

July 23, 2021

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# Alexicon *insider*

INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY FOR THE  
RURAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

## Regulatory Headlines

### [FCC Adopts Supply Chain Order](#)

The Federal Communications Commission has adopted a Third Report and Order to implement the supply chain Reimbursement Program, which reimburses advanced communications service providers for replacing and disposing communications equipment posing a national security risk.

### [WISPs Warn Against Target Speeds](#)

As Congress considers an infrastructure funding bill, wireless internet service providers (WISPs) are asking legislators not to be too aggressive in setting broadband speed targets.

### [Senators Prod FCC on RDOF Delays](#)

After the close of the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) in December 2020, Congress in January urged the agency to thoroughly vet the winning bidders to ensure the money wouldn't be squandered. But with funding yet to be distributed seven months down the line, two key Senators have asked the FCC to explain what's taking so long.

### [FCC Seeks Comment on Mobile Data](#)

The FCC's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB), Office of Economics and Analytics (OEA), and Office of Engineering and Technology (OET) have released a public notice seeking comment on methods to challenge mobile provider coverage data submitted as part of the Broadband DATA Act.

### [Bill: Study Contributions Reform Change](#)

A trio of Senate Republicans introduced legislation Wednesday that would lay the groundwork to force Big Tech companies to pay fees to support broadband subsidy programs.

### [NCTA: No Funds for Muni Networks](#)

Cable broadband operators are OK with most of the Treasury Department's framework for handing out billions of dollars in broadband deployment and adoption funds via the state and local COVID-19 Fiscal Recovery Funds in the American Rescue Plan, but definitely not prioritizing government owned or operated networks when it comes to handing...



## Market Watch

[Latest Frontier Fiber Expansion](#)

[Charter Starts RDOF Builds in 3 States](#)

[AT&T Fiber is Having a Moment](#)

[Cox Offers Wireless Backup to Small Businesses](#)



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Questions? Comments?  
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# Technology Trends

New and notable technology and services

## T-Mobile Enhances STIR/SHAKEN

T-Mobile says that it and a group of other companies have completed a wireless call combining authenticated caller ID and Rich Call Data (RCD) using the STIR/SHAKEN framework and protocols. The initiative is aimed at protecting people receiving calls from spoofer and spammers. First Orion, CTIA, Everbridge, iconectiv, NetNumber, Numeracle and Twilio also participated in the proof of concept test.

## Shentel Targets Field Service Efficiency

Shenandoah Telecommunications Company (Shentel) teamed with CSG to deploy its cloud-based Field Service Management platform, aiming to streamline operations and reap cost efficiencies as it aggressively expands its fiber and fixed wireless access footprints. Jeff Manning, Shentel's VP of operations, told Fierce the new platform has already been rolled out for its Glo fiber and Beam fixed wireless internet services, and will be extended to its cable business next month.

## AT&T 5G Smart City to Power Amazon

AT&T's 5G technology will underlie JBG SMITH's National Landing smart city project, according to a letter of intent the companies have signed. A definitive agreement for this AT&T 5G smart city initiative is expected "in the coming weeks," according to today's announcement. National Landing is under construction in the Virginia suburbs of Washington, DC. It spans 6.8 million square feet of existing office space and 2,856 residential units, 808 units currently under construction plus 7.2 million square feet of additional commercial, multi-family and retail development opportunities throughout the community.

## Comcast Slashes Time to Find Fiber Cuts

Comcast is putting outdated optical spectrum analyzers to work to boost local network reliability, using them as part of a new performance monitoring system which can slash the time it takes to pinpoint fiber cuts from two hours to less than two minutes.

## Microsoft Malware Warning

Microsoft is warning customers about the LemonDuck crypto mining malware which is targeting both Windows and Linux systems and is spreading via phishing emails, exploits, USB devices, and brute force attacks, as well as attacks targeting critical on-premise Exchange Server vulnerabilities uncovered in March. The group was discovered to be using Exchange bugs to mine for cryptocurrency in May, two years after it first emerged.



## IN FOCUS

### State of the Federal Lifeline Program

In the FCC's 2016 Lifeline Order, the Commission mandated that USAC obtain a program evaluation by an independent reviewer. This report was to be used in conjunction with the required Wireline Competition Bureau Report on the State of the Lifeline Marketplace to be provided to the FCC by June 30, 2021. The [USAC review](#), performed by Grant Thornton, was provided to the FCC, along with the Bureau's [Report](#), at the end of June.

The WCB's *Report*, after noting difficulties in obtaining data from wireless providers—that serve around 94% of all Lifeline subscribers—notes that Lifeline subscribership is trending down, due in part to efforts to address fraud, waste, and abuse. The *Report* further notes that overall fixed terrestrial 25/3 Mbps broadband adoption has increased since 2015, with the latest data (2019) showing 69.4% adoption in the United States as a whole, and 46.5% adoption on Tribal lands. The Report offers several "areas of consideration" for the Commission, including:

- \* Increase the reimbursement level for Lifeline services above the current \$9.25 (\$34.25 for Tribal areas)
- \* Continued support for voice-only Lifeline services
- \* Support efforts directed toward improving broadband access in rural Tribal areas and consider exploring other ways of improving access in these areas.

The USAC performance review contained a number of evaluation goals, including:

- \* Determine the Lifeline program's effectiveness at providing affordable voice and broadband services for low-income Americans.

- \* Determine whether the administrative burden placed on consumers affects program participation
- \* Determine the cost effectiveness of the Lifeline program, including the contribution burden on consumers and businesses
- \* Determine the effectiveness of Lifeline program operations and administration

The main recommendation in the USAC program evaluation is that the FCC should adopt a Lifeline program strategic plan. The WCB agrees, and states "it may be appropriate for the Commission to consider setting more specific performance measures to track the National Verifier's progress in delivering value as well as broader performance measures to track certain aspects of the Lifeline program's overall success." Other recommendations made in the program evaluation include:

- \* In order to adopt the proper minimum service standards, the FCC should gather data on how households use the supported services
- \* USAC should clarify its role in the Lifeline application process
- \* The FCC should evaluate the increase in minimum service standards...and determine if the subsidy rate will cover all, or the majority of, cost to help achieve their goal of "Universal Access" and providing affordable broadband.

## Reminders

⇒ **Reassigned Numbers Database.** All carriers receiving NANP numbering resources are currently required to maintain records of the most recent date each number was permanently disconnected and must age telephone numbers for at least 45 days after disconnection and before reassignment. This requirement became effective for small providers on January 27, 2021.

- \* **Beginning October 15, 2021,** Small providers will be required to report to the online [reassigned numbers database](#) on the 15th of every month



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