



Wisconsin's Broadband Association®



WSTA UPDATE

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[WSTA Update May 1, 2017](#)

Legislative and Political

[Assembly Bill 123](#) passes out of Assembly committees; floor action expected on May 2nd

Assembly Bill 123 has passed through the Assembly Energy and Utilities Committee and the Joint Committee on Finance. AB123 is scheduled for floor action in the Wisconsin State Assembly on Tuesday, May 2, 2017. AB123 is expected to pass the Assembly by a wide margin. Following a successful Assembly vote, it is possible that AB123 will be immediately messaged to the Wisconsin State Senate for a final vote. AB123 will significantly increase the funding for the [Broadband Expansion Grant Program](#). As proposed, the legislation will eliminate the \$1.5 million annual cap on the grant program and provide a projected \$15.5 million for future grants. The bill incorporate the Legislative Council Study Committee on Rural Broadband's recommendations for priority criteria and definitions used by the Broadband Expansion Grant Program to make grant awards. The bill also prohibits the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Department of Transportation (DOT) from requiring any appraisal or charging any fee prior to granting an easement for construction of broadband infrastructure in underserved areas.

[No, Republicans didn't just strip away your Internet privacy rights](#)

April Fools' Day came early, as professional lobbyists lit a wildfire of misinformation about Congress's action — [signed into law](#) Monday by President Trump — to nullify the Federal Communications Commission's broadband privacy rules. So as the nation's chief communications regulator and the nation's chief privacy enforcer, we want to let the American people know what's really going on and how we will ensure that consumers' online privacy is protected. Let's set the record straight: First, despite hyperventilating headlines, Internet service providers have never planned to sell your individual browsing history to third parties. That's simply not how online advertising works. And doing so would violate ISPs' privacy promises. Second, Congress's decision last week didn't remove existing privacy protections; it simply cleared the way for us to work together to reinstate a rational and effective system for protecting consumer privacy.

[Scott Walker Is a Top Target for Democrats. So Why Can't They Find Someone to Run Against Him?](#)

Scott Walker presents a big, ripe political target for Democrats. So why haven't they been able to come up with a serious challenger to run against him? Wisconsin's Republican governor has angered Democrats and many independents with his conservative stances on issues such as abortion, voting rights and, most of all, union-

busting. Walker's approval ratings dipped perilously low as a result of his unsuccessful presidential bid. They have since ticked back up but remain subpar, in the mid-40s. Still, Walker enjoys rock-solid support among Republicans. Wisconsin is a divided state, but Walker's fundraising prowess may keep him off the list of endangered incumbents next year.

[Sensenbrenner takes heat for internet privacy comments](#)

Comments about internet privacy by U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner, including the statement that "nobody's got to use the Internet," are drawing criticism online and from left-leaning organizations. At a town hall meeting Thursday, the Republican congressman from Menomonee Falls defended his vote to strike down proposed regulations that would stop Internet service providers from collecting and selling customers' data, including their browsing habits. That data can be used by advertisers and other organizations to target customers, which has concerned many Democrats and consumer advocates.

[Democrat Josh Kaul to challenge Brad Schimel for Wisconsin attorney general in 2018](#)

Josh Kaul, an attorney who successfully challenged Wisconsin voting laws and the son of former attorney general Peg Lautenschlager, announced on Monday his plans to challenge Republican Attorney General Brad Schimel for the job. Kaul, 36, is an attorney with Perkins Coie in Madison, where he focuses on voting rights and election law. Perkins Coie represents the Democratic National Committee and its candidates, including former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign. Kaul is the first Democrat to declare candidacy for attorney general. Schimel announced in December his plans to seek a second term in 2018, after defeating Jefferson County District Attorney Susan Happ in 2014.

Regulatory and Industry

[Cellcom 600 MHz License Wins Positions Carrier for Mobile Broadband Expansion, IoT](#)

Regional rural wireless carrier Cellcom confirmed Friday that it was a winning bidder for seven licenses in the 600 MHz auction. The Cellcom 600 MHz wins include five markets in rural Wisconsin and upper Michigan. The FCC released a list of winning 600 MHz auction bidders on April 13. According to that list, Cellcom 600 MHz spectrum will cost the company, a unit of Nsight, just under \$4 million. Cellcom was one of 20-some rural carriers that won spectrum in the auction, although unlike some rural carriers, the company did not seek a rural carrier discount.

[FCC announces plan to reverse Title II net neutrality](#)

The Federal Communications Commission is cracking open the net neutrality debate again with a proposal to undo the 2015 rules that implemented net neutrality with Title II classification. FCC chairman Ajit Pai called the rules "heavy handed" and said their implementation was "all about politics." He argued that they hurt investment and said that small internet providers don't have "the means or the margins" to withstand the regulatory onslaught. "Earlier today I shared with my fellow commissioners a proposal to reverse the mistake of Title II and return to the light touch framework that served us so well during the Clinton administration, Bush administration, and first six years of the Obama administration," Pai said today.

[FCC's O'Rielly, Clyburn say Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee should focus on consumer needs](#)

Now that the Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee (BDAC) has officially gotten off the ground, FCC commissioners Michael O'Rielly and Mignon Clyburn have called for new policies that are technology-agnostic

and put the consumer first. In February, FCC Chairman Ajit Pai created the BDAC to look at ways to make reforms related to key infrastructure and regulatory issues: pole attachment rules, identifying unreasonable regulatory barriers to broadband deployment, ways to encourage local governments to adopt deployment-friendly policies, and other reforms. More: [FCC's Pai forms Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee, sets focus on encouraging broadband growth](#); [FCC Broadband Panel Starts on Shaky Ground](#)

[FCC Reverses Charter Broadband Overbuild Condition](#)

The FCC has reversed a previous decision to require Charter to bring broadband to one million U.S. homes that already have broadband service available to them. The requirement, imposed under the previous FCC administration, was a condition of commission approval of Charter's plan to acquire Time Warner Cable and Bright House Communications. The reversal on the Charter broadband overbuild condition does not reduce the number of locations to which Charter must bring broadband service, but instead requires the company to build to locations that do not currently have broadband available to them, or who have only low-speed broadband.

[FCC approves easing business data service regulations](#)

The Federal Communications Commission on Thursday voted 2-1 to significantly ease regulatory requirements in the \$45 billion business data services market, a win for companies like AT&T, CenturyLink, Verizon Communications and others but could lead to price hikes for many small businesses. More: [FCC Won't Regulate Most Business Data Services Pricing, Aims to Speed Copper Retirement](#)

[Ajit Pai, F.C.C. Chairman, Moves to Roll Back Telecom Rules](#)

Ajit Pai, the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, is taking the next steps to unwind Obama-era rules and other regulatory efforts that had restricted the abilities of telecommunication companies and broadcasters. With two items up for vote on Thursday that are expected to pass, Mr. Pai is carrying forward a swift Republican attack on telecom rules. The rollback will empower big telecom and media firms that have lobbied aggressively for deregulation, but consumer groups say it may also eventually put consumers at risk of higher prices and fewer options for services and media.

Broadband and Internet

[Google Fiber confirmed for Louisville, but details remain scarce](#)

Google executives had very little to say about the company's ongoing-but-paused Fiber business during the company's quarterly earnings conference call with investors yesterday. However, the company did quietly confirm that it does plan to expand Google Fiber into Louisville, Kentucky. News of Google's plans for Louisville came from the city's mayor. "Many have eagerly waited to hear these words: Google Fiber is coming to Louisville," Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer said in a release. "This next step toward bringing Google Fiber's super-fast internet network to Louisville demonstrates our city's commitment to the type of forward-looking innovation that creates opportunities for businesses and families."

[AT&T launches fixed wireless internet in Georgia](#)

AT&T said it has completed an initial rollout of fixed wireless internet services for rural and underserved consumers in Georgia. The operator is using a wireless tower and a fixed antenna on customers' homes or businesses to deliver internet download speeds of at least 10 Mbps. AT&T said it plans to reach more than 67,000 locations with the technology across Georgia by 2020, and will begin to deploy the service later this

year in 17 other states. AT&T plans to reach more than 1.1 million locations overall with fixed wireless broadband by 2020.

[Broadband Attitudes Survey: 90% Say It's Essential or Important](#)

Americans are sharply divided when it comes to whether or not federal laws should permit local governments to build, own and operate public broadband networks or subsidize home broadband network access for low-income residents, according to a broadband attitudes survey from the Pew Research Center. Seven in 10 agree that federal law should permit local governments to own and operate their own broadband networks. Twenty-seven percent said they should not. Back in 2015, during the Obama administration, the FCC preempted state laws passed in North Carolina and Tennessee that prohibited or restricted municipal or publicly owned community broadband networks. Two Democratic commissioners voted in favor of the ruling. Two Republican commissioners voted against it.

[55% Of Broadband Households Want To Use Voice To Control Devices](#)

At the monster CES consumer show earlier this year, there was a major focus on voice control, most notably by countless companies adding Amazon Alexa skills to whatever it is they do. And study after study shows consumer interest in voice assistants, whether it be Alexa, Google Home, Samsung's Bixby or Apple's Siri. Now a new study finds that the majority (55%) of U.S. broadband households want to use voice to control their entertainment and smart home devices.

Cellular and Wireless

[About Half of Fifty 600 MHz Auction Winners Are Rural Companies](#)

AT&T, Comcast, Dish Network and T-Mobile were the big winners in the voluntary auction of TV broadcast spectrum in the 600 MHz band completed several weeks ago, the FCC announced this afternoon. Fifty 600 MHz auction winners, about half of which were rural carriers, collectively bid \$19.8 billion for 70 MHz of spectrum nationwide. The biggest winner was T-Mobile, which won \$8 billion in spectrum, representing about 40% of the total amount bid. Not far behind it, according to analysts at Moffett Nathanson, was Dish Network, which won a surprising \$6.2 billion in spectrum. That news is surprising because Dish also was a big winner in the AWS-3 auction, yet has not yet begun building a network — and some industry observers question whether the company ever will or if, instead, it will simply sell its spectrum.

[Small Cell Market Will Rise Relentlessly through 2017](#)

Today, Mobile Experts released this year's analysis on the Small Cell market. The report aggregates years of acquired knowledge along with present observations that culminate in the accurate future projections that Mobile Experts is known for—and the result is good news for Small Cells and low power RRH units. This year, the small cell forecast ratcheted down a notch, as some key programs in China and 'direct-to-enterprise' channel did not materialize as anticipated. However, growth due to "densification" and indoor coverage has grown in strength, resulting in a strong revenue outlook. "The overall market, including residential femtocells, is growing at about 17% (CAGR) over our forecast period," commented Mobile Experts Senior Analyst Kyung Mun. "But the growth for non-residential small cells is even more dramatic. We expect carrier and enterprise segments to grow at over 30% CAGR from 2016-2022."

[Report: Time Spent Using Mobile Hits 5 Hours Daily](#)

The time spent using mobile has hit 5 hours each day for the average U.S. consumer, according to the latest market data from Yahoo's mobile analytics specialist company Flurry. That's 20 percent higher than it was in 4Q 2015. In parallel with rising time spent using mobile devices is a decline in Web browser-based mobile device usage, which has fallen to just 8 percent of time spent, down from 9 percent in 4Q 2015. In contrast, mobile apps continue "to reign supreme," Flurry SVP Simon Khalaf and Analytics Manager Lali Kesiraju highlight in a company blog post. SnapChat, for instance, recently announced that users of the mobile app spend an average 25-30 minutes per day using it.

[AT&T's Unlimited Plus wireless plan now includes free HBO](#)

AT&T's \$85.4 billion acquisition of Time Warner hasn't yet completed, but the company is already leveraging Time Warner assets to boost its own services – first with its streaming TV service DirecTV Now, which is currently giving out free HBO, and now today it's rolling out free HBO to AT&T's "Unlimited Plus" wireless plan subscribers. The channel will be offered to both AT&T video subscribers and wireless-only customers, AT&T says. For any Unlimited Plus wireless customer who also subscribes to one of AT&T's video services, including DirecTV Now, DirecTV, or U-verse, the channel will be offered for free through the service they already use. If they had previously signed up for HBO, they'll no longer have to pay for it. And if they didn't, it will become free.

IPTV and Video

[YouTube officially launches YouTube TV in select markets](#)

YouTube on Wednesday officially launched its streaming bundle, YouTube TV, starting in select markets around the US. The Alphabet-owned video giant first announced the service in February, and today the \$35 subscription service rolls out New York, Los Angeles, the Bay Area, Chicago and Philadelphia, with more US markets coming soon. Consumers will be able to sign up for a free trial offer for 30 days and after the first month's payment can get a free Google Chromecast, while supplies last, to stream the service on a TV set.

[Connected TV on the Upswing, Pay TV Declining](#)

Research into TV viewing from several sources suggests ongoing changes in device and service preferences. Connected TV devices are on the upswing, and traditional pay TV services are continuing their years-long decline. According to the Leichtman Research Group, 69% of U.S. TV households have at least one TV set connected to the Internet via a smart TV set, a stand-alone device (like Roku, Chromecast, Amazon Fire TV stick or set-top box, or Apple TV), a video game system, and/or a Blu-ray player - up from 50% in 2014 and 24% in 2010. Overall, there are more connected TV devices in U.S. households than there are pay TV set-top boxes. Among those with any connected TV devices, 76% have more than one device, with a mean of 3.5 per connected TV household. Across all households (including those that do not have any of these), the mean number of connected TV devices per household is 2.4, while the mean number of pay TV set-top boxes per household is 1.7.

[Huawei: Video is Broadband's Dial Tone](#)

Video is now equivalent to 'basic service' according to Huawei, who outlined a growing vision for the video opportunity at their recent Global Industry Analyst Summit last week in Shenzhen, China. Huawei sees a carrier global video market opportunity of over \$1 trillion (USD). That opportunity includes traditional

entertainment video services as the biggest opportunity, but also includes enterprise video and communications based video services playing a significant role as well. By Huawei's account, video is equivalent to dial tone in the broadband age.