

FCC to doll out \$9 billion for 5G

5G Fund for Rural America established

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Federal Communications Commission adopted rules on Tuesday, October 27 creating the 5G Fund for Rural America, which will consist of \$9 billion in funds to bring 5G wireless broadband connectivity to rural America. The 5G Fund will use multi-round reverse auctions in two phases to target support from the Commission’s Universal Service Fund to eligible areas based upon mobile coverage data previously gathered by the FCC. The FCC’s official press release touts that “establishing the 5G Fund further secures United States leadership in 5G and will close the digital divide.”

Others are less optimistic about any possibilities for bridging the digital divide. Bruce Kushnick, who heads the group “The Irregulars”, has exposed how telecom companies built out much of the fiber optic infrastructure paid for by telephone customers but did not provide fiber-to-the-home connectivity to these same ratepayers. Many of these costs benefited wireless subscribers, and effectively, telephone customers have been subsidizing wireless for years.

Although 5G is the next-generation of wireless broadband using high frequency microwave radiation, the small cell sites and associated equipment are only a small part of the necessary infrastructure. Fiber optic infrastructure is the backbone of the entire digital world (at least in the United States) – from carrying long-distance

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Hospital monopine upheld Verizon tower appeals denied despite significant community opposition

PORTOLA, CA – The Portola City Council unanimously upheld a conditional use permit for a 133-foot monopine Verizon cell tower that is expandable to 153 feet after an hours-long hearing that took place the evening of Monday, October 26.

The tower was approved with an added condition for radiofrequency testing after hours of public comments. Opponents to the tower near Eastern Plumas Healthcare outweighed supporters by 17-10. At times, tensions ran high, such as during a recess when a caller repeatedly tried to silence Paul McGavin, who voiced his opposition to the hearing.

Verizon, the applicant, submitted an application requesting a conditional use permit on September 26, 2019. EPHC opposed the tower in multiple communications to city staff. The tower was initially approved September 1, 2020 but was appealed by 3 Portola residents on September 21, 2020. Linda Hale, Josh Hart, and Lisa Miller all filed appeals to reconsider the permit, which was granted by city manager Lauren Knox in her capacity as hearing officer for the Portola Planning Commission. As a result, Portola was required to hold a public hearing by November 5.

Hale’s and Miller’s appeals were requests for accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act due to adverse reactions by electromagnetic sensitivity. Hart’s appeal also cited safety risks to hospital staff and patients, access barriers to people seeking treatment at the hospital, and conflicts of interest.

The RF evaluation report for the facility states the RF exposure level is 2.09% of the applicable public exposure limit, although these limits are outdated and not based on medical science.

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High-power antennas approved in Monterey AT&T application approved after voting changeup in intense hearing

MONTEREY, CA – AT&T’s application for high-power directional 5G-ready FirstNet antennas at Portola Plaza Hotel in Monterey, California, were approved 5-1 by the Monterey Planning Commission on Tuesday, October 27, but not before a contentious discussion amongst the Planning Commission.

During public comment, there were two public comments in opposition to the antennas, including one requesting accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act. There were no comments in favor of the antennas.

Commissioner Freeman was not able to access the Zoom hearing until public comment had finished and was asked to abstain from the vote. As a result, the Planning Commission’s vote tied 3-3. Commissioner Hansen Reed voiced his frustration and intimidated no-voters, saying they would “cost the city a lot of money in the future... we have to make tough decisions – it has nothing to do with worrying about the health and safety of the citizens... we don’t have a choice in this.”

Other commissioners felt differently, and Commissioner Terry Latasa defended his no-vote. Latasa

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AT&T permanently discontinuing dial-up Internet

Service to be discontinued in November

AT&T has quietly announced that it will be retiring its dial-up Internet service in November 2020. According to AT&T, dial-up Internet service will be discontinued between November 1 and November 30, 2020. Existing users will no longer be able to access AT&T’s dial-up network.

AT&T users with att.net email addresses will still be able to keep them. However, those relying on it for their sole method of Internet connectivity will need to find another provider or purchase broadband from AT&T if they wish to stay online.

The announcement comes just weeks after AT&T announced that it would no longer accept new orders for DSL service after October 1, 2020. The move appears to be part of efforts to permanently phase out Internet services that rely on twisted-pair

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New Hampshire to release EMF environmental report

Commission to release report next week

NEW HAMPSHIRE – For the first time in the United States, a legislative body is making meaningful recommendations towards responsible technology use. The New Hampshire commission tasked by law to investigate the health and environmental effects of evolving 5G technology is scheduled to release its report next week.

The report will go to the New Hampshire Governor, Senate President, and House Speaker to determine next steps. The report will also go to the State Library.

The commission’s report is the result of New Hampshire House Bill 522, which was sponsored by Rep. Patrick Abrami (R), an engineer, who spearheaded the move after a constituent brought the matter to his attention. The bill was also sponsored by Rep. Tom Sherman (D), giving the bill bipartisan support. The bill passed both the New Hampshire House and Senate in 2019 and was signed by the governor.

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“Phonagate”: France sees more violations

At least 3 models banned in France

FRANCE – To date, 26 different mobile phone models have either been withdrawn or had their Specific Absorption Rate (SAR) software updated. More than 250 other models sold before June 2017 must either also be withdrawn or updated.

Several major manufacturers were affected by SAR exceedances, including Alcatel, Apple, Blackberry, HTC, Huawei, LG, Motorola, Nokia, Razer, and Samsung. The Orange HAPI 30, NEFFOS X1 TP902, and Razer Phone 2 were all withdrawn and any models already sold were recalled.

Other European countries are paying attention. After the Razer Phone 2 was recalled in France in May 2020, Danish journalist David Wedege made it possible for the model to be withdrawn in Denmark, though no action has been taken yet.

Daylight Saving Time ends Sunday

Clock to go back 1 hour Sunday morning

In most areas of the country where Daylight Saving Time is currently being observed, clocks will go back 1 hour on Sunday, November 1, at 2:00am.

The mnemonic “Spring forward, fall back” is often used to remember which way the clocks change. But this year, 32 states have proposed legislation to make Daylight Saving Time permanent. While proponents claim this means more sunlight year round, others are skeptical, as it means children will walk to school and wait for the bus in the dark in the winter. Daylight Saving Time was initially created to conserve energy, which the United States Department of Transportation has also shown reduces crime and car accidents.

Some areas of the United States don't observe Daylight Saving Time, among them most of Arizona, which stopped observing Daylight Saving Time more than 50 years ago, because energy consumption actually increased with DST, as air conditioners had to run longer into the evening. DST was more costly, farmers complained, and now most of Arizona is on Mountain Standard Time year-round. The Navajo Nation within Arizona does observe DST.

Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands also don't observe Daylight Saving Time.

While most states have yet to pass legislation, a few – Arkansas, California, Delaware, Florida, Maine, Oregon, Tennessee, Washington, and Utah – already have and just need Congressional approval.

5G

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landline telephone calls to connecting small cell equipment to carriers.

In *Irregularities v FCC*, the D.C. Court of Appeals decided on March 16, 2020 that Irregularities didn't have standing in the lawsuit, but Krushnick says this has freed states to go back and stop what he calls “the financial shell game.” 5G is not profitable on its own, and federal subsidies for 5G seem to evidence that 5G is unprofitable.

Apart from apprehensions about assertions that 5G will do anything to address the digital divide, hundreds of scientists have signed appeals for worldwide moratoriums on 5G technology, due to significant health consequences to humans, wildlife, and the environment.

Phase I will target up to \$8 billion for areas lacking 4G LTE or 5G, with \$680 million specifically set aside for tribal lands. Phase II provides an additional \$1 billion to specifically target precision agriculture. T-Mobile hopes to cover 90% of rural Americans with 5G coverage within six years. 5G fund winning bidders are required to deploy speeds of at least 35 Mbps download, 3 Mbps upload.

While the FCC's ambitious plans for wireless coverage continue unchecked, many Americans still lack access to basic fixed broadband. 0.6% of Americans still use dial-up Internet connections, many of whom have no access to high-speed fixed broadband.

Portola

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Although the Portola City Council is required to appropriately engage with the Americans with Disabilities Act, requests for accommodations were ignored and the approval was allowed to stand, largely unfettered.

Josh Hart, director of StopSmartMeters! and Plumas Wired, also uncovered a conflict of interest between Verizon and Portola city staff. A public records request by Hart reveals Karen Downs, contract planner for Portola and employee of Manhard Consulting, referred to Verizon's representative to the city as her “BFF”. Emails reveal Downs encouraged scheduling the meeting during the day to prevent people from attending, as well as increasing the appeal fee.

When Hart reached out to the city for comment, Portola deputy city clerk Tara Kindall emphasized the city's commitment to transparency and that she was confident that Downs would disclose any conflicts of interest.

Hart also noted that several of the supporters of the tower were employees of the Plumas-Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative whom he thinks were paid to be there. “PSREC will be getting money from the project installing fiber to the site,” Hart said.

The Portola City Council scheduled a special meeting for October 28, 2020 to approve the conditional use permit with a modification. Verizon will agree to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the city from any claims arising from violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act, California Fair Employment and Housing Act, or other laws relating to access of public facilities or services by the disabled. The tower must comply with Federal Communications Commission guidelines for radiofrequency radiation exposure, although these guidelines have no medical basis. The applicant must also conduct testing before and after installation in order to ensure compliance with FCC guidelines.

Dial up

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copper phone lines. AT&T is instead choosing to focus exclusively on cable, fiber, and wireless services.

Some AT&T subscribers have already received notifications that dial-up Internet was being discontinued in their region, including one poster on the AT&T Forums. However, it seems that AT&T is coordinating this effort nationwide.

Who still uses dial-up, you might ask? According to data published by J. Clement in July 2020, as of 2019, 0.6% of households used dial-up Internet connections. The states with the highest usage? Georgia, with 1.9%, closely followed by Maine and Montana at 1.5% each. New Jersey (1.4%), Iowa, Mississippi, Vermont (1.3%), Kansas, North Carolina (1.1%), and New Hampshire and New Mexico (1%) all have usage rates of at least 1%. Alabama, Arizona, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, and Tennessee all have the lowest rates of dial-up usage, at just 0.1%.

While statistics on how many dial-up users rely on AT&T are not readily available, one thing that is certain is that hundreds of thousands of people could be left hanging without an Internet connection as AT&T phases out dial-up and DSL services. At the same time that calls for bridging the digital divide seem to be voiced with renewed vigor, AT&T seems to, bizarrely, be widening it instead.

No Carrier reached out to AT&T for comment but did not hear back before the print deadline.

Monterey

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said he'd voted for every single cell tower application in the past but that “this one is different. They're putting these RF beams right into hotel rooms... I don't find that acceptable in a public health sense.”

Commissioner Michael Dawson, who also voted against it, said he'd worked on microwave systems in the television industry and that he knew they were dangerous, and he was particularly alarmed by the max cumulative beam of 739% of human exposure limits in the EMF summary.

Commission chair Michael Brassfield said he understood they could not deny on the basis of health but that “we have to balance the interests of our citizens versus what the industry wants.” Brassfield said he would approve if the impact on the hotel balconies could be reduced.

The commission consulted the city attorney, who said a 3-3 tied vote meant no action and the automatic approval shot clock would deem it approved if no action was taken.

Public comment was reopened to allow James Phillips from AT&T to comment. Phillips falsely claimed that the Zoom and telephone hearing would not be possible without wireless communications. He then downplayed the risks. “We're still driving cars,” Phillips said, “and there are car accidents every day.” However, he did admit there are cell tower workers injured from the radiation. “There are one-offs.”

Under protest, Latasa reluctantly agreed to change his vote, adding that he resented the FCC and that the hotel was responsible for liability issues from the antenna, not the city. The commission moved to revoke.

Dawson also changed his vote, leaving Brassfield as the sole no-vote in the final 5-1 vote approving the applicant's permit.

Appellants have three days from the date of the hearing to appeal the matter to the city council.

New Hampshire

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House Bill 522 directed the 15-member commission to submit the interim report on or before November 1, 2019, and to submit the final report on or before November 1, 2020.

The report is expected to address a slew of questions prompted by federal initiatives to remove barriers to and expedite 5G deployment despite requests for moratoriums on the technology from the scientific community. The Environmental Health Trust and Children's Health Defense are currently engaged in an unprecedented lawsuit against the Federal Communications Commission for ignoring science and failing to protect public health.

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

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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

8 Reasons to Use Mobiles

Perhaps one of the greatest advancements in humankind has been, undoubtedly, the mobile (aka cellular phone). Everybody uses a mobile for pretty much everything now, but unfortunately, not everyone has gotten with the times, yet. If you're still a caveman with a landline, here are some compelling reasons to ditch that old-fashioned technology and embrace the 21st century:

1. **Easier to get out of a conversation** — It seems everybody is always calling at the wrong time, right? Thankfully, your mobile has your back! Just when the conversation is going south, the call drops. Or maybe the battery dies. Either way, cool beans!
2. **Allows you to warp what people say** — If you're not really paying attention when people call you, it's okay, because even if you are, you can't really hear half of what they say anyways. If you want to hear "make sure the toilet's clean" to "be sure to eat ice cream", you can! On the other hand, if someone calls you on a landline, you have to - inconveniently - actually pay attention; there's no chance of mishearing anything.
3. **Allows you to disconnect** — Everybody needs some time alone, disconnected and what not. Well, you can conveniently misplace your mobile somewhere in the house and not be able to find it. Perfect, now you don't need to call grandma! This only works if you don't have a landline; otherwise, she'll just ask why you didn't use the landline to call your mobile.
4. **Better birth control** — Not only are landlines old-fashioned, but so are condoms. Prolonged use of mobiles can decimate sperm and egg counts, thus increasing intimacy: when it's time to get exciting in the bedroom, no need to let a condom come between you and your partner!
5. **Complimentary brain cancer** — If you're going to get cancer (and let's face it, we all are), then brain cancer's definitely the bomb. Fortunately, you don't have to go out of your way to smoke tobacco or eat tons of junk food. Just ten years of mobile usage can double your chances of getting a rare brain tumor. For even better chances, you can opt to live near a mobile base station (cell tower). Bonus? Lower property values near cell towers means you save big on real estate! On the other hand, landlines won't give you brain cancer, just dial tones.
6. **Allow you to play God with emergency responders** — Landlines are boring; when you call 911, they provide dispatchers with your exact location. When you call using a mobile, they just get coordinates which may or may not be slightly useful in approximating your location. But they'll need you to tell them exactly where you are, which means you can take some liberty in sending the cops to your neighbor's house in the middle of the night. There's a certain thrill in that emergency responders are actually depending on your every word, rather than just using information on a computer display! Just make sure you know where you actually are if there is a real emergency.
7. **No more stalkers and private detectives on your back** — now that mobile carriers, the government, hackers, and third-party agencies can monitor and track your location at all times, nobody needs to come out and physically monitor your movements. At last, you can finally enjoy some privacy!
8. **Easy way to get rid of some excess cash** — Fortunately, these days, we're able to shell out \$600 every few years for a brand new iPhone, providing a convenient sinkhole for all that excess money in your checking account. Since a \$30 landline phone can have a greater lifetime than you will, you'll need to be a bit more creative at figuring out an excuse for replacing it, meaning excess funds will pile up in your bank account.

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