



Wisconsin's Broadband Association®

WSTA UPDATE



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WSTA Update January 25, 2019

Legislative and Political

[Tony Evers sworn in as Wisconsin's 46th governor, pledges to put 'people first'](#)

For the first time in eight years, a Democrat occupies the east wing of the state Capitol. With a pledge to seek unity and overcome partisan divisions, Gov. Tony Evers was sworn in on Monday as Wisconsin's 46th governor. "As elected officials, we are reminded that our obligation and our allegiance are to the people of this state, not any political leader or party. That is the promise and the spirit of our service," Evers said in his remarks. "May we dare to transcend divisiveness and party line. May we have courage in our conscience. And may we be willing to do what's best for the next generation rather than the next election."

[State Legislature Convenes New Session with Divided Government](#)

A new era of divided government began Monday at the state Capitol with the inauguration of the state Assembly and Senate. Republican legislators continue to hold power in both legislative chambers, with a 63-36 majority in the Assembly and a 19-14 majority in the Senate. However, the GOP will not have a member of their party in the governor's office for the first time since 2011. Related: [On inauguration day, Wisconsin Republicans call for cooperation, civility in era of divided government](#)

[Governor-elect Evers announces more Cabinet appointments](#)

Governor-elect Tony Evers announced four more cabinet appointments on Friday, including Rebecca Cameron Valcq as Chair of the Public Service Commission. "I want to thank Governor-elect Evers for offering me the opportunity to serve the people of Wisconsin," said Rebecca Cameron Valcq. "I look forward to making sure the Public Service Commission is proactive and engages in a robust exchange of ideas with all stakeholders." Rebecca Cameron Valcq is currently a partner at Quarles & Brady in the Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Practice Group. Prior to joining the firm, Valcq spent 15 years as regulatory counsel for We Energies where, among other responsibilities, she represented the company before the Public Service Commission in Wisconsin and advised management on multiple areas of compliance. She received her undergraduate degree from Drake University and her law degree from Marquette University.

[David Cagigal to Remain Wisconsin CIO in New Administration](#)

A veteran of former Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker's administration will continue into the new administration of Gov. Tony Evers. David Cagigal, who has been serving as Wisconsin's chief information officer since 2011, will

continue in the role. As CIO, Cagigal also serves as division administrator for the Division of Enterprise Technology (DET), which manages the state's IT assets. Cagigal's continuance as CIO may strike some as an anomaly, since many new administrations bring in their own appointments for senior cabinet-level positions. "Yes, this is an anomaly," agreed Doug Robinson, executive director of the National Association of State Chief Information Officers.

[Complete text of Gov. Evers' State of the State Address](#)

Honorable Supreme Court Justices, tribal nation leaders, Constitutional Officers, Major General Dunbar and the members of the Wisconsin National Guard as well as active and retired members of our armed forces, Senate President Roth, Majority Leader Fitzgerald, Minority Leader Shilling, Speaker Vos, and Minority Leader Hintz, cabinet members, legislators, distinguished guests, and, most importantly, people of Wisconsin: welcome, and thank you for being here.

[11 counties ask state to use police, fire protection fee for original purpose: 911 upgrades](#)

Counties across the state need to upgrade their analog 911 call centers to digital technology — sooner rather than later. The money already exists in Wisconsin's coffers to cover the upgrades — it was meant to go to a fund started for that purpose. However, it doesn't always make it there. Now, a number of Wisconsin's counties, Kewaunee among them, are asking the state to use the money for its originally stated purpose. The County Board approved a resolution at its Dec. 18 meeting "urging (the) State of Wisconsin to fund Next Generation 911 upgrades." The resolution, like those filed by 10 other counties within the past three months, asks the state to use revenue from its Police and Fire Protection Fee to allocate a total of \$7 million a year so all 72 counties can modernize their response centers to handle the changeover to the digital Next Generation 911 — or NG911.

[USDA Official: States and Localities Need Skin in the Game for Rural Broadband to Succeed](#)

When decision makers consider who should receive some of the \$600 million allocated to the USDA ReConnect rural broadband pilot program, the agency will use a scoring system that awards points based on a range of factors, including the number of educational and healthcare facilities that would receive service – and for serving parts of states that have their own broadband funding programs. The latter criteria was included with the goal of "leveraging funding from outside sources" to "maximize the use of very limited resources," said Anne Hazlett, Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development at the USDA, in an interview with Telecompetitor.

[New House Bill Would Push Carriers to Expand Rural Broadband](#)

U.S. Rep. Doug Collins (R-GA) introduced a bill Thursday that would help rural communities access broadband services. The bill, named the Connect America Fund Accountability Act of 2019, outlines additional guidelines for the Connect America Fund, a Federal Communications Commission program that incentivizes broadband carriers to provide service to underserved or rural areas. The bill would require recipients of fund dollars to provide additional information about how they test their services, mandating that the carrier report their testing method and choose a sample that is representative of their consumers.

[Robocall epidemic has Senators eyeing steep fines for scam artists](#)

Two senators are renewing their push for legislation to curb the increasing amount of robocalls in the U.S. A bill reintroduced this month from Senate Majority Whip John Thune, R-S.D., and Sen. Ed Markey, D-Mass., would allow the Federal Communications Commission to impose civil fines of up to \$10,000 per each violation of federal restrictions on telemarketing. The authority would extend up to three years after a robocall is made – an increase from the current one-year limit. Alongside the new penalties, the measure would also direct the

FCC to craft new federal regulations to further prevent unwanted calls or texts, including when telecommunications providers can block voice calls.

[Rep. Steil hits the ground running](#)

U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil, R-Wis., is starting his political career in an intense time in our nation's capital. The partial government shutdown over border security is officially the longest in history, and President Donald Trump's campaign is being investigated for possible connections with the Russian government during the 2016 presidential campaign; former FBI Director Robert Mueller is serving as special counsel to investigate the matter. It is against this backdrop that the freshman congressman, representing Wisconsin's 1st District, steps into an unfamiliar role as elected public official. On Wednesday, during his first speech on the House floor, Steil tried to push his colleagues to find an end to the shutdown.

[Scott Walker's eight years as governor ushered in profound change in Wisconsin](#)

Eight years ago, Scott Walker was sworn in as Wisconsin's 45th governor and declared: "Under our administration, state government will do only what is necessary — no more, no less." It turned out, he was underselling the conservative revolution that was about to begin. Walker's tenure was controversial and consequential, a dramatic break from Wisconsin's traditions. His years in office will echo across decades. "Scott Walker did not sit back and let the world pass by him and watch the parade pass by," said Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, a Rochester Republican. "He was the leader of the parade." But not everyone was cheering.

Regulatory and Industry

[Shutdown or No, FCC Will Hold Jan. 30 Meeting](#)

The FCC said it plans to proceed with the scheduled Jan. 30 public meeting, but it will be pretty much of a pro forma exercise since there will be no votes on any of the agenda items. "There is a requirement in the Communications Act that the FCC meet monthly," said an FCC spokesperson. That means there will be a meeting whether or not the partial government shutdown ends before that time.

[Just the Facts: Congressional Report Summarizes State of Broadband, Federal Assistance Programs](#)

A new Congressional Research Service Report offers a wealth of information about the state of broadband deployment and adoption, along with summarizing current broadband federal assistance programs. The report, titled "Broadband Internet Access and the Digital Divide: Federal Assistance Programs," even lists dozens of broadband-related bills introduced in the 115th Congress, even though they didn't pass. The authors seem to have been tightly focused on simply presenting the facts, leaving it to readers to draw their own conclusions about the information presented – a refreshing departure from what we see so often in this highly partisan era.

[Charter Picks Cujo AI as In-Home Network Security Partner](#)

CUJO AI, an award-winning next gen artificial intelligence-powered software platform to enable in-home network security for network operators, has been chosen by Charter Communications to enhance security, privacy, and improve the in-home connected experience for more than 24M Spectrum Internet subscribers. Spectrum will begin deploying CUJO AI in 2019.

[TDS Gigabit Expands to Two More Wisconsin Communities](#)

TDS Fiber, which has a considerable footprint in Wisconsin, said this week that it is bringing 1 Gigabit per second networks to two more municipalities in the state. The new TDS gigabit communities are Weston and Stevens Point. The Weston village board approved a project that eventually will provide access to more than 4,400 residential customers and 550 businesses. The project will begin in Tax Incremental District #1 and then move to the rest of the village. It eventually will cost between \$8 million and \$10 million. Weston is adjacent to Wausau and about 140 miles north of Madison, where TDS Fiber is headquartered. “The entire village of Weston leadership team immediately understood the benefits of fiber technology and the potential it brings for residents,” Drew Petersen, the Senior Vice President of Corporate Affairs at TDS said in a press release. “From telecommuting and education to entertainment and health care, world-class services are a real game changer.”

Broadband and Internet

[Broadband Data: Usage Accelerates; 1TB 'Power Users' Double](#)

Broadband usage in the United States continued to accelerate across all market categories throughout 2018 and Amazon made substantial year-end inroads into consumers' device ecosystems, according to OpenVault, a leading provider of industry analytics and technology solutions for broadband operators. According to OpenVault, both average and median data usage for year end 2018 increased when compared with year end 2017 statistics. Importantly, the rate of growth for median usage continued to far exceed the growth rate for average usage, indicating that consumption is growing across service providers' entire subscriber bases, rather than only among heavy users.

[Intel, Comcast ink deal to enable 10 Gigabit broadband, WiFi 6 in homes](#)

As Comcast continues to hone its ambitions to be the hub around which our many connected devices and services revolve in your home, and Intel continues to build smaller, faster and more efficient chips, the two are announcing a key deal to give Comcast an edge over the likes of Amazon, Google and the field of other home broadband providers. Today at CES — alongside new 9th generation chips, a new integrated, a hybrid “3D” chip in a new project called Lakefield, and its Ice Lake 10nm chips — Intel said it would collaborate with Comcast on devices and services to enable super-fast broadband speeds of 10 Gigabits per second (a new priority for Intel) for its Xfinity broadband service, as well as in-home WiFi 6, aka 802.11ax, the newest, faster WiFi standard that requires less energy to work, and sits as an alternative to 5G for IoT connectivity.

[MoffettNathanson: Household Formation Will Drive Cable Broadband Growth](#)

For some years, cable broadband growth has been driven, in large part, by customers switching from lower-speed telco broadband. But broadband financial analysts at MoffettNathanson Research see that changing, now that telcos have made substantial progress in upgrading their broadband speeds. Moving forward, “perhaps the more important factor is new household formation,” MoffettNathanson researchers said in a slide show that accompanied a recent conference call with investors.

[Big Cable's '10G' campaign betrays a fear of wireless 5G](#)

5G networks are poised to be a big thing, with promises of big speed boosts that some think may even one day be able to compete with traditional broadband (just ask D-Link, which announced a 5G home router at CES 2019). And apparently, the idea of that kind of competition has traditional cable companies a bit spooked,

considering that this week at CES, the NCTA and other cable groups announced their new “10G” initiative, which must be better than 5G: after all, 10 is a whole twice as much as 5!

Cellular and Wireless

[AT&T lays out 5G pillars: Mobile 5G, fixed wireless, edge computing](#)

AT&T laid out its strategy this week for serving businesses with 5G, which makes a lot of sense given the number of enterprise customers it serves. The company counts 2,000 of the largest multinational companies as customers. The strategy consists of three main pillars: mobile 5G, fixed wireless and edge computing. Last month, AT&T announced it had turned on its mobile 5G network in parts of a dozen cities via connections to a portable hotspot and started offering service to “select businesses and consumers” for free for at least the first three months.

[Verizon has positioned a new 5G offering as an industry disrupter, but investors have 'low expectations'](#)

Investors aren't betting on big results from Verizon's self-described cable-disrupting 5G offering. In a Morgan Stanley survey of over 50 telecommunications investors, analysts said investors had "low expectations" for the 5G home broadband offering that launched at the end of 2018. The note said 45% of survey respondents predicted the Verizon 5G Home would have less than 100,000 subscribers by the end of 2019. Another 27% said there would be between 100,000 and 200,000. Verizon began offering its 5G Home service to customers in four initial markets — Houston, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, and Sacramento, California — in October 2018, choosing cities where Verizon is not the incumbent carrier, meaning there is room for growth in the market.

[Verizon dethrones T-Mobile in wireless network ranking](#)

Verizon has given T-Mobile the boot and now leads all its main rivals in 4G, streaming and uploads, wireless tracking firm OpenSignal said Thursday. "For the last two years T-Mobile has been the dominant operator...across our metrics, winning most of our speed and availability awards in OpenSignal's last three reports. But we see a newly resurgent Verizon," the tracking company said in its new report. "Verizon has either caught up to or surpassed T-Mobile in nearly every one of our primary metrics." Verizon won outright in 4G coverage, video streaming quality and upload speeds. T-Mobile and Verizon tied in download speeds. And AT&T won in the fifth category: latency, which measures network response time.

[Spectrum strategies for 5G: 2019 update](#)

Much of the activity on 5G spectrum in the US to date has focused on millimeter (mmWave) spectrum, but it is not clear that mmWave spectrum will be suitable for mobile 5G network deployment in the near to mid-term future. High-band spectrum offers higher speeds and more capacity due to the amount of unused spectrum available at these frequencies, but mmWave is limited in geographic coverage needed for mobile deployments. Low and mid-band wireless signals travel further and penetrate obstacles like buildings better than high-band spectrum. As per Ericsson's June 2018 Mobility Report “In general, all the current 3GPP bands including low bands (600 MHz, 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 850 MHz and 900 MHz) and mid-bands (1.5 GHz, 1.7 GHz, 1.8 GHz, 1.9 GHz, 2.1 GHz, 2.3 GHz and 2.6 GHz) are being considered for 5G services in the future”.

IPTV and Video

[TDS CEO: Carriage Negotiations with Nexstar 'Not Going Well'](#)

Retransmission negotiations between TDS Telecom and Nexstar Media Group are not going well, TDS's chief executive said Wednesday as a channel blackout on TDS systems continued into day 16. More than 50,000 TDS customers in eight states are affected, without access to channels including ABC, CBS and Fox in certain markets. "We never imagined that these negotiations would drag on this long," TDS President and CEO Jim Butman said in a second video message appealing to customers. He added that TDS will apply credits to consumers' accounts for the lost programming. TDS says Nexstar is demanding retransmission rate hikes that the local service provider deems "too expensive and unreasonable to ask our customers to absorb."

[NBCUniversal set to launch standalone streaming service in 2020](#)

NBCUniversal is joining the streaming wars, announcing that it will launch its own standalone streaming service in 2020. An ad-supported version of the streaming service will be free for NBC TV subscribers in the United States and will also be made available to Comcast Cable and Sky subscribers internationally, too. Paid versions of the app, which include an ad-free version for those who don't want to sit through commercials, will also be available for \$12.99, according to a CNBC report. This will allow cord cutters who don't subscribe to NBC to access the streaming service, too.

[Research: Over 585m OTT subscriptions by 2024](#)

An OTT report from Parks Associates predicts OTT services will accelerate their global expansion over the next five years, with more than 310 million connected households having at least one OTT service by 2024 – equating to some 586 million subscriptions overall. OTT Video Services: Disruptive Globalization estimates approximately 200 million households had at least one OTT service at home at the end of 2018.