Lots of Prep Work Needed to Ready Towers for Repack

*Inside Towers* has been reporting there are several things broadcast owners and their engineers should do early in order to prepare for the television channel repack. Now the need for tower prep is urgent as companies are booking their crews for repack-related work as well as other types of jobs.

Vertical Technology Services Chief Operations Officer Paul Fitts says his company is now booking repack work for 2019. He told attendees of the Society of Broadcast Engineers Chapter 37 meeting in Washington, D.C. earlier this week, the industry has identified about 14 companies considered qualified, experienced and equipped to conduct the tall broadcast tower work. His is one of those 14; that small number alone could impact the pace of the work, as well as weather, manpower, fabrication errors, emergency work and injuries, he said. Continue Reading

Wisconsin

State Bill Is a Developer’s Dream and a NIMBY’s Nightmare

Amendments to state legislation are a dream come true for tower companies, but will likely infuriate tower opponents. Changes made to Assembly Bill 348 will not implement a statewide setback requirement. Instead, it permits local municipalities to implement rules regarding setbacks, says GMToday.com. The Assembly-passed bill dictates, “In addition, the setback requirement must be based on the height of the proposed structure, and the requirement may not exceed the height of the proposed structure.” When state lawmakers return from summer recess, the bill will need approval from the state Senate before it can be signed into law.

According to state Rep. Jim Ott, the bill will not only apply to residential-zoned properties, but also land designated for commercial use adjacent to residential locations. Ott originated many of the ideas in the measure, even though it was introduced by Rep. Mike Kuglitsch. Ott said municipalities will be able to pass ordinances restricting setbacks, as long as they adhere to the state law. In 2013, a provision of the state budget lifted many of the restrictions local
FCC Updates RF Device Authorization Rules
Manufacturers of RF devices like cell phones or TV receivers that are imported, marketed or operated within the U.S., will cheer after the FCC Thursday voted to modernize authorization requirements. Specifically, the change will allow labeling information to be provided to the consumer via electronic displays.

This means those who make devices with such displays no longer need to stamp or label the case of every single device for FCC certification. The change is expected to save manufacturers “a measurable reduction in costs,” according to the agency. Makers of devices without digital displays would still need to etch or affix a permanent label on each product.

The Commission also eliminated the requirement to file with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) the FCC Form 740 – the FCC’s unique import declaration for RF devices brought into the United States. A spike in imports has made this filing requirement “unwieldy” for the FCC; the CBP’s updated database and increasing availability of product information on the internet have reduced the need for the form.

The Commission is also combining two separate self-approval procedures into one, which will help reduce confusion as to which process applies to any given product. The new process, called the Suppliers Declaration of Conformity, will enable manufacturers to more efficiently bring products to market yet also ensure compliance with the equipment authorization program.

FirstNet Progress Under Senate Microscope
U.S. Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS), chairman of the Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet, will convene a hearing titled “An Update on FirstNet” next Thursday, July 20. The subcommittee will examine FirstNet and AT&T’s progress to date and the anticipated timeline to build, operate, and maintain an interoperable nationwide public safety broadband network. Witnesses for the 10 a.m. hearing include: FirstNet CEO Michael Poth, AT&T SVP Chris Sambar, GAO Physical Issues Director Mark Goldstein, University of Mississippi Medical Center Assistant Professor Dr. Damon Darsey and Virginia Deputy Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Curtis Brown.

Maryland
Ocean City Keeps Kicking Sand in Crown’s Boardwalk Plan
UPDATE Inside Towers reported in May about how Ocean City officials recently changed course and approved a revised proposal by Crown Castle to install up to 12 new towers along the boardwalk. The south end of the resort can benefit from expanded service from carriers like Verizon and Sprint, especially during the busy summer season.

After the initial proposal was rejected this April because of aesthetic concerns, Crown
Castle was asked to go back to the drawing board. Working with City Engineer Terry McGean and City Manager Doug Miller, the revised proposal includes camouflaging antennas mounted on existing infrastructure on the boardwalk such as sign posts and light fixtures. Additionally, Crown Castle is adding security cameras and increased lighting (and picking up the expense), reported The Dispatch. Continue Reading

Massachusetts

Tower Opponents Threaten to Derail WiFi Upgrade for Trains

UPDATE A commuter railway wants to improve its WiFi service for daily travelers, but municipalities and property owners are trying to keep the project from ever leaving the station. The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) wants to install more than 300 monopole towers within its rights-of-way from Salem to Boston, says the Andover Townsman. Unfortunately, track neighbors say the 70-foot monopoles will ruin the historic nature of the communities the railway crosses. Discontent reached a high point in an earlier meeting on June 12, when one Andover resident threatened to tie herself to the tracks if a tower was constructed in her neighborhood.

Instead of fighting the upgrade, State Rep. Brad Hill, R-Ipswich, asked for cooperation. He told the MBTA, “We know that this project is going to move forward, but we need to work together on this issue.” MBTA originally signed a 22-year lease with inMotion Wireless in 2014, to upgrade and maintain the new WiFi network. MBTA has obtained the federal and state permits necessary for the project, which is expected to be completed by 2018, even following local opposition.

FCC Tries to Fix Unreliable Rural Calls

“Maybe a long-distance call will connect and maybe it won’t,” said FCC Chairman Ajit Pai during yesterday’s meeting as he and his fellow commissioners passed a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking a fix to ongoing call problems in rural America. The Commission asks for public input on rules to hold phone companies that hand off those calls to intermediate providers more accountable for ensuring those calls go through ensuring those calls go
through by monitoring their performance. The changes would update the FCC's current call completion data collection and reporting rules.

FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn stressed that “all of our talk about building out networks would be for naught if those services are unreliable.” While an FCC 2013 order addressed the basics, “we did not know how big the problem really was.” Continue Reading

**Illinois**

**Peoria Area Broadcast Tower Sold to InSite Wireless**

A Peoria area broadcast tower, owned by Michael S. Rea, has been sold to InSite Wireless Group, LLC, a Delaware limited liability company. The sale has closed.

The tower complex located on Sand Hill Road in Spring Bay, IL, consists of a 300’ guyed and lit tower built in 2011 (ASR #1232743), a 10’ satellite receiving dish, and a transmitter building situated on land in the city of Metamora, IL. Terms of the sale were undisclosed.

The current tenants on the tower include WPMJ(FM) and the Woodford County Sheriff.

Bob Heymann of the Chicago office of Media Services Group was the exclusive broker representing the seller.

*Editor's note: The publishers of Inside Towers have an ownership interest in Media Services Group.*

**NetComm Wireless Bridges Digital Divide With LTE Fixed Wireless Service**

NetComm Wireless Limited announced an initiative, with an unnamed telecom holding company, to supply the outdoor wireless antennas needed to bring fixed wireless internet connectivity to certain rural and underserved areas in Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, North and South Carolina, Tennessee and Louisiana. NetComm Wireless’ outdoor wireless antennas will create a direct line of sight connection between the customer's residence and the network tower to deliver internet download speeds of at least 10 mbps.

The new LTE fixed wireless service aims to serve 400,000 locations in 18 states by the end of 2017, with the potential to increase to 1.1 million by 2020, as part of the FCC Connect America Fund commitment. "In low population rural and underserved locations, fixed wireless is proven to offer the most effective solution and we are pleased to enable a large-scale rollout that will allow homes and businesses to achieve reliable access to essential online government, education and health services," said NetComm Wireless EVP North America Jim Berridge.
Montana

Sixty-Year-Old Towers Continue to Stir Controversy

Two, 325 foot radio transmission towers have been stirring controversy since their construction in 1954…and the saga continues. The towers, used by KGEZ(AM) – the second oldest station in Montana, were originally built on the outskirts of town along U.S. 93 south, two miles from the nearest airport.

Because of their height, the towers violated FAA standards. So, for over 60 years, these towers have posed a challenge, which is now coming to an end as KGEZ moves its headquarters to downtown Kalispell, with the towers in tow, reported the Flathead Dispatch.
Residents near the new location are voicing their concerns. One resident filed an appeal with the county stating, “the towers would negatively impact the surrounding properties and violate zoning standards.”

B+T Group Adds National Account Director and VP of Sales

B+T Group Inc. announced this week that Grant Cooper has joined the company as National Account Director. The Tulsa, OK based company provides services to major telecommunications carriers, tower owners and asset managers along with turnkey engineering, construction services and project management.

Cooper joins B+T Group from General Dynamics where he served as Senior Business Development Manager. Prior to General Dynamics, Cooper, spent 11 years driving new business at SPX Corporation – Flash Technology Division.

Patrick Lien has joined the company as vice president of sales and business development. Lien is a results-driven telecommunications and technology executive with 20+ years of experience in the industry, most recently serving as director of strategic national accounts in the telecom division at Black & Veatch in Orlando, FL.

Tower-Pro.com, Inside Towers’ companion Buyer’s Guide has over 3,500 listings in 130+ categories. Each month we will be featuring one of our primary categories. Each month we will be featuring one of our primary categories. This month, we’re highlighting Safety Training.

Should your company be in one of these categories?
See if you’re listed and if you only have a basic listing, find out why you should upgrade here.
We will be randomly highlighting our enhanced listings in Inside Towers for added exposure. Email us with questions or for assistance.

Latest posting from the FCC 7/13/17

GOOD DESIGN MATTERS...
Small Cell Infrastructure CAN be beautiful.
Distinctive outer design combined with complex engineering - made simple.

Diamond Communications - Project Manager - Operations

Diamond Communications LLC is looking for a self-motivated individual with strong analytical and organizational skills to serve as a project manager to assist with the installation of wireless carrier equipment on Diamond owned and/or managed structures. The successful candidate will provide support to the company’s sales and operations groups in our Short Hills, New Jersey headquarters and in the field. Click here for more information

Controller/CFO Job Opportunity

A well-established full service turnkey wireless telecommunications company is seeking a controller/CFO. A minimum of 4 years construction experience is preferred. Click here for more information.
Flag Pole tower in St. Louis contributed by Justin Cleveland.

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