



May 10, 2024



RURAL ROUNDUP: *Montana Governor Greg Gianforte and First Lady Susan Gianforte stopped by Mid-Rivers Communications in Roundup, Mont., to meet with Chief Communications Officer Erin Lutts and Chief Risk Officer/VP of Network Solutions Scot Buerkle. The group took a tour and talked about the work Mid-Rivers is doing to provide broadband to Montanans.*

Members Advised to Submit 6/30/2023 Broadband Data Collection Challenges ASAP

As NTCA has urged members since the **FCC's Broadband Data Collection** (BDC) began a few years ago, submitting availability challenges through the BDC process is essential to mitigate the risk that Universal Service Fund support could

be lost or reduced due to overstatement of broadband coverage by would-be competitors.

NTCA and a number of members [met with the FCC last week](#) to highlight concerns about such broadband overreach and how to improve the BDC reporting and challenge processes based upon lessons learned over the past few years.

But the need to challenge overstated BDC availability claims by other entities for the period ending June 30, 2023, is even more pressing in light of [a FCC release](#), which made clear that the commission will use June 30, 2023, availability data for the most part in determining how to adjust Enhanced Alternative Connect America Cost Model (ACAM) support consistent with the order creating that program last year. This clarification was welcomed given that prior guidance had been the agency would use December 31, 2023, data instead, which would have reflected expansion in competitive coverage well after the date contemplated in the Enhanced ACAM order and would have penalized Enhanced ACAM electors by reducing support for deployments made in the second half of last year.

However, the notice also highlights that the commission will finalize resolution of availability challenges with respect to June 30, 2023, availability data in the near future and move forward with support adjustments based upon such revised data. It stated therefore that **Enhanced ACAM recipients are advised to submit any final challenges to June 30, 2023, availability data as soon as possible**, because no further challenges will be processed to that map and vintage of data once the updated June 30 map is published.

NTCA encourages members that have not submitted challenges (or have not finished doing so), to submit any final challenges to the June 30, 2023, BDC availability data for your study area as soon as possible – especially if you are an Enhanced ACAM recipient and if you believe that a would-be competitor has overstated coverage in your area. If you have any questions, please [contact Mike Romano](#) at 703-351-2016.

NTCA, Allied Organizations Support FCC in Supreme Court Challenge to USF Contribution System

NTCA, USTelecom and the Competitive Carriers Association this week joined the Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband Coalition, Benton Institute for Broadband & Society, National Digital Inclusion Alliance and MediaJustice in a brief supporting the FCC in its response to Consumers' Research's Supreme Court challenge of how the commission

determines quarterly Universal Service Fund contribution factors.

In [the joint brief](#), the organizations said there is no need for the Supreme Court to intervene because there has yet to be a circuit court split on the nondelegation doctrine challenge, noting both the Sixth and Eleventh Circuit Courts of Appeals have denied the challenge. Months after a three-judge panel of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals denied a similar challenge, the full Fifth Circuit has yet to act on rehearing of the matter. The court is considering whether the funding mechanisms for the USF are constitutional. NTCA, USTelecom and CCA have intervened in support of the FCC and USF in all the proceedings.

House Subcommittee to Explore Rural Broadband During Calif. Field Hearing

The House Energy and Commerce Committee Communications and Technology Subcommittee will host the hearing, “Perspectives from the Fields: The State of Rural Broadband in America” at 10 a.m. PT today in Bakersfield, Calif. The hearing will feature NTCA member Ducor Telephone Company (Ducor, Calif.) President & CEO Eric Votaw.

According to the subcommittee, the hearing will explore, “how we can secure meaningful connectivity for every American and close the digital divide.” Members can tune into the hearing [online here](#).

FCC Net Neutrality Order Released, Including Forbearance from USF Contributions

Following the FCC’s vote in late April to restore net neutrality rules that will allow the commission to regulate broadband as a “common carrier” service, [the full order](#) was released this week.

As expected, the order forbears from a number of Title II statutory provisions, including most notably requiring broadband services to contribute to the Universal Service Fund (USF). NTCA had previously advocated in the proceeding for a more holistic analysis of the entire online ecosystem and the interconnection of networks and platforms rather than a focus upon retail broadband service providers. Leading up to the vote, NTCA [also emphasized](#) that forbearance from contribution obligations—especially if not approached carefully—could complicate ongoing USF reform efforts.

The [order](#) and additional [net neutrality resources](#) are available on the commission's website.

NTCA and ACA Reiterate Flaws in FCC Proposal for Multilingual EAS Alerts

In [joint reply comments](#) filed with the FCC, NTCA and ACA Connects pointed to substantial industry agreement as to the many flaws with respect to the proposal for Emergency Alert System (EAS) alerts in multiple languages.

As NTCA and ACA highlighted, the proposal would require that cable systems undergo both equipment and software modifications to have this capability, a problem compounded by the fact that neither the equipment nor software has been developed. As a result, NTCA and ACA recommended the commission establish a working group to identify the capabilities and costs that would be necessary for cable systems to be able to deliver multilingual EAS alerts.



Promoting Smart Policies for Rural Broadband

During this historic year for broadband deployment, there's something electrifying about walking into a hotel ballroom and seeing nearly 500 NTCA members from across the country ready to meet with members of Congress and share their

perspective on public policy matters that impact their ability to deploy broadband to their communities. That's what happened this week during the NTCA 2024 Legislative + Policy Conference, a two-day event to showcase our unified voice on key policy issues impacting the rural broadband industry.

[READ MORE](#)

AMAC CORNER



The NTCA Associate Member Advisory Council (AMAC) looks forward to hosting two panel discussions at the upcoming **NTCA 2024 Marketing + Sales Conference**.

Marketing in New Markets | Monday, May 20, 2:30 – 3:15 p.m.
Moderated by NTCA AMAC member Hillary Cherry, senior manager, field marketing at Calix (San Jose, Calif.).

Panelists include Ruby Hibben, director of marketing services at Vantage Point Solutions (Mitchell, S.D.), and Jill Casper, director of marketing and community engagement at CTC (Brainerd, Minn.).

Finding, Winning, and Satisfying Grants | Tuesday, May 21, 9:15 – 10:00 a.m.

Moderated by Paul Breakman, vice president, business development at Adtran (Huntsville, Ala.)

Panelists include Tammy Wheeler, advertising solutions representative at Nex-Tech (Lenora, Kan.), Lorna Gilmore, FRS

fundraising manager, and Kari Kleingartner, marketing specialist at Red River Communications (Abercrombie, N.D.).

Need to Know

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) will host **a webinar at 1 p.m. ET on May 28** with Andrew Scott, associate director for China operations, to inform small and medium-sized businesses in the Communications Sector about the threats posed by Volt Typhoon, a People's Republic of China State-Sponsored Cyber Actor. The webinar follows a similar briefing provided exclusively to participants in **CyberShare: The Small Broadband Provider ISAC** in February.

NTCA Executive Vice President Mike Romano will participate in the NRTC webinar, "**The Evolution of BEAD: The Journey from NOFO to State Implementation**" at 1 p.m. ET on May 21. Romano also participated this week in the Ready.Net State Broadband Leadership Summit in Newport Beach, Calif.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) will host **a webinar** at 1 p.m. ET on May 15 to provide stakeholders an opportunity to ask questions directly to RUS staff about the currently open ReConnect Program application window, which closes May 21.



CONGRATS GRADUATES! Chariton Valley (Macon, Mo.) staff surprised Carson Reed during class with an

announcement that he was awarded one of the Foundation for Rural Service scholarships. FRS **awarded \$173,000 in scholarships** to rural students sponsored by NTCA member companies—the largest amount in its 30-year history.



© 2024, NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association • [Terms](#)
4121 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 1000 • Arlington, VA 22203
Phone (703) 351-2000 • www.ntca.org

This email was sent to . [Opt out](#) of receiving
future messages like this one or [manage your email preferences](#).