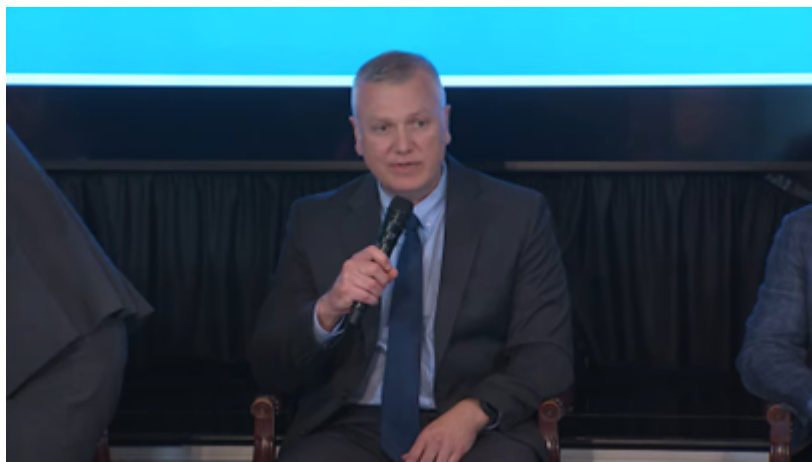




May 17, 2024



Highlighting Success: *Keith Holden, CEO of FOCUS Broadband (Shallotte, N.C.), speaks about the importance of federal broadband funding and the Affordable Connectivity Program at the [White House Rural Communities in Action](#) event. Chuck Deisbeck, CEO of South Slope Cooperative Communications (North Liberty, Iowa), also attended the event, which was part of a larger conversation about recent federal investments in rural spaces.*

NTCA Highlights Timing and Coordination Issues in Setting High-Cost USF Deployment Obligations, Raises Questions About Effect of Broadband Maps on High-Cost Support

In a meeting with the FCC Wireline Competition Bureau, NTCA highlighted the substantial progress that small rural providers are making in deploying broadband above and

beyond baseline program deployment obligations and urged the commission to take those and other factors (such as the interplay with other broadband funding programs) into account in defining or recalibrating such obligations under the Alternative Connect America Cost Model (A-CAM) and Connect America Fund Broadband Loop Support programs.

NTCA also raised the need for recalibration of the obligation under the Enhanced A-CAM program to submit plans that reflect certain cybersecurity and risk management “best practices” and **reiterated concerns raised** in recent meetings regarding the interplay of the commission’s National Broadband Map and its high-cost Universal Service Fund programs.

As a related reminder, NTCA **recently urged** members to make sure to submit challenges to June 30, 2023, data reflected on the national broadband map as soon as possible. The FCC will be using this data as the baseline for potential Enhanced A-CAM support adjustments, and the commission has indicated that, once it releases a revised National Broadband Map (which is expected imminently), the window for having challenges to June 30, 2023, data accounted for in these support adjustments will be closed.

NTCA Urges Relief from Proposed Network Outage, Disaster Reporting Rules

In a **filing with the FCC**, NTCA reiterated its concerns that **proposed obligations** to collect and report information during an emergency, and on an ongoing basis, impose tremendous costs and burdens on small providers. The comments come as the commission considers requiring cable, wireless, wireline and other communications entities to report their infrastructure status information in the Disaster Reporting Service when activated in their coverage areas. Rather than requiring such burdensome actions, the association urged the commission to consider lesser regulatory burdens for small providers as a part of any new reporting requirements.



KEY POINT INDICATORS FOR RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Joshua Seidemann
VP Policy and Industry Innovation, NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

NTCA's Smart Communities program partnered with the National Rural Economic Developers Association to release a new white paper, **Key Point Indicators for Rural Economic Development**. The report focuses on the impact of broadband on rural economies and includes examples from which communities can draw individualized approaches.



Community Grant Program



FRS Community Grant Applications Now Open

Applications for the 2024 Foundation for Rural Service **Community Grant Program** are now open. Grants range from \$250 to \$5,000 and are designed to provide support to a variety of local efforts to sustain a high quality of life in rural America. All applications are due by September 9.



FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel and FCC Commissioner Brendan Carr discussed the commission's proposed budget in a **hearing** before the House Appropriations Committee Financial Services and General Government Subcommittee.

NTIA Administrator Alan Davidson discussed the agency's proposed budget in a **hearing** before the House Energy and Commerce Committee Communications and Technology Subcommittee.

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and its federal partners released **Mitigating Cyber Threats with Limited Resources: Guidance for Civil Society** to provide cybersecurity guidance to high-risk community entities.

The Biden-Harris Administration is **accepting nominations** of innovators who are making a positive impact in their rural communities for future recognition at the White House. Nominations are due by Friday, June 14 at midnight EST.

The window to submit applications in response to the **Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Rural eConnectivity (ReConnect) Program for Fiscal Year 2024** is now open. All applications must be submitted through the Rural Utilities Service online application portal by 11:59 a.m. ET on May 21, 2024.

Announcements



Correction: Last week's edition of Bandwidth included a photo of the 2023 Associate Member Advisory Council. The 2024 group photo is above.

Shirley Bloomfield will participate in a **LinkedIn Live session** with Calix's Martha Galley as part of its "Women in Telecom – Leadership Perspectives Series" on June 13.



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