

November 12, 2021

- ▶ BIDEN NOMINATES ROSENWORCEL, SOHN
- ▶ **NET NEUTRALITY MAY BE BACK**
- ▶ HOUSE PASSES BROADBAND BILL
- ▶ **ADDITIONAL RDOF FUNDS AWARDED**
- ▶ FCC AWARDS \$421M FROM ECF
- ▶ **FCC AWARDS COVID-29 TELEHEALTH FUNDS** ...1
- ▶ **COMPORIUM COMPLETES ACQUISITION**
- ▶ VEXUS EYES SANTA FE FOR FIBER EXPANSION
- ▶ **180M FIXED WIRELESS CUSTOMERS PREDICTED**
- ▶ TDS BOOSTS FIBER GOAL TO 929K LOCATIONS ...1
- ▶ IOT VALUE SET TO ACCELERATE
- ▶ **AT&T INKS CONNECTED COW DEAL**
- ▶ FARM MANAGER TECH TOOLS
- ▶ **STARLINK REVEALS NEW USER DISH**
- ▶ WELINK OFFERS GIG FIXED WIRELESS ...2

Alexicon *insider*

INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY FOR THE
RURAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

Regulatory Headlines

[Biden Nominates Rosenworcel, Sohn](#)

President Biden has nominated Acting Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel to be permanent Chairwoman of the Federal Communications Commission. Biden also nominated former FCC advisor Gigi Sohn to fill former Commissioner O'Reilly's position as an FCC Commissioner.

[Net Neutrality May be Back](#)

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which regulates everything from TV to internet service providers in the United States, is finally poised to pursue the pro-competition, pro-consumer agenda that President Joe Biden laid out in a July executive order declaring that an array of US companies have become too big and need to have their power checked.

[House Passes Broadband Bill](#)

The House last week passed the E-BRIDGE Act, which makes it easier for the Economic Development Administration to hand out money to help close the rural digital divide.

[Additional RDOF Funds Awarded](#)

The FCC said...that it is ready to authorize over \$709 million in Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) funding for 50 broadband providers. As a commission press release notes, the "bulk" of the RDOF funding will go to rural electric cooperatives.

[FCC Awards \\$421m from ECF](#)

The FCC has made awards totaling more than \$421 million from the Emergency Connectivity Fund in its latest funding wave announcement.

[FCC Awards COVID-19 Telehealth Funds](#)

The FCC has approved 75 more applications for funding in Round 2 of the COVID-19 Telehealth Program. The new funding announcement totals \$42,163,705. This is the fourth Round 2 announcement. All four announcements combined total approximately \$166.13 million. Healthcare providers in every state and territory, as well as the District of Columbia have been approved.



Market Watch

[Comporium Completes Acquisition](#)

[Vexus Eyes Santa Fe for Fiber Expansion](#)

[180m Fixed Wireless Customers Predicted](#)

[TDS Boosts Fiber Goal to 929k locations](#)



Alexicon

Questions? Comments?
Contact Chris Barron

cbarron@alexicon.net

Technology Trends

New and notable technology and services

AT&T Inks Connected Cow Deal

Sometimes truth is stranger than fiction, as news today from AT&T about connected cows illustrates. In a development reminiscent of the 1960s sci-fi movie “Fantastic Voyage,” AT&T has inked a deal to provide wireless connectivity for smaXtec, developer of sensors that are swallowed by cows and remain in the first of cows’ multiple stomachs to provide biometric readings aimed at making dairy farms more efficient.

Farm Manager Tech Tools

Technology has changed since I started in farm management nearly 30 years ago. Back then, keyboarding was called typing. High schools taught shorthand for young women who aspired to be “secretaries,” and home economics for those who didn’t. I cut my technological teeth learning how to program BASIC on a TRS-80 computer with 16K of RAM. No floppy disks to store the program — we used cassette tapes. (Younger readers, that’s what Chris Pratt’s character, Peter Quill, used to listen to music in “Guardians of the Galaxy.”)

Starlink Reveals New User Dish

SpaceX’s internet-from-space initiative Starlink has unveiled a new rectangular dish that interested customers can buy to tap into the company’s growing satellite constellation in low Earth orbit. It’s a thinner and lighter weight option than the circular dish that Starlink beta users have been testing over the last year.

WeLink Offers Gigabit Fixed Wireless

WeLink, a service provider founded in 2018, has rolled out fixed wireless service offering symmetrical speeds up to a gigabit per second in metro Las Vegas and Phoenix. In an email to Telecompetitor, WeLink founder and CEO Kevin Ross said the company plans to be in a total of 10 major metros in the next 18 to 24 months. The company will use 5G millimeter wave technology and 60 GHz wireless technology that it developed, according to Ross. The company plans to charge \$70 a month for gigabit service for 24 months or \$80 a month without a time commitment, according to its web page.

IoT Value Set to Accelerate

The Internet of Things (IoT), the convergence of the digital and physical worlds, has emerged as one of the fundamental trends underlying the digital transformation of business and the economy. From the fitness trackers we wear to the smart thermostats we use in our homes to the fleet-management solutions that tell us when our packages will arrive to the sensors that promote increased energy efficiency or monitor natural disasters resulting from climate change...



IN FOCUS **Infrastructure Bill Broadband Provisions**

The House passed the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#) (a/k/a Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill) on November 5, meaning the legislation, already passed by the Senate, now awaits the President’s signature. Included in the IJA is around \$65 billion for broadband deployment and affordability, most of which (\$42.45 billion) is allocated to the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program to be administered by NTIA and awarded by the states.

Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program. The BEAD program has NTIA handling grant funding to states, which then will subgrant funds to entities to deploy broadband networks where 25/3 Mbps does not exist (according to maps generated in compliance with the Broadband DATA Act). The supported networks must be capable of 100/20 Mbps. NTIA is to release a Notice within 180 days of the Act’s passage.

- * Funds can be used for, among other things, unserved and underserved areas, connecting anchor institutions, data collection, broadband mapping and planning, WiFi to multi-family residential buildings, and adoption
- * Unserved location—lacks 25/3 Mbps
- * Unserved project—80% of locations are unserved
- * Eligible Anchor institution—lacks gigabit service
- * \$100m minimum initial allocation will be made available to each state and territory
- * Priority of awards—unserved, underserved, unserved anchor institutions
- * There will be a challenge process that states will have to admin-

- ister
- * 25% matching requirement, except in high-cost areas

We will provide more detailed information once the NTIA releases the notice of funding opportunity.

Tribal Connectivity. The IJA provides an additional \$2b to the existing Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program, and makes some technical changes to the TBSP including an extension of program beyond the COVID-19 pandemic and lengthening the construction time frame from 1 year to 4 years.

Middle Mile. The IJA establishes a \$1b program to be handled by NTIA to fund middle mile projects. The federal share of the grants is no more than 70%, the projects must be completed within 5 years, and recipients “shall offer interconnection in perpetuity” (within certain parameters).

Affordability. The EBB program is renamed, is extended beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, and the credits are set at \$30 for non-Tribal and \$75 for Tribal households.

Other. A Report on the future of the USF is to be issued by the FCC within 9 months; the ReConnect program receives \$1.926 billion; and there is a \$2.75b [Digital Equity Act](#) that helps ensure all Americans can effectively use broadband services.

Reminders

- * **Starting on September 28, 2021**, intermediate providers and voice service providers were prohibited from accepting calls directly from a voice service provider if that voice service provider’s filing does not appear in the [Robocall Mitigation Database](#).
- * **Broadband Performance Pre-Testing** begins 1Q22 for ACAM II, CAF BLS, and CAF II auction support recipients. The first report is due to USAC on April 7, 2022.



Questions? Comments?
Contact Chris Barron
cbarron@alexicon.net