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Inside Towers

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Oregon's FirstNet Buildout by AT&T Gives Priority to Rural Areas

As the first stage of the five-year First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) buildout gets underway in Oregon, state officials, AT&T and FirstNet say rural deployment will not be an afterthought, reported *Radio Resource Media Group.*

"Rural is something that won't be waiting until last," said Carrie Johnson, director of public-safety advocacy and tribal affairs specialist for AT&T's FirstNet program. "It is a key priority during every stage of the buildout and beyond those first five years as well."

With each stage of the buildout, there is a requirement for rural coverage to ensure that AT&T doesn't wait until the fifth year to begin deploying that coverage, said David Soloos, the single point of contact (SPOC) for Oregon.
The breakdown for rural deployment over the five-year buildout requires 20 percent of rural coverage be built in the first year, 60 percent in the second, 80 percent in the third, 95 percent in the fourth and 100 percent by the fifth year.
"Rural will be coming online as it comes online with urban first responders," said Soloos. Continue Reading

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Senate Bill Would Quantify How Rural Broadband Compares to Urban

Senators Maggie Hassan (D-NH) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) introduced a bill this week to expand access to broadband in rural America.

The Rural Reasonable and Comparable Wireless Access Act of 2018 directs the FCC to establish a national standard for determining whether rural mobile and broadband services are "reasonably comparable" to service provided in urban areas. The measure directs the FCC to gather data about the average speed and signal strength of mobile and broadband internet services in the 20 most populated urban markets. "The services provided in rural areas shall be deemed reasonably comparable to urban areas if the signal strengths and/or speeds meet or exceed the averages in the most-populated areas," according to the legislative text.

The bill is companion legislation to a measure introduced in the House last year by Reps. Peter Welch (D-VT) and David McKinley (R-WV).

Competitive Carriers Association President/CEO Steven Berry praised the Senate bill. "Many rural locations in the

U.S. still lack mobile broadband services comparable to their urban counterparts, and this Act, in keeping with Congress' mandate, will help ensure these important areas are not left behind in the digital world," Berry said.

KNWT Coming Back On-Air After Tower Lease Dispute

KNWT-FM, Cody, WY, formerly the campus radio station of Northwest Community College, went off the air last July after a dispute with its tower owner on Cedar Mountain. That's when Patrick Communications-owned Legend Towers informed the school it owed more than $50,000 in back tower lease payments, reports the *Powell Tribune*.

The school's tower lease said the college had to make annual payments. The college wanted to make monthly payments, arguing the lease was not valid, and that the previous President had no authority to agree to it nor the increases built into it, according to Patrick Communications-owned Legend Towers.

Managing Partner Larry Patrick tells *Inside Towers* that KNWT tried to substitute Wyoming Public Media on the lease, but WPM wanted changes that Patrick's company declined to accept. Then, Patrick abided by the KNWT lease terms. "The lease said, once they had defaulted, we had the right to bar their access to the transmitter site and to change the locks. We did cut the power to their station. They elected not to honor a valid lease and breached its terms," said Patrick.

Now, the license for KNWT has been transferred to Wyoming Public Media, which plans to keep the call letters and broadcast from a tower in the McCullough Peaks.

D.C. Download

Walden: Trump Willing to 'Build Upon' Infrastructure Plan

During Wednesday's vote by the House Commerce Committee on a measure to reauthorize the FCC, several Democrats complained about the lack of dedicated funding for broadband deployment in President Donald Trump's infrastructure package revealed on Monday.

One of those, Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT), asked: "Will this committee take the lead?" The fear is state governors will use federal funds for other priorities like fixing roads and bridges unless the money is specifically earmarked to deploy broadband.

Committee Chair Greg Walden (OR) was one of the lawmakers invited to the White House on Wednesday to meet with Trump about the proposal. Walden reassured Welch he's "got this one." He said he made that very case at the White House. "I was encouraged that there is some money … put aside in the proposal," said Walden. He added: "The president's willing to work with us to build upon that." Continue Reading

FCC 411

LMCC Wants Enforcement Bureau to Regulate Non-Compliant Wireless Devices

The Land Mobile Communications Council (LMCC) submitted a letter to Rosemary Harold, Chief of the FCC's Enforcement Bureau, requesting "a meeting with Enforcement Bureau management personnel for the purpose of identifying public relations, educational, enforcement and other potential activities that will serve to address the widespread use of non-rule compliant wireless devices, whose access, illegal use and distribution has reached epidemic proportions."

In the letter signed by LMCC officers Farokh Latif and Mark Crosby, the Enforcement Bureau was advised that the devices are marketed for use by any entity, for any purpose, for operation on channels ranging from 136–174 MHz and 400–520 MHz, without regard to federal and non-federal spectrum allocations, user eligibility or licensing requirements.

The LMCC noted that this presents a serious risk of harmful interference to federal systems and FCC-compliant systems operated by public safety and business/industrial licensees. The LMCC also advised that the use of non-compliant devices creates significant economic consequences and competitive disadvantages that affect manufacturers and their channel partners who produce and distribute wireless products in full compliance with the Commission's and National Telecommunications and Information Administration's operational and technical rules.

Tower Ticker

February 15, 2018 at Close

Symbol	Price	Change	% Change	Low	Volume	High	52 Wk High	52 Wk Low
AMT	136.22	+0.74	+0.55%	133.04	3.22M	136.93	155.28	106.85
AMX	19.37	+0.68	+3.64%	18.94	3.80M	19.46	19.50	12.40
CCI	107.64	+2.28	+2.16%	104.62	2.64M	107.99	114.97	88.54
COMM	39.26	+0.38	+0.98%	37.10	3.46M	39.28	42.75	30.95
CTL	19.13	+1.55	+8.82%	18.41	25.47M	19.47	27.61	13.16
DY	115.28	+2.32	+2.05%	112.12	753.98k	115.94	123.99	73.95
ERIC	6.78	+0.12	+1.80%	6.65	4.67M	6.80	7.47	5.52
FTR	8.89	+0.66	+8.02%	8.43	3.14M	9.03	51.30	6.08
S	5.49	+0.18	+3.39%	5.30	10.36M	5.52	9.44	4.91
SBAC	167.10	+4.54	+2.79%	160.08	1.15M	167.64	177.67	107.30
T	37.00	+0.59	+1.62%	36.23	27.03M	37.00	42.70	32.55
TMUS	60.44	+1.82	+3.10%	58.20	6.19M	60.60	68.88	54.60
UNIT	15.96	+0.89	+5.91%	15.12	2.95M	16.05	29.65	13.81
VZ	49.74	+0.23	+0.46%	48.95	18.80M	49.78	54.77	42.80
ZAYO	37.46	+1.28	+3.54%	35.98	2.16M	37.46	37.95	29.73

Real-Time

SBA Refinancing in Light of Favorable Tower Outlook

SBA Communications Corp. is preparing its thirteenth overall wireless tower securitization through its master trust platform with $640 million of bonds backed by wireless tower leases, according to *American Banker.*

An SBA spokesperson told *Inside Towers* they have $755M coming due in April, so the current deal of $640M, plus some additional borrowing, will be used to pay off the $755M. They did something similar in April 2017, where they issued $760M to pay off $610M of debt, the spokesperson said. Continue Reading

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Mississippi

New Tower Bolsters EMS Communication Network

Mississippi's statewide communication system allows first responders to maintain contact with numerous state agencies, but the success of that system depends on having an adequate network of towers. The city of Oxford, MS is one area that lacks enough towers nearby to take full advantage of the statewide system, but a solution is on the way, according to *The Local Voice.*

The Mississippi Wireless Communication Commission provided $1.3 million to fund a new centrally located tower at the Whirlpool water tank site, slated for construction, beginning February 9. The new tower site will include a 10 by 12-foot communications hut, a microwave link to the rest of the network's tower sites, as well as a separate generator, which makes the tower self-sustaining, according to *The Local Voice.*

Jimmy Allgood, Oxford's Director of Emergency Management, explained the new tower's numerous benefits, including better communication for emergency personnel and the elimination of dead zones across Oxford, to *The Local Voice*. "This system works as a relay between each of the towers and this will really improve the coverage for our officers and first responders as well as improve the communications for those that work with the state such as the highway patrol and MDOT," Allgood said, expressing gratitude to the MWCC and other agencies who collaborated to make the tower possible. "This is a big project and investment in our city and emergency communications capabilities and will serve our community for many years to come," Allgood said.

Tower Tribe

National Wireless Safety Alliance Makes Board of Governors Appointments

The National Wireless Safety Alliance (NWSA) announced their appointments to serve on the organization's Board of Governors.

Those serving include: Bernard Borghei, Executive Vice President - Operations and Co-Founder of Vertical Bridge, Doug Dickinson, Western Region Environmental Health & Safety Manager at Ericsson, Bruce Eades, President of USA Telecom Insurance Services, Pat Moore, Field Service Specialist at Stainless, Paul Roberts, Vice President of Compliance for American Tower Corporation, Jose Tarafa, Corporate Operations Manager at Mastec Network Solutions and Gary Trent, Quality Assurance Engineer for U.S. Cellular.

The NWSA Board of Governors consists of representatives from a broad cross-section of the industry and is tasked with developing policy and overseeing the activities of the various committees that will serve under their jurisdiction.

Inside Interviews

View From “The Bridge”: Looks Like a Super Year Ahead

By Jim Fryer, Managing Editor, *Inside Towers*

Bernard Borghei

Bernard Borghei is having a good year so far. Not only did he recently see his hometown Philadelphia Eagles win the Super Bowl but his company, Vertical Bridge, is off to a good start as well. “We’re excited about the year ahead,” Borghei, the Executive Vice President of Operations & Co-Founder told *Inside Towers.*

“The pipeline looks good,” he said, “with the level of activity by the carriers, Sprint coming back, T-Mobile being aggressive, Verizon’s steady capex increasing and cable companies becoming more active and aware of how they can deliver content, 2018 is heading in the right direction.”

Formed in 2014 through a partnership between key executives of Global Tower Partners and Digital Bridge Holdings LLC, Vertical Bridge now boasts a site inventory of over 60,000 assets, including close to 5,000 wireless and broadcast towers, along with tens of thousands of rooftop and billboard sites, billing itself as “the largest private owner and manager of communication infrastructure in the U.S.”

Would their mercurial growth eventually result in or require a public offering? Continue Reading

NATE UNITE 2018

Free Exhibit Hall Pass Offered at NATE UNITE 2018

National Association of Tower Erectors (NATE) invites you to attend the NATE UNITE 2018 annual event which will be held February 19-22, 2018, at the Gaylord Opryland Resort in Nashville, Tennessee. New to NATE UNITE 2018, there is a special option this year for a FREE Exhibit Hall pass. This FREE pass is valid only for the exhibit hall on Tuesday and/or Wednesday during exhibit hall hours.

This pass will offer exhibitors an opportunity to invite customers to the exhibit hall at no cost. The Exhibit Hall pass does not include educational sessions, beverage breaks, luncheons or the Tuesday Networking Reception. Attendees who would like to register for an Exhibit Hall pass can do so at the NATE UNITE website or on site at NATE UNITE 2018.

Conference attendees who are interested in attending educational sessions, luncheons and receptions have the option to register with a Full Conference or One-Day pass. Advance registration discounts are valid through Friday, February 16. By registering in advance, attendees can save over $100.

Inside Towers will see you @ NATE UNITE 2018

Jim Fryer
Managing Editor

Leslie Stimson
Washington Bureau Chief

Cara Aston
Creative Director

If you see us, please say Hello!

Stop by and see some of our friends @ NATE UNITE 2018

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System Training Solutions — Booth # 603

Booth # 237 — USA Telecom insurance services

NCI Noash Construction, Inc. — Booth # 420

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Conference News

IWCE Introduces the Next-Generation of Industry Leaders

International Wireless Communications Expo (IWCE), the premier annual event for communications technology professionals, has introduced the second annual IWCE Young Professional Award winners. The award showcases the next-generation of leaders in the communications technology industry who are shaping the future of the industry.

IWCE's Young Professional Awards recognize young professionals under 35 who have made a significant contribution in his or her company or agency and works in the communications technology industry. These individuals are executing some of the most innovative ideas, showing creativity and initiative.

"Congratulations to the 2018 Young Professional award winners," said Stephanie McCall, Show Director, IWCE. "These individuals are the up-and-comers in the telecommunications industry, honored for their spectacular work and accomplishments. We look forward to celebrating their achievements at IWCE in March and seeing their contributions in the years to come." Continue Reading

Inside Towers Impact

Groundhog Phil may have predicted more cold weather, but the reality is, spring will be here before we know it. This year, we are introducing our inaugural Spring Showcase.

What you need to know:
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Tower-Pro.com, *Inside Towers*' companion **Buyer's Guide**, boasts over 3,500 listings in 130+ categories - all of which are relevant to the telecom and/or tower industry. Tower-Pro is a go-to resource for thousands of users each year. You can enhance your listing to make sure your company is noticed first. Below is a chart outlining the differences between a basic and enhanced listing. Seems like a no-brainer to us. An enhanced listing is a nominal $250 fee.

Search for and claim your listing, create a listing or enhance your listing today or contact us for assistance.

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Additional media uploads		✔

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Tower Jobs

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- At least 2-3 years of sales experience, preferably digital
- Knowledge of wireless infrastructure and financial services is a plus
- Communications or business degree is preferred
- Effective communicator and presenter, written and verbal
- Self-motivated and proactive professional with proven track record of results
- Hard-working, trustworthy individual with positive attitude

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