another \$1 billion for 5G connectivity to harder to serve and higher cost areas. The 5G budget will also include a set amount for supporting 5G networks in Tribal lands, currently proposed to be \$680 million.

## Reminders

- ⇒ **988 Suicide Prevention Hotline.** Mandatory 10-digit dialing transition has started for certain area codes containing 988 NXXs. See the 8/19/20 Special Bulletin and 8/20/20 email distribution of the NANPA transition schedule.
- ⇒ Providers that block robocalls are required to establish a **single point of contact** for resolving unintended or inadvertent blocking.
- ⇒ For ETCs designated by the FCC, annual [54.314](#) certifications are due to the FCC on October 1



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