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# Alexicon *insider*

INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY FOR THE  
RURAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

## Regulatory Headlines

### [Lujan Seeks Backing for Legislation](#)

Rep. Ben Ray Luján (D-N.M.) is hoping to introduce his Broadband Infrastructure Finance Innovation Act next week, a staffer with knowledge of the bill confirmed. The proposed legislation “would make low-interest financing available to public-private partnerships to help deploy broadband,” which would “enjoy the flexibility to apply for secured loans, lines of credit, or loan guarantees,” Lujan said in a letter to other lawmakers seeking co-sponsors.

### [Sinclair Policies Should be Reviewed](#)

FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel told Congress that the FCC under chair Ajit Pai has been taking actions that appear to favor Sinclair Broadcasting, and suggested that needs investigating.

### [FCC Adopts NPRM on 3.5 Ghz](#)

A divided FCC has voted on a framework for freeing up new spectrum for wireless broadband that could encourage

cable and telco broadband players to use, and bid on, that spectrum. The vote was 4 to 1, with Commissioners Jessica Rosenworcel dissenting and Mignon Clyburn concurring, which is a “yes,” but short of full-throated support. ([Link to NPRM](#))

### [FCC Plans Media Rules Roll Back](#)

The Federal Communications Commission will vote next month to eliminate a decades-old rule designed to preserve media diversity in local markets, FCC Chairman Ajit Pai said Wednesday.

### [CenturyLink: Revise Copper Rules](#)

CenturyLink is joining the chorus of incumbent telcos that want the copper retirement and legacy service discontinuance process to be simplified to facilitate the build out and expansion of next-gen fiber and IP-based services. In an FCC filing, CenturyLink has asked the regulator to streamline the Section 214 and copper retirement processes.



## Market Watch

[FirstNet Competitor: 18 States in Play](#)

[Bipartisan Groups: Scrutinize AT&T Deal](#)

[Telco 3Q2017 Earnings Results](#)

[Juniper: Telecom a Challenging Market](#)



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Questions? Comments?  
Contact Chris Barron

[cbarron@alexicon.net](mailto:cbarron@alexicon.net)

# Technology Trends

*New and notable technology and services*

## Tackling Network Capacity Conundrum

Nathan Sutter, director of network operations and engineering at rural carrier Nex-Tech Wireless, which serves about 60,000 wireless subscribers in Kansas and eastern Colorado, said that in the last two years, Nex-Tech has seen traffic levels go up 66%. That is plateauing somewhat, he added, noting that traffic was up 27% in the past 12 months alone.

## Smart Farms Require Good Broadband

The agricultural industry is expecting big things from smart farm technology aimed at enhancing crop yields while minimizing the use of fertilizers and pesticides and which will rely heavily on broadband connectivity. According to Transparency Market Research, the global smart agriculture market is expected to increase 13.5% annually through 2025, rising from \$6.5 billion in 2015 to \$23.4 billion by 2025.

## Mobile Encryption Huge Problem for FBI

Encryption has stopped the FBI from accessing almost 7,000 mobile devices, according to the agency's new director, Christopher Wray. "To put it mildly, this is a huge, huge problem," he reportedly said in a Sunday speech at a police conference in Philadelphia. "It impacts investigations across the board."

## U.S. Cellular 5G Fixed Wireless Tests

U.S. Cellular has achieved speeds of 8.5 Gbps in tests of 5G fixed wireless technology at 28 GHz using macrocell antennas. The U.S. cellular 5G fixed wireless tests were the first to use an antenna height of 123 feet, the company said. Because distances covered are shorter for wireless communications in high-frequency millimeter wave (mmWave) bands, some network operators expect to use lower antenna heights.

## Data Breaches Increase by 164%

Data protection systems were a sieve in the first half of this year, according to a study by Gemalto, a digital security firm based in Europe. Gemalto's Breach Level Index shows there were 918 data breaches during this period, resulting in 1.9 billion data records being exposed — a "staggering" 164% increase over the last six months of 2016. This presumably included email addresses.



## **IN FOCUS:** **FCC Has Another Busy Week**

The FCC had a busy week, including an Open Meeting, a Congressional hearing, and releasing new draft items for their November Open Meeting.

### **October Open Meeting**

At this week's Open Meeting, the FCC adopted a number of fairly substantial items, including a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on use of the 3.5 Ghz wireless spectrum band (see above), eliminating certain International reporting requirements (see October 26 Special Bulletin), and a [Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) regarding the implementation of Nationwide Number Portability. We will dig into the Number Portability NPRM in the near future, but this could represent a fairly major change to carriers should the FCC's wishes be adopted.

### **November Open Meeting**

The FCC released a tentative agenda and draft items for their November Open Meeting, one of which is already generating a bit of controversy: another [Lifeline reform order](#) (and NPRM/NOI). This time, the majority (Pai, Carr, O'Rielly) is looking to (1) Target enhanced Lifeline support to residents of rural areas on Tribal lands, establish mapping resources to identify rural "Tribal lands" for enhanced Lifeline support, require independent certification of residency on rural Tribal lands, and direct enhanced support to facilities-based providers; (2) Increase Lifeline benefit portability by eliminating the port freezes for voice and broadband Internet access ser-

vices; and (3) Clarify that "premium Wi-Fi" and other similar networks of Wi-Fi-delivered broadband Internet access service do not qualify as mobile broadband under the Lifeline program rules.

[Commissioner Clyburn](#) already issued a statement, saying "If the goal of the current FCC majority is to widen existing divides, and ensure that our nation's most vulnerable are less likely to be connected, this item sets us on that path. It will harm those less fortunate, those who need to dial 911, stay in touch with their children's educators, keep a job, and stay healthy. The day we head down such a path, is a sad one indeed."

### **House Oversight Hearing**

Finally, the 5 Commissioners appeared in front of the House Oversight Committee for what was, at times, a testy [hearing](#) (a video and the written statements are available at this link). At one point, Chairman was asked about the USF funding problems, to which he replied former Chairman Wheeler put the FCC "in a pickle" due to not accepting Pai's advice and to expect an NPRM soon. Also a topic of discussion was the potential transfer of USF funds from USAC to the U.S. Treasury. The Chairman stated that this is being done for reasons of safety, and that foregoing approximately \$55m in annual interest is a small price to pay to allow the Chairman to rest easy at night...



## Alexicon at Work

### **Conferences and Meetings**

Cassandra Byers, Julie Hudson, Tamara Lowe, and Zach Cochran will attend the NECA Expo November 5-8 in San Antonio, Texas



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Contact Chris Barron  
[cbarron@alexicon.net](mailto:cbarron@alexicon.net)