

Village of Waukesha to get 190-foot cell tower

Conditional use permit for
monopole approved

WAUKESHA, WI – After three public hearings spanning August, September, and October, the Village of Waukesha Board and Plan Commission approved a conditional use permit on October 8 for Diamond Communications to construct a 14-story cell tower at Infinity Field, a youth baseball diamond.

The new tower will replace an existing American Transmission Company/Wisconsin Electric Power Company tower that Verizon will no longer be able to use because of its location on high-voltage power lines. That tower is located roughly half a mile away from the new site.

Although Diamond Communications said the tower would have space for five arrays, the village has limited the number of providers to four, including Verizon.

The new tower will be galvanized but not painted, and each of the two compounds will be surrounded by brick enclosures. Four parking spots will be temporarily eliminated.

The approval is despite the opposition of many of the local residents near the tower, many in an adjacent neighborhood and concerned about their own health and safety and that of kids using the nearby field. One local resident said that Tom Kelenic, the owner of 5 Diamonds, supported the project and doesn't care about anything but making money.

See **TOWER**, PAGE 2A

Police back AT&T in Berkeley neighborhood

Police forcefully remove residents
trying to prevent antenna installation



BERKELEY, CA – Long before 1:00 AM on October 5, twenty people arrived for two vigils in north Berkeley in hopes of stopping installations of "small" cell wireless antennas on utility poles in the public rights of way at Monterey Market and near Berkeley Natural Grocery. Workers arrived at 3:30 AM and called police. Seeing that they would not leave of their own accord, Berkeley police forcibly removed the people. Grounding wires were installed, but not the antennas and meters.

Former Planning Commissioner Clifford Fred who lives nearby said, "I'm shocked that city officials knew that AT&T violated Berkeley Municipal Code 16.10.040 by not notifying people within 500 feet of the 1321 Gilman or 1550 Hopkins poles before the controversial cell towers were approved, but let AT&T get away with violating the city laws. Officials used to care but now are keen on letting big telecom companies have their way."

Because neighbors and activists had prevented work eight times in recent months by refusing to leave three sites when workers arrived, AT&T had beat them to the sites on

See **BERKELEY**, PAGE 2A

Berkeley's radiation warnings on pause

Retailers no longer required
to warn about carcinogenic
risks – at least for now

A Berkeley ordinance that took effect in 2016 which has survived years of legal challenges by the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association (CTIA) will no longer be enforced after a federal judge ruled in September that Berkeley was interfering with the Federal Communications Commission's oversight of the industry.

Berkeley could have appealed the ruling but chose instead to settle by agreeing not to enforce the ordinance. In return, the CTIA will not seek attorneys' fees, according to Lawrence Lessig, a Harvard law professor and lawyer for Berkeley.

The decision is a blow to environmental and health advocates who supported the law, which required wireless retailers to display information already present (and required by law) in manuals. The required warning said: "The City of Berkeley requires that you be provided the following notice: To assure safety, the Federal Government requires that cell phones meet radio frequency (RF) exposure guidelines. If you carry or use your phone in pants or shirt pocket or tucked into a bra when the

See **ORDINANCE**, PAGE 3A

Payphones holding up, despite pandemic

Nation's largest payphone
provider still boasting significant
revenue

COVID-19 has impacted nearly every facet of modern life. One might well think that payphone usage has precipitously declined, owing to a decline in travel and general movement due to working from home. But payphone usage has remained remarkably steady this year, despite a decline in public mobility.

Pacific Telemanagement Services (PTS), the nation's largest payphone provider, operates the majority of the nation's payphones as customer-owned coin-operated telephones (COCOTs), which means they are not serviced by any telephone company.

According to PTS sources, many payphones have continued to see significant revenue, making payphones a lucrative venture in the right locations. The

See **PAYPHONES**, PAGE 3A

Fight continues over pole ownership preemption

Federal appeals court asked to
reconsider preemption of local control

On September 28, 2020, dozens of municipalities asked a federal appeals court to reconsider a decision that allow the Federal Communications Commission to preempt local ownership and control of streetlights and other assets in public rights of way.

This comes a month after a challenge by multiple cities to a ruling by the Federal Communications Commission was rejected by the Ninth Circuit federal appeals court. Local governments maintain that even if the F.C.C. has the authority to preempt some local laws, they don't have the right to seize municipal property and hand it off to private companies.

The F.C.C. is also currently the party of a lawsuit against them brought by the Environmental Health Trust and the Children's Health Defense., which is suing the F.C.C. for ignoring substantial evidence that its radiofrequency radiation exposure limits are outdated and do not protect current consumers.

See **FCC**, PAGE 2A

Yahoo Groups to shut down permanently

Platform to cease
functioning by December

Yahoo Groups, which disabled many aspects of its platform a year ago, will cease to exist completely as of December 15, 2020.

The announcement from Yahoo to list users and moderators comes after the creation of new groups has already been disabled, effective as of October 12.

After December 15, messages sent to Yahoo group addresses will no longer be delivered and will be bounced back to posters.

Yahoo says it is making this decision due to a "decline in usage over the last several years." Many platform users have been increasingly frustrated as the paint has worn on the almost two-decade old platform. Delays in message

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FCC

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The F.C.C. recently filed a reply brief to the suit, much of which contained debunked or inaccurate information. According to Theodora Scarato, Executive Director of EHT, the FCC “saw no reason to take steps to protect children” despite voluminous scientific evidence on the record showing that children are uniquely vulnerable due to their developing brains and bodies.

Windows 7 holding on Eleven-year old operating system “refusing to die”

Microsoft’s Windows 7 operating system is no longer receiving security updates as of January 2020, except for those users receiving Microsoft’s Extended Security Updates (ESUs), which continue into 2023. However, that hasn’t stopped a significant minority of users from sticking with the eleven-year old operating system.

Ed Bott, a veteran technology writer for over two decades, noticed that many visitors to his site were still using Windows 7 – about 10% out of millions of users. Bott decided to poll visitors about their reasons for sticking with Windows 7.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, 58% - more than half – of users said they had no plans to upgrade to Windows 10 in the next year. Only 6% of users said they were paying for ESUs. It’s unclear if this includes users who may be receiving ESUs without paying for them.

A staggering 42% said compatibility was their mean reason for sticking with Windows 7. 32% said they didn’t want to upgrade, mainly because of the user interface. A quarter of this category was particularly hostile towards Windows 10 with the passionate “Windows 10 sucks” attitude. Others had no problem with Windows 10 but preferred Windows 7, many of them preferring it for its user interface, stability, and control.

Less popular reasons for sticking with Windows 7? Only 10% said the upgrade was too expensive, which seems to align with the fact that Windows 10 is still available as a free upgrade. 5% are concerned about the intrusiveness of updates and 3% over privacy (or the lack thereof). 3% were “too busy” to upgrade and 3% had “training” issues with Windows 7. That left 1% of users which didn’t upgrade because they moved to Linux, a percentage that aligns closely with the overall usage share of the minority set of operating systems.

Some of the sentiment is not entirely unfamiliar. When Microsoft ended support for Windows XP in 2014, many users refused to budge, making it necessary for Microsoft to release multiple patches for the operating system years after they said they would stop. Even in 2020, Windows XP has also refused to die, still prevalent in ATMs and many other embedded systems. A 43GB source code leak in September of old Microsoft software, including Windows XP, has raised new security concerns. Leaked source code can make it easier for vulnerabilities to be detected, and Microsoft is unlikely to release security updates for an operating system that is now almost seven years out of support.

Tower

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Section 704 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 as well as Wisconsin Act 67 add restrictions to what the village can consider. They are prohibited from considering health or environmental effects in their decisions.

Additionally, the board reiterated at the beginning of the third hearing that conditional use permits are a “quasi-judicial matter”. This prohibits them from reading or considering ex-parte comments in their decisions, including emails from residents. All input considered must be provided during the hearings.

Testimony from local residents was considered during the final hearing. Sarah Carstens, whose home is just 500 yards south of the site, once again urged officials to deny the permit.

“This is going to be debilitating to me. I have several auto-immune deficiencies that this will affect,” Carstens said, urging consideration of the Americans with Disabilities and Fair Housing acts.

Diamond Communications attorney Claude Krawczyk reiterated to the commissioners the limits of their ability to block the tower.

“You are aware that the FCC prohibits local boards from barring cell towers due to perceived health implications,” he said.

Although the “perceived health implications” are well-backed by thousands of peer reviewed studies, they cannot be considered in conditional use decisions. However, the Americans with Disabilities and Fair Housing acts are not preempted from local control, as Krawczyk posited.

This is not the first falsehood Krawczyk has presented. In the first hearing, he falsely claimed that cell towers don’t collapse, despite dozens of collapses causing property damage and even fatalities in some cases over the past two decades. Krawczyk lied to the board and claimed that monopoles don’t collapse, even at high wind speeds. At the third hearing, he misrepresented objections to discrimination on the basis of disability as health concerns, which they are not. Instead of adjourning to get more information, the board relied on the applicant’s attorney’s falsehoods.

Approval of the permit was unanimous among the board and plan commission members who were present. Michael Dorr, one village trustee, recused himself from all related discussions and did not participate or vote on the issue. He has left the room for all conversations about the tower and has said in the past that the matter presents a conflict of interest for him. One village resident said he is “some form of a manager at AT&T”.

According to Carstens, most of the neighbors she has spoken with are also opposed to the tower. Concerns range from health to unsightliness to property values, which can decline by up to 20% if a cell tower goes in nearby.

Although Wisconsin is currently experiencing surges in COVID-19, construction is slated to begin sometime later this year.

Concerns over transparency surfaced as minutes from the hearing were not available afterwards. The village has been understaffed recently, exacerbated by the resignation of the clerk/treasurer after incorrect ballots were mailed out to some residents. Village trustee David German has been operating the audiovisual equipment in the interim, but was absent from the October 8 hearing, and the village did not record the meeting. However, Watching Waukesha, an independent village watchdog group, was able to record the meeting.

Berkeley

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September 21, noisily setting up tall chain link fences at 2:00 AM, then waiting until 7:00 AM, when Berkeley law allows work to begin, to install ancillary equipment. Since then, an elder and a young neighbor have slept in a tent on site. This week, “pole protectors” beat the workers to both sites, but were dragged across the street by police.

Cynthia Papermaster, who wondered if her arm was being broken as she was hauled off, said, “More important than my pain is that we were removed from a public sidewalk so that a private multibillion dollar company, with help from local cops paid by our taxes, could perform non-essential work in the middle of the night against Berkeley’s laws.”

Jason Winnett wrote of the incident to the City Council, “I exercised my constitutional rights where crews were attempting to erect a cell tower which has been protested, clearly unwanted by residents. According to my understanding, there were actions by private parties as well as Berkeley police that have questionable legality... 24 hours later, I am experiencing lingering injuries, pulled muscles from being handled roughly. I was appalled to witness women in their 70s, concerned citizens, who after being up in vigil all night, were roughly handled by a large number of young, strong officers... We seem to be heading into what is known as fascism.”

Sargent Ronnie Hernandez asked a co-founder of Wireless Radiation Education & Defense (WiRED), Phoebe Sorgen, what the fuss is about. She replied, “Antennas emit EMF/RF microwave radiation that sickens people and harms flora and fauna. They increase fire risks, and overloaded, weathered poles sometimes fall! Business and property values plummet nearby. 5G is an energy glutton, too. Wired connections—whether copper or fiber—will always be faster, greener, safer, more reliable, and more secure than wireless. We need to preserve our right to privacy. Furthermore, there’s no AT&T service gap here, and the people don’t want it. It’s only about greed.”

AT&T has permits to install twelve more antennas, many near residences, schools, and healthcare facilities. Most of the permits expired in August, but were extended until 2021, though the public had urged the City Manager to exercise her option of requiring AT&T to reapply. WiRED, which has been lobbying and educating locally for the past three years, hired Ariel Strauss of Greenfire Law to craft stronger local laws and lobby for them.

Phoebe Sorgen
Berkeley, CA

SpaceX launches more satellites

60 more satellites join those already in space

Early on October 6, 2020, at 5:29 am Mountain Time, SpaceX launched 60 more satellites to join those already in outer space. There are now 738 satellites operating in the Starlink constellation, and SpaceX wants to launch thousands more of them. But why are they there, and what are they doing?

Elon Musk, the CEO of SpaceX, wants to use them to provide Internet access at speeds between 100 Mbps and 1 Gbps to much of the populated world. While the race for 5G is ongoing here on the ground, the race for space is going on above. Meanwhile, no consideration has been given to environmental or health impacts.

Some people, like Arthur Firstenberg of the Cellphone Task Force, have pointed out the environmental destruction that these satellites are causing. "If Neil Armstrong had brought a cell phone to the moon in 1969, it would have appeared from earth, at night, to be the brightest object in the universe in the microwave spectrum," said Firstenberg. While the Sun shines at 500,000 janskys, a cell phone in close proximity shines at 100 quadrillion janskys.

Firstenberg has spearheaded the International Appeal to stop 5G on earth and in space, an appeal to governments by scientists, doctors, and environmental organizations. As of October 13, 2020, 300,217 people and organizations from 220 nations and territories have signed. Citing the harmful effects of radiofrequency radiation in studies dating back as far as 1975, the appeal aims to ban the deployment of satellites such as those being pushed by SpaceX.

Yahoo

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posts, undelivered messages, and other operational problems in recent years have taken their toll on many groups previously using the platform. Many groups voluntarily moved to different list platforms, such as Groups.io, which was started by the original developer of what eventually became Yahoo Groups.

In October 2019, Yahoo Groups announced that groups would no longer be able to upload any new content, and only basic email functionality would remain. To many group owners, the writing was on the wall even then that Yahoo Groups was on the way out. Many groups shelled out hundreds to Groups.io to import their groups to Groups.io.

This time, even those groups that decided to remain on the platform for basic email functionality will be forced to find a different platform. While Groups.io has been a popular alternative, noting significant upsurges in demand in the past year due to the Yahoo Groups announcement, other open-source alternatives like Mailman and SYMPA are also viable options.

Payphones

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most lucrative phones are averaging as much as \$5 per day or more – a meager proportion compared to coin phone revenues 50 years ago, to be sure, but more than profitable for PTS. According to the company, they need about 3 calls per day or 100 calls per month to make a phone profitable, which averages out to between \$1.33 and \$1.50 per day.

Payphone revenues are by no means equal, though. While some phones remain very lucrative for PTS, others bring in, on average, no revenue at all.

Mark Thomas, the creator of The Payphone Project, has been tracking payphones since the 1990s. His work was featured in the New York Times in 1998 and 2004. The project continues into the present day, and Thomas spends much of his time documenting changes in the telephonic world around him.

Despite COVID-19, Thomas continues to witness people using public pay telephones in New York City. This is despite the city removing many phones in June and July, leaving some areas with no public phone service at all. These phones are maintained by CityBridge and are not privately owned and maintained as PTS's phones are.

"In recent months the pace of removals seems to have slowed," Thomas told us, "and CityBridge, which has a monopoly on New York's outdoor payphone franchise, posted a job opening for a Payphone Technician, suggesting the future of payphones in this city is not so bleak as most observers might think." CityBridge phones are privately owned.

Thomas says that despite frequently seeing sanitary wipes or napkins on handsets, COVID-19 may not be solely why. "[This] is not new since the pandemic."

Thomas also frequently spots used long-distance calling cards left behind on payphones. PTS – or any other payphone provider – doesn't get a cut for these beyond the dial-around compensation fee of 49.4¢ mandated by the F.C.C. (Originally 24¢ and increased in 2006.) When callers ring up toll-free numbers on payphones, the payphone provider gets two quarters from the call, even though the caller didn't feed them any.

It's a compensation scheme that has seen both scrutiny and abuse. While the revenue helps compensate for lost coin revenue, it also creates an environment that's ripe for fraud.

Between 2005 and 2015, payphone operator David Grudzinski raked in \$2.4 million by programming his phones to dial toll-free numbers when idle. Federal law enforcement placed cameras near two of his phones and traced nine calls in one month that were made when nobody was at the payphones. Grudzinski was ultimately sentenced to 18 months in prison and ordered to repay the funds.

U.S. District Judge Sim Lake, who presided over the case, said "This is one of the most sophisticated frauds I've ever seen and I've seen a lot of fraud." Perhaps surprisingly, numerous other individuals have pulled off the same scheme over the past twenty years.

But, according to Thomas, there's a silver lining to it all. "Gaming the system via auto-dialing payphones is obviously wrong and anyone doing what [these fraudsters did] will probably get caught eventually. On the other hand, if you want to help support your local payphone provider without incurring any cost to yourself then maybe use a payphone the next time you need to call a toll-free number."

Ordinance

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phone is ON and connected to a wireless network, you may exceed the federal guidelines for exposure to RF radiation. Refer to the instructions in your phone or user manual for information about how to use your phone safely."

Dubbed the "Cell Phone Radiation Right to Know" ordinance, it was upheld in 2019 by the Supreme Court, which rejected a free-speech challenge from the CTIA. Ellen Marks of the California Brain Tumor Association called the recent change a "devastating blow". Although the change is a setback for public health, Lessig said the arrangement was not necessarily permanent, and that it "remains on the books awaiting a better FCC."

The Federal Communications Commission has come under immense scrutiny in the past few years, not just for net neutrality, but also for preempting local control over 5G despite public health experts and scientists recommending moratoriums on the untested technology. A Harvard ethics report called "Captured Agency" discusses the revolving door between the wireless industry and the F.C.C. that has enabled these decisions. Joel Moskowitz, director of the Center for Family and Community Health at the University of California Berkeley says he believes that "fraudulent behavior on the part of the FCC" can be proven.

End of support for Office 2010

Security updates to end for ten-year old office suite

After more than ten years of support, official support for Microsoft Office 2010 ended October 13, 2020. This follows the end of mainstream support five years earlier, on October 13, 2015.

Released in 2010, as its name suggests, Office 2010 received mainly positive reviews upon its release. Although some critics were puzzled with the ribbon, which first debuted in Office 2007, Office 2010 received the same warm welcome by enthusiasts that Windows 7 received following Windows Vista's cooler reception.

End of support means that Office 2010 will no longer receive security patches from Microsoft. Although Microsoft recommends users upgrade to a newer version, Office 2010 will still work indefinitely, and users who prefer the older version may prefer to do so. Unlike Windows 7, there are no extended security updates for the office suite. Now, it belongs to the ages.

Landline outages in Pennsylvania

Two counties lose phone service for nearly half a day

PENNSYLVANIA – Thursday, October 8, 2020 saw yet another CenturyLink outage, this time disrupting service to Cumberland and Perry counties in

Pennsylvania.

Perry County’s Emergency Management Agency said CenturyLink subscribers were unable to make calls from their landline phones. Residents were advised to use an alternative service if they needed to contact emergency or non-emergency services instead.

However, Cumberland County’s communication department said calls to the Department of Public Safety’s ten-digit non-emergency number were not getting through. County residents were advised to call 911

instead if they needed assistance.

CenturyLink did not have any comments to offer at the time. This latest of CenturyLink outages – which completely interrupted service – follows many other outages in recent years that have disrupted emergency calls.

OPINION

Letters to the Editor

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.” — Martin Luther King, Jr.

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Topics are not restricted strictly to the focus of this newspaper, but we may prioritize more relevant letters over less relevant ones if there are space constraints. Well-articulated and thought-provoking letters are encouraged. All political viewpoints are welcome, but we reserve the right to refuse to publish material that is primarily hateful, inciteful, misleading, nonfactual, or inflammatory.

Some ways conservatives and liberals are different

A conservative thinks in-a-box that’s hard to get out of because they resist change. This box was usually created early in life having been programmed to have faith, be faithful, follow tradition, and to not question authority. Their brains are anatomically more susceptible to fear-based propaganda (enlarged amygdala) and they’re easily convinced with hearsay when frightened.

Conservatives are often found in rural areas; their social structure is mainly based around family and church; and they seldom venture far from home or where they were born. They are more apt to homeschool, less likely to go beyond high school and if they do, go to Christian colleges or ones with a strong Christian community. Conservative political and social philosophy is characterized by respect for American traditions, republicanism, support for Christian values, moral universalism, pro-business, anti-labor union, anti-communism, pro-individualism, and an advocacy of American exceptionalism.

Liberals on the other hand think out-of-the-box and when dissatisfied seek change. They resist even rebel against being programmed, are deeper thinkers, and question authority. They’re anatomically less susceptible to fear-based propaganda and when something frightens them, they ask questions, get answers, and then act on those facts. Liberals are often found in cities where there’s a variety of activity, their social structure is diversified based on their many interests. They move away from confining places to interesting ones, frequently travel, and will easily move away from home and where they were born. Liberals usually go to public school, go on to college and seek higher educational degrees. The foundation of liberalism is based on freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion and the separation of church and state, right to due process and equality under the law. So, which one do you align with? You could be a mutt.

Richard Cristdahl
Nevada City, CA

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“Facts don’t cease to exist just because they are ignored.” — Aldous Huxley

“The further a society drifts from the truth, the more it will hate those that speak it.” — George Orwell

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The EMF Medical Conference 2021, a virtual conference, will convene Jan. 28-31, 2021 to review the latest exposure science. Leading physicians, clinicians, and scientists will conduct presentations on the recognition, diagnosis, and treatment of EMF associated illness. 4 days of learning, 34 lectures, 6 panels, EMF meter workshop. This conference has been approved for 16.5 hours of CME. <https://emfconference2021.com>

Anti-Digit Dialing League. Will you be forced to dial 10 digits locally because of the FCC's 988 order? If so, you are not alone – 83 area codes will be! Join us in our opposition to 10-digit dialing for local calls! We oppose overlays and we are fighting for a more just implementation of 988. Join your local chapter today! addl.phreaknet.org. Dues, none; donations, sought.

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HUMOR



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FIRST AMENDMENT

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution gives the press the right to publish news, information and opinions without government interference. This also means people have the right to publish their own newspapers, newsletters, magazines, etc.

SATIRE

Life as a POTS de-installer

Landlines are dropping fast all across the country. The most aggressive in the act has been Verizon, which has been actively practicing "copper neglect" in its service region, purposely letting lines deteriorate and threatening its employees with termination if they do their due diligence and repair them.

One Verizon lineman, whom we'll call Fred, agreed to speak with us anonymously about the rationale behind Verizon's tactics.

"At first, I thought it was kind of dumb," Fred said. "When my dad was a lineman, quality and service were important values. But of course, that's old-fashioned today. Nobody wants quality and service, anymore. That's all old hat. What people want is flashy and delicate convenience that will fail on a dime. And so of course, that's exactly what we're giving them."

Fred is one of a growing number of Verizon POTS "de-installers". POTS referred to traditional analog telephone circuits from the local exchange. Until recently, it was the only form of communications for most people. Today, a variety of options exist, and so companies like Verizon see the infrastructure as redundant. Linemen like Fred frequently go out on service calls to homes in its service area to try to tamper with and vandalize the copper infrastructure. "It's a lot more effective than just waiting for that copper in the ground to fail," Fred explained. "That could take, geez, hundreds of years. By actively dismantling the network, we expedite the process a lot. It's actually kind of fun, now. We linemen have a competition of seeing how many wires we can cut in a day. Of course, then we get service calls, so we can actually enter homes and properties and rip out the rest of the copper."

Why is Verizon purposely destroying its outside plant? "It's not as cheap as wireless," Fred explained. "Cell towers are cheap to setup. They're not designed to have 99.999% uptime like landlines are. The quality sucks. Naturally, it costs us a fraction of what it would cost to provide high-quality landline service as it would to provide crappy cellular service, you see?"

The growing number of young people without a landline is good news for Verizon. "Young people are so accustomed to the pathetic quality of a cellular connection, they don't know what they're missing." Indeed, and Verizon intends for it to stay that way. In addition to not repairing any landlines that go out of service, it also requires that customers be at least 50 years old to subscribe to landline service. "The rationale," Fred explained, "is that if some teenager picked up a landline and made a call, he would be so blown away by the quality that he would never go back. Naturally, Verizon doesn't want that, so we're trying to turn landline service into more of an inside secret. Unfortunately, the cat's already out of the bag for most people over 40. Fortunately, Alzheimer's, breast cancer, and a myriad of other degenerative diseases are slowly killing many of them, our wireless division has been seeing to that."

No act of corporate negligence is complete without bribery, of course, and Verizon is no exception.

"We actually sold our payphone assets to third-party providers a few years back," Fred elaborated. "Most people think it was because payphone revenues were declining. Actually, it was to keep the FCC happy. You see, now whenever hurricanes or disasters hit, or blackouts occur, we see these massive lines for payphones and revenues are through the roof. By keeping people in the dark about the benefits of having a landline, we can guarantee exorbitant profits whenever some kind of disaster hits."

Linemen like Fred are an invaluable resource for learning about the rationale behind Verizon's decisions. However, most people, Fred argues, will be better off left in the dark, literally and metaphorically. "At the end of the day, Verizon wants people dead. And right now, anyone with a landline is a serious threat to that business goal. While Verizon's wireless division is working proactively to that end by producing ever more powerful silent killers, also known as "iPhones with unlimited data plans", Verizon's wireline division is working reactively to dismantle its copper infrastructure to leave customers disconnected in an emergency. And because payphone providers, in cahoots with Verizon, have lobbied to reduce payphone regulation, they can now price gouge during a disaster. You won't need just a handful of quarters to make a call next hurricane, you'll need a whole sack!"

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