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NewsClips

December 20, 2017

Politico
Tech's
challenge:
How to spend
its tax
windfall

The Mifflin County Internet Advisory Committee does not anticipate the repeal of Net Neutrality to affect its efforts to expand broadband internet in rural areas. "There has been a fear about how this would affect rural areas," said Bill Gomes, who represents the Mifflin County Planning office. The committee shared a number of varied viewpoints on what has become a controversial topic and discussed how it would impact local providers. Committee member Kristen Ritchey, who represents Comcast, said she doesn't expect the repeal to change the way Comcast operates.

Ars Technica
GOP net
neutrality bill
would allow
paid fast
lanes and
preempt state
laws

BCAP Board of Directors member Michael Hain, who represented Nittany Media Inc., voiced concern that the action will help larger organizations, while leaving more independent agencies at a disadvantage. Hain was also concerned that adding regulations to the internet might open it up for taxation in the future. Gomes discussed initiatives in New York to make broadband internet available to everyone across the state by the end of 2018. "We're behind the eight-ball because we're not on top of this," he said.

Washington
Post
The net
neutrality
lawsuits are
coming.
Here's what
they're likely
to say.

The committee urged Lori Comp, a representative from Sen. Jake Corman's office, to continue to pursue efforts to expand access in Pennsylvania. Also during the meeting, the committee discussed the status of a grant application that could assist with funding an internet feasibility study. While the application was initially going to be sent out at the end of December, Scott Kramer, a committee member representing of SEDA-COG, said they were encouraged to pursue a different type of grant, which would delay the application to February.

CNET
YouTube TV
will launch
Roku and
Apple TV

The committee also discussed the status of House Bill 1620, which, if approved, would take the responsibility for approving wireless facilities in public rights of way out of the hands of township officials and gives the power to wireless companies. In other news, Gomes said the committee hopes to have results to a survey that was distributed to school districts regarding how they deal with internet related issues available next month. – *Lewistown (Mifflin Co.) Sentinel*

[apps in early 2018](#)

[New York Times In Protests of Net Neutrality Repeal, Teenage Voices Stood Out](#)

[Bloomberg Apple Plans Combined iPhone, iPad & Mac Apps to Create One User Experience](#)

[Philadelphia Business Journal NBCUniversal merger conditions under fire](#)

[Pennlive Gov. Tom Wolf calls on second Democratic lawmaker to resign over sexual harassment claims](#)

[Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Congressman Shuster touts poll showing him ahead of potential challenger Art Halvorson](#)

The state agency that regulates Reading-based company MAW Communications has opened an investigation into MAW's deployment of the public-private LanCity Connect fiber-optic broadband network.

The achievements of an organization are the results of the combined effort of each individual. ~ Vince Lombardi

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The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission sent MAW a letter Friday ordering it to stop connecting to poles owned by PPL Electric Utilities. "MAW is hereby directed to cease and desist any and all broadband deployment that attaches or touches any PPL pole or facility immediately," reads the letter, addressed to MAW President Frank Wiczowski. The letter tells MAW not to alter anything related to the investigation, including any pole attachments already made.

Earlier this month, PPL [sued MAW in Lehigh County Court](#), saying MAW attached equipment to at least 70 PPL poles in Lancaster without obtaining PPL's authorization. PPL is based in

Allentown. PPL is seeking an injunction requiring MAW to stop installations on PPL poles and remove those already made, contending they are unsafe. A hearing is scheduled for this morning. In light of the commission ordering MAW's existing installations to stay up, PPL will still ask the court to order them taken down, but to make the removal subject to the commission's approval, PPL spokesman Paul Wirth said.

Brian Kelly, MAW's director of operations, said MAW "voluntarily suspended additional deployment" of LanCity Connect earlier this month, but is continuing to provide service for existing customers. He said his company will work closely with the commission and PPL and is confident the process will show MAW is installing equipment "safely, reliably and cost effectively." MAW "will continue to apply its presumptive legal right" to operate within public rights-of-way, consistent with existing rules and regulations, Kelly said.

LanCity Connect is a partnership between the city and MAW. The company is handling the rollout; for its part, [the city has provided MAW](#) a \$1.5 million working capital loan and has reserved another \$1.5 million so far to subsidize residential connections. It plans to recoup the subsidies through a user surcharge. Lancaster's City Council [voted last week to retain a Washington, D.C., law firm](#) at a billing rate of \$365 per hour to go before the Federal Communications Commission and seek changes to PPL's regulations on behalf of LanCity Connect.

The commission's letter says PPL notified it about MAW's alleged attachments to PPL's poles. It says MAW admitted connecting to PPL's poles at a Dec. 6 "field conference" the commission held with the

two utilities. At that meeting, the letter says, MAW told the commission it had taken over equipment on PPL poles owned by the Lancaster Safety Coalition, which operates 170 surveillance cameras around Lancaster city. Kelly said MAW received “initial permission” from PPL to take over the safety coalition’s equipment in 2015.

Coalition board chairman Don Geiter said it and MAW have been cooperating on the plan, which LNP has previously reported, to hook the coalition’s cameras into the fiber optic network. Doing so will make it easier to add and remove cameras, he said, but it hasn’t been a board matter, so he’s not familiar with the details. The PUC’s letter initially gives MAW 30 days to provide information and documentation related to the dispute. Mayor Rick Gray’s chief of staff, Pat Brogan, said the commission’s investigation relates only to MAW and PPL. “The city is not a party to the matter, nor are we involved,” she said. – **Lancaster Newspapers**

Less than a week after the Federal Communications Commission rolled back net neutrality rules, two Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor legislators announced a plan to “counteract” the decision and said they hope other states take similar steps.

Rep. Paul Thissen and Sen. Ron Latz said Tuesday they would introduce legislation next year prohibiting internet service providers, like Comcast and Verizon, from blocking residents’ access to websites and applications. Under the FCC’s new rules, companies could potentially block or slow down service for certain sites and charge more for higher speeds or access. “The internet is an essential part of our prosperous economy and an essential part of a healthy democracy, and we need the internet to be a space where people have free speech,” said Thissen, of Minneapolis. “We should not allow the gatekeepers ... to block people based on their content or to block people based on the fact that they can’t pay as much.”

The **Republican-dominated FCC last week repealed rules** put in place during President Barack Obama’s term. Supporters of the change said the regulations were overly burdensome and discouraged companies from investing in broadband. FCC officials said they would pre-empt states from circumventing the change. However, Thissen said when the state government buys internet service or allows a provider to install infrastructure, it could require that company to comply with the certain net neutrality and data privacy rules. “We have every right to say, ‘We will give you that grant, but we are going to condition it on making sure you are protecting Minnesota residents and Minnesota consumers’ rights,’” he said. Still, it’s likely such requirements by state government would draw legal challenges.

Without this legislation, Latz, of St. Louis Park, said he worries companies would track which topics and websites people prefer and charge them more for an internet package that includes what they are interested in. Latz **proposed a measure to protect data privacy** during the last session, which he said had broad support but was not included in the final jobs and energy bill. Latz said he believes legislators will rally in support of their new plan. “I think we are on the right side of history on this one,” he said. – **Minneapolis Star Tribune**

Fake comments might have been submitted under your name to the Federal Communications Commission as it weighed whether to undo net-neutrality rules that guaranteed equal access to the internet. **You can search for your name at this site**, set up by Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro. The FCC voted 3-2 last week to undo the rules, created under former President Obama.

A Pew Research Center analysis found that, among 21.7 million comments posted, just 6 percent were unique. The rest were submitted multiple times, sometimes hundreds of thousands of times, according to Pew. The comment period lasted about eight months, ending in September. Shapiro, a Democrat, has said he plans to take legal action over the FCC’s change, saying it “undermines free speech and is bad for consumers and business.” Shapiro is part of a group of 18 state attorneys general who raised concerns with the FCC over the fake comments before a Thursday vote.

Republican FCC Chairman Ajit Pai said at a July FCC meeting that the raw number of comments wasn’t as important as the substance of issues raised, according to the Associated Press. New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, a Democrat, has said he will lead a multistate lawsuit to stop the FCC’s rollback of the rules. – **Pittsburgh Tribune-Review**

A second Republican is getting into the race for lieutenant governor of Pennsylvania. Ex-state Rep. Gordon Denlinger of Lancaster County said Tuesday that he’ll seek the party’s nomination in next year’s election. The 54-year-old trained accountant served 12 years in the House. Already seeking the nomination is suburban Philadelphia real estate investor Jeffrey Bartos, who dropped his candidacy for

U.S. Senate. March 6 is the deadline for major party candidates to file paperwork for the May 15 primary election ballot.

Five Democrats have lined up to contest the re-election bid of the party's sitting lieutenant governor, Mike Stack. Stack is a former Philadelphia state senator. He has little working relationship with Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf, who stripped Stack of police protection after receiving complaints about Stack's treatment of state employees. – *Associated Press*



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