

May 13, 2022

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# Alexicon *insider*

INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY FOR THE  
RURAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

## Regulatory Headlines

### [NTIA Funding Availability](#)

The Biden administration is taking the first steps to release \$45 billion to ensure that every U.S. resident has access to high-speed internet by roughly 2028, inviting governors and other leaders on Friday to start the application process.

### [Feds to Share Broadband Data](#)

Four federal agencies have agreed to a broad data sharing agreement under which they will collaborate on collection and reporting and share information on broadband deployment.

### [Effort to Boost Broadband Access](#)

The Biden administration announced 20 internet providers committed to increase speeds or cut prices to provide free high-speed internet to eligible Americans. Meanwhile, it's been one year since the Colonial Pipeline attack, which served as a wake-up call for industries to invest in cybersecurity.

### [TBCP Awards \\$77M](#)

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), a part of the Department of Commerce, has awarded 19 grants in the Tribal Connectivity Program. The grants total \$77 million and cover tribal communities in Alaska, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Louisiana, Michigan, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Dakota and Washington.

### [RDOF Winner Change of Plans](#)

Two associations representing rural broadband providers sent a letter to the FCC...to express concerns about a reported change of plans by Resound Networks, which was one of the largest winning bidders in the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) auction.



## Market Watch

[Rural Broadband Benefits in Oregon County](#)

[Who Needs Multi-Gig Internet Anyway?](#)

[Comporium Offers Free 100meg ACP Service](#)

[Muni Broadband Advocacy Group](#)



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# Technology Trends

New and notable technology and services

## Skills Crisis & Rural America

The Upper Peninsula of Michigan is home to 30% of the county's landmass, but just 3% of its population. Boasting dense technicolour forests dotted with waterfalls and surrounded by dazzling turquoise lakes, the Upper Peninsula (UP) lures explorers and lovers of the outdoors and is a world away from the noisy, kinetic streets of the Michigan capital of Detroit some 350 miles away.

## What is DOCSIS 4.0?

You may have heard companies like Comcast, Charter Communications and Cox Communications say something called "DOCSIS 4.0" will let them provide users with blazing fast speeds for applications like AR/VR, gaming, online learning, telemedicine and more. But what exactly is DOCSIS 4.0 and how is it going to make the internet faster? Let's start with basics. DOCSIS is an acronym that stands for Data Over Cable Service Interface Specifications.

## Ransomware is Written in Rust

The BlackCat ransomware gang, known for being the first to use ransomware written in the Rust programming language, has compromised at least 60 organizations worldwide since March 2022, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) says in a new alert. BlackCat, which also goes by the name ALPHV, is a relatively new ransomware-as-a-service gang that security researchers believe is related to the more established BlackMatter (aka Darkside) ransomware gang that hit US fuel distributor Colonial Pipeline last May.

## Lumen Accounts for 20% of DDoS Attacks

Telecommunications companies continued to be a key target for distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks in Q1 2022, as the number of attacks jumped 32% year on year, a new Lumen report showed. Of the top 500 largest attacks, the telecom industry accounted for a whopping 76%. That compares to just 9% of the biggest attacks in Q1 2021.

## Cable Tech X-Ray Vision

It's not quite the kind of superpower you read about in comic books, but software company Nrby is peddling a kind of app-based X-ray vision that makes it easier for telecom technicians to locate problems with plant in the field, see recent maintenance activity at a given site and track their own repairs. The technology appears to have peaked operator interest, with dozens of providers from Tier-1s like Comcast to mom-and-pop ISPs deploying it with their teams.



## IN FOCUS

### Draft Extended ACAM Plan NPRM

The FCC released a [draft NPRM](#) addressing the ACAM Coalition's [plan](#) to extend ACAM I and II support in exchange for additional broadband deployment obligations.

The proposal would extend the terms of the original ACAM I and II plans, increase deployment obligations to 100/20 Mbps (or above), and proposes an additional \$387m in annual support. The ACAM Coalition proposes to increase the support cap per location to \$300 or 80% of ACAM costs for eligible location, whichever is greater.

The Commission is poised to ask a number of key questions about the proposal, and brings into the draft NPRM some fairly high level considerations. For example, the FCC (and ACAM Coalition) will ensure any new offers of support, whether extended CAM or something else, will be based on the BDC/broadband serviceable location fabric (BSLF) information. In addition, the FCC questions the cost/benefit of using a new model (and specifically notes the notorious problems the ACAM model has with determining locations).

Several questions are raised about the ACAM Coalition's proposal, including whether areas currently funded and largely served with 100/20Mbps service should continue to receive support. On the other hand, the FCC does recognize such areas may still require ongoing support for operations and maintenance.

The FCC seems especially concerned with coordinating any enhanced ACAM offer with other federal programs, especially the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) program. Once question raised is whether the deployment term should better line up with the

BEAD's four-year time frame.

There's something for everyone in the draft NPRM—the FCC asks whether a new ACAM offer should be made to current CAF BLS recipients. The FCC also makes clear that it will address what comes next for CAF BLS in a separate proceeding.

The FCC then will propose, if the draft NPRM is adopted, a number of proposals to "improve the administration of the high-cost program." These proposals include:

- Changes in annual reporting requirements, including filing the Form 481 and annual ETC certifications with USAC only, require performance testing reporting on a quarterly basis, and revise HUBB reporting deadlines
- Streamline the review of ROR carrier mergers
- Revise rules regarding acquisition of exchanges by CAF BLS recipients
- Changing how study area boundary waivers are handled
- Require quarterly performance testing reporting

The FCC will consider the NPRM at its May 19, 2022 Open Meeting. Given a normal Federal Register publishing schedule, this puts the initial comment due date around the middle of July.

## Reminders

- \* **Broadband Performance Pre-Testing** began 1Q22 for ACAM II, CAF BLS, and CAF II auction support recipients. The next report is due to USAC on July 7.
- \* The transition to **988 suicide prevention hotline** is currently scheduled for July 16, 2022. By this date, all calls to 988 are to be routed to 1-800-273-TALK.
- \* All broadband providers should make sure **broadband serviceable location fabric** (BSLF)-related licenses with CostQuest are executed.



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