

January 22, 2021

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INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY FOR THE
RURAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

Regulatory Headlines

Rosenworcel Named Acting Chair

President Biden has appointed Jessica Rosenworcel to serve as acting chairwoman of the FCC now that former chairman Ajit Pai has stepped down with the change in presidential administration. Rosenworcel has served as FCC commissioner since 2012, with an interruption in her tenure of several months in 2017 when her initial appointment expired and she awaited reconfirmation.

Departing Pai Warns of China Threats

Outgoing U.S. FCC chairman Ajit Pai said potential Chinese espionage and threats to U.S. telecommunications networks and internet freedom are the biggest national security issue that regulators will face in the next four years.

FCC Releases Broadband Report

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) has released its annual Broadband Deployment Report, which shows rapid and significant progress in closing the digital divide.

Congress: Vet RDOF Winners

A broad coalition of Republican and Democratic senators and representatives have sent a letter to the FCC asking the commission to thoroughly vet RDOF auction winners. At stake is \$9 billion in rural broadband funding awarded through the reverse auction, which was completed last year.

FCC Ruling on Pole Attachments

The FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) has issued a Declaratory Ruling in response to a July 2020 Petition of NCTA — The Internet & Television Association (NCTA) asking the Commission to clarify its rules with regard to the cost of pole replacements.

FCC Rejects Ligado Request

The Federal Communications Commission voted 3-2 to reject a bid by U.S. government agencies to freeze its decision to allow Ligado Networks to deploy a nationwide mobile broadband network.



Market Watch

[67% of Workers Don't Want to Return to Office](#)

[Businesses Hit By Supply Chain Issues](#)

[Telehealth Adoption Report](#)

[FCC Oks Frontier Chapter 11](#)



Questions? Comments?
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Technology Trends

New and notable technology and services

FBI Warns of Vishing Attacks

The FBI has issued a warning in relation to “vishing” or voice phishing attacks, a form of cybercrime that uses social engineering over a telephone to gain access to private personal and financial information for the purposes of financial reward. The FBI said in a notification Jan. 14 that cybercriminals are focusing their operations to target employees of companies who maintain network access and an ability to escalate network privileges.

Cisco Warning on SD-WAN Software

Cisco is warning customers to update its networking software immediately, flagging four critical security vulnerabilities affecting SD-WAN, DNA, and the Smart Software Manager Satellite. The Cisco SD-WAN has three command injection vulnerabilities that are tracked as CVE-2021-1260, CVE-2021-1261, and CVE-2021-1262. Collectively, they have a severity score of 9.9 out of 10. In other words, these are serious flaws and require immediate action. And that rating comes despite an attacker on the internet actually needing a valid password.

Congress: Curtail Facial Recognition

U.S. lawmakers are moving ahead with efforts to ban facial recognition software even as the technology helps identify supporters of President Donald Trump who ransacked their workplace and forced them to evacuate this month. Researchers and law enforcement have been running photographs from the Jan. 6 siege of the Capitol through facial recognition, which looks for similar faces in databases of mugshots, social media headshots or other images.

Firms Claim 5Gbps 5G Speeds

Australian mobile operator Telstra alongside partners Ericsson and Qualcomm claimed a 5G download speed record Wednesday, hitting 5 Gbps for a single user on a commercial network. The test leveraged New Radio (NR) carrier aggregation for millimeter wave spectrum. Performed at Telstra’s 5G Innovation Centre on the Gold Coast, the 5G data call combined eight 100-megahertz channels of mmWave spectrum in the n257 (28 GHz) band together with two 20-megahertz of 4G LTE CA. Ericsson called it “a major milestone...”

Alphabet Popping Loon Balloons

Alphabet Inc is shutting down Loon after concluding the business, which offers balloons as an alternative to cell towers, is not commercially viable, Google’s parent company said on Thursday. Founded in 2011, Loon aimed to bring connectivity to areas of the world where building cell towers is too expensive or treacherous using balloons the length of tennis courts and solar-powered networking gear.

IN FOCUS

FCC’s Latest DODC Order

The FCC [released](#) its latest decision implementing the Digital Opportunity Data Collection initiative—basically a replacement for Form 477 broadband availability reporting. In this latest Report and Order, the FCC addresses issues raised in the last NPRM (see July 21, 2020 *Special Bulletin*), and it also represents the FCC’s continuing attempt to reconcile earlier DODC decisions with the Broadband DATA Act. The main difference the FCC is trying to work out is USAC’s involvement with the new mapping process—the FCC had USAC heavily involved, and then Congress quashed it. As a result, the FCC has been waiting for funding to do what Congress wants, which arrived with the 2021 Appropriations Act/COVID-19 Relief Bill in the form of \$33m.

Following is a summary of this latest release:

- * **Service providers subject to collection:** facilities-based providers, including those using licensed and unlicensed spectrum
- * **Fixed Broadband Reporting Standards:** Mass market res. and bus. service only; there will be 3 speed reporting tiers - >200k and < 10/1 Mbps, 10/1-25/3 Mbps, and for speeds >25/3 Mbps the maximum advertised speed
- * **Engineering Certification:** All reporting providers will have to have submissions certified by a “qualified engineer” in addition to a corporate certification. This engineer can either be an employee of the company or a certified professional engineer.
- * **Collecting Data from Government Entities and 3rd Parties:** The Broadband DATA Act allows for state, local and Tribal governments to report data for their areas. The FCC is clear that this not include governments that simply gather the data and then report it without any type of technical analysis.

- * **Fixed provider challenge process:** The FCC adopts some parameters and timelines for the consumer and governmental entity challenge process. Providers will have 60 days to respond to challenges, after which a dispute resolution process begins if an agreement can’t be reached.
- * **Implementation of Fabric:** The FCC adopts some definitions of residential and business locations, as well as how they want to address “multi-tenant environments.” In one example, the FCC will not count multiple buildings at a location if they are owned by the same entity or don’t have power running to them.
- * **Technical Assistance:** The Broadband DATA Act requires the FCC to provide technical assistance to Tribal governments, in the form of annual workshops, and to small providers, in the form of call center-type help. The FCC directs OEA and ONAP to have annual workshops for Tribal governments in each of the 12 BIA regions, and directs the creation of a help desk and clear instructions to help small providers.

We will issue a more detailed summary once the FCC releases the Public Notice, after which providers have 6 months to report under the new rules.

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*, 8/20/20 email distribution of the NANPA transition schedule, and 11/18/20 email distribution of NANPA’s latest guidance.
- ⇒ **Reassigned numbers database** recordkeeping requirements for small providers begin 1/27/2021. (See 8/10/20 *Special Bulletin* & 1/20/21 email distribution)
- ⇒ **8YY Access Charge Reform**—All current intra-state originating access charge rate elements for toll free/8YY calls were frozen as of 11/27/2020.



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