Inside Towers

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Superstorm Sandy Put Community Back to the 19th Century for 12 Days

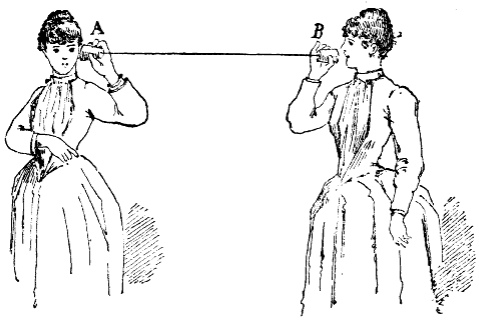


Fig. 76. Trådtelefon.

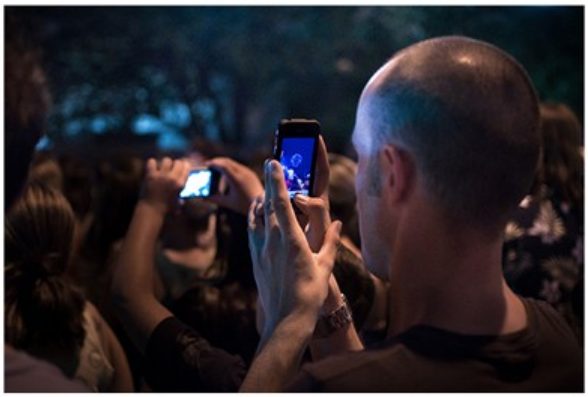
Two years ago the Mount Pleasant town officials turned a blind eye to the lack of wireless infrastructure in the area when they denied the construction of cell tower on town land. Not only did the town lose out on $200,000, they also deprived the community of the ability to communicate six months later. In a letter to the Lohud, a newspaper in New York, written on June 26th, Ken Lyons of White Plains claims that the only thing left to look at in Mount Pleasant will be paved building lots and a few trees placed between. “A very sad prospect due to our open parcels of land are running out quickly,” he said. “We need to think of preserving such valuable resources, not diminishing them in the interest of profit, and it needs to happen yesterday.” However, William Metzler of Thornwood wrote a reply to Ken’s letter explaining that, “The letter writer decries the anti-ecological policies of the town. However, two years ago the board closed its eyes and denied construction of a cell tower on town land, costing the town $200,000 and denying over 100 families in the Nannyhagen-Bear Ridge community cell service. Six months later, Superstorm Sandy put us back to the 19th century for 12 days. While over 90 percent of Americans have cell phone service, some even provided at government expense, we languish in a communication vacuum. As the Town Board denies modern technology, again, I ask the supervisor to reopen and approve the cell phone tower and bring us into the 21st century.” This is a common debate among residents. Some feel as if new buildings and technology are detracting from the environment, while some realize that denying residents of cell phone service is cruel and unusual punishment.

Indiana Man Killed While Working on Kentucky Cell Tower

On July 3rd, 28-year old Joel Metz was working on a cell phone tower in Harrison County, Kentucky with three other crew members when a cable stuck him, killing him instantly. They were replacing booms on the tower when the accident occurred. “It got within two feet of where it was going and something broke. And then the 1,800-pound boom failed,” explained Harrison County Sheriff Bruce Hampton to WDKY Fox 56. “Not too many people used to seeing that. And it’s a guy you’ve been working next to… Nobody else was injured and they’re just, they’re very much beside themselves.” Metz was hanging in his safety harness for several hours before another crew brought his body

down. He'd been working about 240 feet in the air. Work on the tower has been halted. Crews from OSHA, Verizon and Fortune Wireless were inspecting the accident site Thursday, Fox 56 reported.

Did You Talk All You Wanted This Weekend?



The mobile carriers were working their hardest to improve network coverage in cities around the country in anticipation of 4th of July festivities. Cell phone reception tends to be spotty when large groups of people gather in one area for afternoon BBQs or firework shows. In Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, Verizon Wireless has brought in COWs to assist with network coverage over the long weekend. The mobile cell towers are being used more frequently in the Pacific Northwest - especially during large events attracting hundreds of thousands of people carrying 4G smart phones. "We as a company have been trying to plan ahead," said Scott Charlston, a spokesman for the company. We recently wrote about the company's attempt to prepare for communications outages during Tropical Storm Arthur. This is just another example of mobile carriers working to keep their customers happy by implementing additional infrastructure. With more and more people upgrading their cell phones to 4G LTE smart phones, there is need for more network coverage during large gatherings, Charlston said. "People are beginning to realize they can use their phones to download a movie over the wireless network in a matter of minutes," he said. "There are all kinds of things people are doing with their phones now."

Belcourt's KEYA Radio Receives Funding for Tower

A local radio station on the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation in Belcourt, North Dakota will be receiving federal funding to replace their 50-year old broadcast tower because it is losing stability and beyond repair. KEYA radio is a non-commercial, educational broadcast station based in Belcourt. It is operated by the Belcourt School District. It is the only local non-commercial radio station within a 100 mile radius. The radio station also received $50,000 from a Bremer Grant. It is contributing $90,000 of its own funds to meet the project's total cost of $190,000, according to The Washington Times.

Stealth Towers Still Opposed by Some

By Jen Koester, an insider at Lease Advisors

A common first response to the proposal to install a new cell tower is often, "Not in my backyard!" Many people have come to rely on the convenience of having social media, the internet, and text messaging at their fingertips, yet still oppose the structures that make all this possible The most common complaints about cell towers are that the potential effects on health are unknown and that the structures themselves are an eyesore, ruining the aesthetics of the surrounding area. While only time will tell, many "experts" have maintained that there are little to no health risks associated with proximity to cellular sites. Meanwhile cellular companies have designed stealth towers in an attempt to invalidate the argument about aesthetics. Continue reading here.

Cell Tower Thieves Strike Again

In Milton, Washington thieves stripped a cell tower and its surrounding area of hundreds of feet of

copper wire. They yanked the wire from an overgrown plot of land, the surrounding structure, and the tower itself. These guys were busy! "(The wire) is quite valuable on the recycling market, as all metals tend to be right now," Milton Police Chief Mark Langford said. "People are turning to all sorts of means to make a few dollars. Problem is, it costs taxpayers." Given the unusual nature of the theft and how the wire was pulled from the ground, Langford wondered if it was an inside job. A shack adjacent to the cell phone tower also had damage to it, with a busted door guard and broken boxes on the outside, among other things. In Pevely, Missouri another group of troublemakers stole $4,600 of copper wires that they ripped from buried piping.

Tower Ticker

SYMBOL	TIME & PRICE		CHG & % CHG		DAY'S LOW & HIGH		VOLUME
★ AMT	01:00pm EDT	90.01	+0.27	+0.30%	89.05	90.09	1,165,653
★ CCI	01:00pm EDT	74.16	+0.07	+0.09%	73.54	75.55	823,251
★ CIGW	11:26am EDT	0.43	0.00	0.00%	0.43	0.43	13,000
★ SBAC	01:00pm EDT	101.73	+0.12	+0.12%	101.00	101.95	390,776
★ TMUS	01:02pm EDT	33.33	-0.02	-0.06%	33.23	33.49	1,695,772
★ VZ	01:02pm EDT	49.71	+0.05	+0.10%	49.35	49.94	8,234,267
★ S	01:01pm EDT	8.60	+0.12	+1.42%	8.48	8.60	3,697,274
★ T	01:00pm EDT	35.84	+0.17	+0.48%	35.69	35.87	11,662,483

Zoning and Moaning

Tower Site Locations Receiving Extra Attention in Montgomery, Alabama

Officials in Montgomery are facing a deadline as they try to move forward with a project that may bring better cell coverage to the west side of the city. AT&T officials are looking to build two towers for cellular phone use. The towers will measure up to 199 feet and would allow for the village to have better cell service and will be able rent space to other carriers. One part of the project, for a cell tower on the east side of town at the local water facility, has been given the green light. The site in question however is on land owned by the Montgomery Police Department. Village attorney Steve Andersson told trustees the current hurdle in the plan is a covenant that prohibits any commercial use on the land. “The land is our land. We received it from the Park District in exchange for giving them our old police station. When we did the land swap, they included a covenant that we could not use the land for commercial purposes. We have asked them to remove the covenant for the portion of the land where the cell tower would be located,” said Village Administrator Jeff Zoephel.

Virginia Commission Recommends Some Changes to Cell Tower Ordinances

Residents are asking that key protections be maintained as Albemarle officials consider changes to the approval process for communications towers in the county. “Right now, you’re being asked to rule on a decision that will make it easier to place cell towers in established neighborhoods and if you agree to these changes it will have a significant impact on Key West in particular,” said local resident Bob Toplin. Over the past few years industry officials have been asking the county to streamline the approval process so more towers can be erected to satisfy growing demand for mobile data services. Currently, site locations are covered by the county’s critical-slopes ordinance and a waiver is sometimes required to construct a tower and its base station. The proposed ordinance would instead allow disturbances by-right. That had the support of industry representatives, one of whom claimed disturbing a critical slope could be in the county’s benefit. “A monopole to serve an area is best done on the side of a mountain or hill so that we don’t have skylighting,” said Lori Schweller, an attorney who represents Verizon. “We want to have that treed background so you don’t see the brown pole amid the trees.” However, the commissioners did not reach consensus to recommend that change. The current ordinance also requires that site locations must be set back from the property line at a distance that is at least the height of the tower and all equipment. Staff is recommending allowing use of that ground equipment within the setback, but several dozen residents of the Key West neighborhood opposed that move. “AT&T has been trying to place a cell tower between two houses in our neighborhood for five years,” said resident Ellen Dudley. “Last year’s application was turned down because their structural base would have been too close to the house on the adjacent lot.” The Board of Supervisors will discuss the ordinance changes later this summer.

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