



May 31, 2024



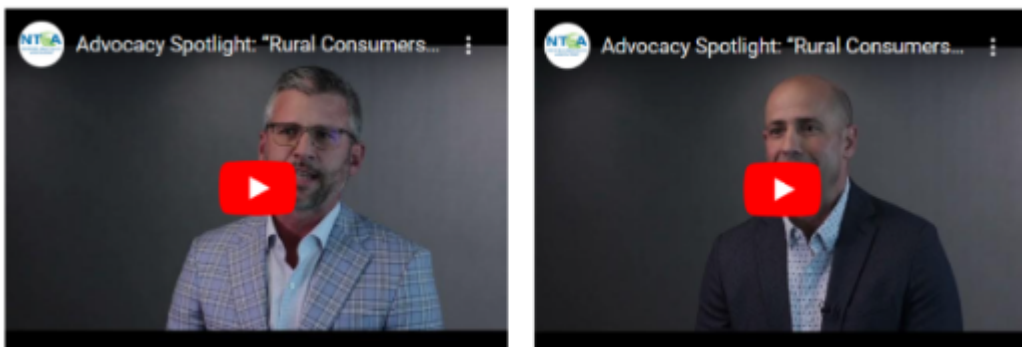
Leading the Conversation: For the fourth year in a row, NTCA CEO Shirley Bloomfield has been named one of the **500 most influential people in Washington, D.C.**, by *Washingtonian*. Join us in congratulating her.

NTCA Urges Enhancements to FCC Mapping, Broadband Data Collection Processes

In a meeting with staff to FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel, NTCA **highlighted several issues** for the commission to consider as part of its **mapping and Broadband Data Collection (BDC) updates**.

Those **recommendations**, which follow the release of the **fourth iteration** of the National Broadband Map, include strengthening reporting verification efforts, enabling greater use of performance and subscription data to inform challenges and otherwise to update several BDC challenge codes, closing loopholes that allow providers to avoid submitting data to back up coverage claims, updating procedures to overcome successful or conceded challenges through reasserted claims of availability, considering changes to reporting standards to reflect proven technological capabilities in lieu of advertising claims and reviewing the use

of BDC data in making better-informed decisions that affect broadband funding and policies.



Advocacy Spotlight: 'Rural Consumers Need and Deserve Better Service'

NTCA members are united in their efforts to achieve and sustain universal service. Last week, **Jennifer Prather**, CEO of Totalcom Communications, LLC. (De Leon, Texas), and **Catherine Moyer**, CEO of Pioneer Communications (Ulysses, Kan.), talked about what universal service means to their companies and communities and **wrote about the importance of a sustainable and predictable USF**.

This week, **Ben Foster**, president and CEO of Twin Valley Communications (Miltonvale, Kan.), and **Stephen Milner**, CEO of Planters Telephone Cooperative (Newington, Ga.), share the need for programs that aim to build networks for today and tomorrow and the importance of **taking a longer view when making policies**.

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FCC Continues Affordable Connectivity Program Wind Down

FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel **sent a letter** to broadband providers who participated in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) thanking them for their efforts and encouraging them to promote the **Lifeline program** to ACP-enrolled customers as the program concludes this month.

Prior to freezing enrollment in February due to a lack of sufficient Congressional funding, the commission said that over 23 million households, or one in six homes nationwide, took part in the program. The commission also **shared a fact sheet** highlighting the amount of ACP support provided to

each state and the number of households enrolled in both the ACP and Lifeline programs.

NTCA continues to advocate for the program and supported [legislation](#) that would fund the ACP through the end of 2024.



Celebrating a Legacy of Connecting and Advancing Communities

This Saturday marks the 70th anniversary of NTCA. Originally known as the National Telephone Cooperative Association, NTCA was incorporated on June 1, 1954, with eight rural telephone systems in seven states becoming its original members.

Today, NTCA represents more than 850 independent, community-based telecommunications companies that are leading innovation in rural and small-town America. NTCA members have evolved beyond “telephone companies” to become one-stop technology service providers, offering everything from video to wireless services, home security, cybersecurity and IT management, data center services and more. Despite enormous challenges, NTCA members have made tremendous strides in deploying high-speed broadband networks to nearly all their rural customers, enabling our nation’s ongoing evolution to broadband-based communications – and we know their work isn’t done yet.

As we celebrate NTCA’s platinum anniversary, it is important to [remember its history](#) as well as [its path forward](#). Thank you for your membership and all you do for rural America.

Join our celebrations all week on [social media](#), and stay tuned for more throughout the year!



Building Smart Communities: On May 1, NTCA hosted “Smart Communities in Conversation,” highlighting locally driven initiatives that are spurring digital adoption, economic development and community engagement and featuring presentations from Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), FCC Commissioner Geoffrey Starks, and representatives of Totalcom (De Leon, Texas), Nex-Tech (Lenora, Kan.), PRTC (Mckee, Ky.) and SRT Communications (Minot, N.D.). [Watch the recap](#) or [stream the full event](#) to learn about key takeaways.



NTCA joined a group of associations in [filing an amicus brief](#) in the appeal of the FCC’s data breach order, arguing that the [burdensome requirements](#) adopted by the commission exceed its legal authority.

The FCC’s Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau will conduct a [voluntary Disaster Information Reporting System \(DIRS\) exercise](#) from June 10-12, 2024, to ensure communications providers can access and file reports in the DIRS system and help familiarize new employees with the DIRS reporting process.

The FCC released a **tentative agenda** for its June 6 meeting, including the consideration of a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on letter of credit requirements for recipients of high-cost Universal Service Fund support authorized through a competitive process.



Operation IFAST – Internet Service Providers Fighting Against Sex Trafficking

NTCA is working with the Guardian Group to encourage providers to join **Operation IFAST**, a three-step program designed to raise awareness, support law enforcement and raise money to combat sex trafficking.

Announcements

JSI (Greenbelt, Md.) announced that Todd Wilson has joined the company as president of its Fiber Design, Implementation and Engineering Division.

UPCOMING WEBINARS

Keeping you **connected** to the latest information for broadband providers.



Policy Talk: Mapping, Universal Service and BEAD Implementation



**Sponsored by NRTC
Thursday, June 13 | 1 p.m. ET**

Join NTCA CEO Shirley Bloomfield and Executive Vice President Mike Romano for a discussion about the association's ongoing advocacy efforts to correct data in the FCC's National Broadband Map, protect and sustain the Universal Service Fund and improve implementation plans for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program.

[REGISTER](#)

Smart Rural Communities: Continuing the Conversation Tuesday, June 18 | 2 p.m. ET

Following a successful Smart Communities in Conversation event in Washington, D.C., join NTCA's Smart Communities program for an interactive webinar to continue the conversation. Hear updates on the latest program resources and how to use Smart Rural Community branding and share examples of initiatives you have implemented in your own communities.

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