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# Alexicon *insider*

INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY FOR THE  
RURAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

## Regulatory Headlines

### ReConnect Awards Announced

The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced a pair of financial awards – a grant and a loan – in high-speed broadband infrastructure under the USDA’s ReConnect Pilot Program. Both of the USDA ReConnect awards went to rural incumbent local exchange carriers (RLECs).

### Carriers Sue T-Mobile Over Calls

Two rural telecom service providers have filed a class-action lawsuit against T-Mobile over calls not completed to rural service areas. T-Mobile previously was fined \$40 million by the FCC for rural calls not completed, but that money went to the U.S. treasury, and the providers are arguing that they deserve compensation.

### FCC Formally Approves Merger

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on Tuesday formally confirmed its approval of the T-Mobile-Sprint merger along party lines, clearing the final hurdle for government approval.

### Millimeter Wave Auction Qualified Bidders

The FCC said late last week that 35 companies have qualified to bid in Auction 103 of millimeter wave spectrum in the 37 GHz, 39 GHz and 47 GHz bands that is scheduled to begin December 10. Qualified bidders include large and small mobile service providers, as well as companies that don’t provide mobile service but instead are likely to use the spectrum for fixed wireless deployments.

### AT&T to Pay Throttling Fine

AT&T will pay \$60 million to resolve U.S. allegations it misled millions of smartphone customers by charging them for “unlimited” data plans that reduced data speeds if they used too much, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) said on Tuesday. As part of the settlement of the 2014 complaint, AT&T is also prohibited from making any representation about the speed or amount of its mobile data without also disclosing any material restrictions on the data.



## Market Watch

[CenturyLink Loves Chick-fil-A](#)

[Cord Cutting Could Claim Another 6.2M Subs](#)

[Viaero Wireless to Build FirstNet Sites](#)

[Public-Private Partnerships Key to Broadband](#)



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Questions? Comments?  
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# Technology Trends

*New and notable technology and services*

## New Laws Mean Tougher Data Protection

Sweeping data protection laws are in the process of reshaping the landscape for consumer data and rights in the United States. On Jan. 1, 2020, only a couple of months from now, the California Consumer Privacy Act of 2018 (CCPA) will take effect, less than two years after the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) went live.

## Privacy Protection Essential

Microsoft President Brad Smith said on Wednesday a "new wave" of data privacy protection and other security measures was needed to safeguard people's rights at a time when "everything has gone digital". Speaking at Lisbon's Web Summit, Europe's largest tech conference, Smith said it was important to protect privacy, something he sees as a "fundamental human right" and one of the next decade's most critical issues. "It's why I believe we will not only need a new wave of technology but a new wave of privacy protection as well..." he said.

## Drones: Flying Network Security Threat

Drones could become a major network security threat from 2020, forcing organization to guard the airspace around their buildings, security researchers have warned. Small unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) will increasingly evolve from novelty items to "ubiquitous business tools" over the coming years, explained defense contractor Booz Allen Hamilton in a new 2020 Cyber Threat Trends Outlook report. However, as they do, cyber-criminals may also look to take advantage by flying them close to target networks and/or landing them in concealed locations such as on roofs.

## U.S., China, Japan, Korea to Dominate 5G

China, the United States, Japan and Korea will account for more than half of the world's subscribers to super-fast 5G mobile networks by 2025, leaving Europe lagging, a study showed on Thursday. Europe, moving more slowly to build 5G networks, will lag in terms of consumer take-up. Yet the picture looks different in business, where 5G will be able to run 'smart' factories using connected robots...

## VZ Adds Co-Mgmt to SD-WAN

Verizon had added a new capability into its SD-WAN managed services portfolio that lets customers change their policies on the fly. Verizon said its "Co Management" service gives enterprise customers the ability to change SD-WAN policies, such as application-aware routing, or quality of service, through either the Verizon Enterprise Center (VEC) self-service policy management portal or Verizon's API platform.



## IN FOCUS

### **Starks Calls for Review & Possible Contributions Reform Legislation**

#### ***Starks Calls for USF Review***

Commissioner Geoffrey Starks, in a [speech](#) at the Broadband Communities Conference on October 31, called for the FCC "to conduct a data driven 10-year look-back on how [the federal USF] program has effectively performed in bringing broadband to our remote areas." In Starks' view, this look-back would answer a number of questions: "Where have we succeeded? Where did we miss? Under our programming, which communities have had their connectivity needs met in the way that we expected? Which haven't, and why? Or are there areas where we in fact already provided High-Cost/CAF funding but they're still behind in their connectivity needs, and if so, why?"

Starks hits a number of key topics, including the upcoming Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) process, broadband data collection, and the importance of the Lifeline program in ensuring broadband is affordable, as well as available.

While it is unknown if and how this will move forward, it is worth monitoring closely and providing input to Commissioner Starks when possible. Also of note is the [report](#) cited in the speech from the Benton Institute for Broadband & Society. It's 150 pages but well worth perusing.

#### ***Possible USF Contributions Reform Legislation***

*This is from WTA this week:*

Next week, Congressmen Collin Peterson (D-MN) and Don Young

(R-AK) plan to introduce legislation to require the FCC to assess broadband for contributions to the Universal Service Fund. Modernizing the USF contribution system by assessing broadband has been an objective of WTA and the rest of the rural industry for many years. WTA has endorsed this legislation.

While the legislation has yet to be introduced, WTA suggests contacting Congressional offices to express support. This comes on the heels of the state members of the Joint Board on Universal Service issuing a report on contributions reform, so it is timely.

Following are links to some useful information:

- 1) [Bill text](#)
- 2) [Section-by-section summary](#)
- 3) [Background paper](#) created by the sponsors
- 4) ["Dear Colleague" letter](#) that Representatives Peterson and Young are circulating around the Hill that contains the staff contact in those two offices



## Alexicon at Work

Zach Cochran will attend the NECA Expo in Denver, CO on November 10-13.



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Questions? Comments?

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