



**SCCTA**

SOUTH CAROLINA CABLE TELEVISION ASSOCIATION

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Prepared by Robinson,  
McFadden & Moore



## IS WIRELESS SERVICE COMPETITIVE WITH LANDLINE SERVICE?

The South Carolina Telephone Coalition (“Coalition”) and its individual member companies filed a petition with the Public Service Commission of South Carolina on August 11, 2015, seeking a determination that carriers who offer retail wireless services in South Carolina are providing telecommunications services that compete with local telecommunications service provided in this State. Should the Commission make a determination that wireless is competitive, then all wireless carriers would be required to contribute to the South Carolina Universal Fund Act (“State USF”). The impact of that decision would be to spread support for the USF over a broader group and greatly reduce the burden on those who are currently paying into the fund. The Office of Regulatory Staff has estimated that the 3.6% USF tax might be reduced to 1.2 to 1.4%.

The Commission initially excluded wireless revenues from the base of contributions for the State USF in 2001. The Commission found that there had not been sufficient evidence presented during the proceeding that any wireless provider was competing with a local exchange carrier. However, the Commission ruled that wireless carriers who sought carrier of last resort or “eligible telecommunications carrier” (“ETC”) designation in South Carolina would be deemed as competing and required to contribute to the State USF. Numerous wireless ETC carriers in South Carolina currently contribute to the State USF. In 2006, the S.C. Office of Regulatory Staff asked the Commission to clarify whether under current Commission orders, broadband and wireless services revenues should be included. The Commission noted that while it had authority to include wireless and broadband revenue, the Commission had not yet determined that either should be included in the State USF assessment.

Numerous incumbent local exchange carriers and their CLEC affiliates have intervened including Frontier, AT&T South Carolina (ILEC), Windstream, FTC Wireless and CenturyLink. The South Carolina Cable Television Association also intervened in support of the Coalition’s request. FTC Wireless supports the Coalition petition noting that the disparate treatment between it and other wireless carriers puts the company at a competitive disadvantage. Competitive Carriers of the South, Inc., a CLEC organization, submitted a letter in support of the Coalition petition, but did not intervene.

The CTIA-The Wireless Association also intervened. Its members include AT&T Wireless, Sprint, T-Mobile, and Verizon Wireless among others. AT&T filed a statement indicating that it was not participating in the proceeding directly or through its membership in CTIA. Several individuals have filed comments opposing any new “tax” on wireless carriers. (continued on page 5.....)

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## From the Executive Director...Autumn Greetings!



I thank each of you for your contributions regarding the successful association and foundation board meetings held at our annual SCCTA Board Retreat. Mark your 2016 calendars next year as we return to Wild Dunes from July 27 - 30 to celebrate our great team and take care of the business of your SCCTA. Congratulations to the newly elected 2015/16 SCCTA Board of Director Officers: Dan Jones—Chairman, Brian Gregory—Vice Chairman, Ben Breazeale—Secretary and Jim Corrin—Treasurer. Outgoing Board Chairman Tim Gage was honored at the annual meeting with a plaque in appreciation for his dedicated service as the 2014/2015 SCCTA Board chairman. I sincerely appreciate each of you for your input at these meetings as we prepare for another rewarding year to promote and protect the SC Cable industry.

The second session of the 121st General Assembly (GA) of South Carolina will commence Tuesday, January 12. Hundreds of bills were filed late 2014 and throughout 2015 and the SCCTA is already focusing on and monitoring over 200 pieces of legislation that either directly or indirectly affects the cable industry. While none is causing major concern, most of the legislation we monitor continues to address a plethora of telecommunications issues, ethics reforms and items related to lobbyists.

Our focus continues to be S277, which the SCCTA, AT&T and the rural telephone coalition are currently working with the Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) regarding a refiled bill that addresses telephone relay service for the deaf. Of most interest to us is part two of this bill which will hopefully resolve decades of cable concerns over the Universal Service Fund. The bill passed the Senate and is now in the House of Representatives to first be heard in the House Labor, Commerce & Energy Committee. Currently, the SCCTA is participating in a procedure before the SC Public Service Commission that could require wireless carriers to support the USF, which would greatly reduce the amount paid into the USF by the cable industry.

Late this fall and into January, I will attend a number of pre-session meetings which will outline the legislative focus for 2016. At this point, the SC General Assembly is expected to address the following issues next year:

***Ethics:*** Continuous legislative scandals in recent years have pushed ethics reform to the forefront in South Carolina. In 2015, the SC House passed ethics reform but it failed in the Senate last session. Expect compromise in both bodies this year as more ethics issues occur, pushing ethics reform to the forefront. SC Governor Nikki Haley has made ethics reform one of her administration's most important signature issues.

***Infrastructure:*** Billions of dollars are needed to repair SC's crumbling roads and bridges but last session's dedication of funds is considered inadequate for this growing issue. While gas tax increases and toll roads are discussed, don't expect the GOP controlled legislature to approve any major tax increases. However, with the recent collapse of dozens of roads and bridges during the October 2015 historic SC rainfall, expect infrastructure upgrades to be a priority issue for both the Senate and House.

***Appropriations Bill:*** The appropriations bill will continue to take up an exorbitant amount of legislative time particularly with the Board of Economic Advisors expected surpluses available in FY 2015/16. Education and Health care funding will be a funding priority as usual.

***Education Lawsuit:*** SC's suit dates from a 1993 lawsuit when roughly half of the state's school districts sued the state saying the Legislature had failed to adequately fund the state's poor, rural school districts. The S.C. Supreme Court last November sided with the schools and put the onus on the Legislature to find solutions but suggested no firm details on how to make that happen. Since the ruling, various lawmakers, Gov. Nikki Haley and other groups have offered ideas to bring poorer districts up to standard. House Speaker Jay Lucas has also convened a task force to study the issue and report back to the Legislature in 2016. However, the state supreme court has issued a February 2016 deadline, which gives the legislature very little time to pass a plan.

Thanksgiving is next month and as we consider our blessings, I am quite thankful for your many contributions to this association as we continue to promote and protect our industry.

*Ray Sharpe*

## Member News...



### Comcast Internet Essentials service continues to improve

Recently, Comcast doubled the download speed of its Internet Essentials broadband service for low-income families and began providing Wi-Fi service, including a Wi-Fi router, at no additional cost to program participants.

Now entering its fifth year, Internet Essentials is the nation's largest and most comprehensive high-speed Internet adoption program and has connected more than 2,000 South Carolina families. It provides low-cost, high-speed Internet service; the option to purchase an Internet-ready computer at a steep discount; and multiple options for free digital literacy training.

The program was created to provide easier access to the Internet and close the technology gap known as the Digital Divide that separates communities into information haves- and have-nots based on socio-economic conditions. Internet Essentials has been available in South Carolina and across Comcast's entire service area since 2011.

"The Digital Divide isn't confined to certain buildings or neighborhoods in South Carolina or in any other city or town," said Comcast Regional Senior Vice President Doug Guthrie. "From day one, our goal has been to make Internet Essentials available wherever inequality exists, and to keep enhancing and expanding the program to serve the broadest number of families possible across entire communities, wherever they might be located."

"We have made significant progress against closing the digital divide for low-income parents and children across the country," Guthrie added. "In less than four years, Internet Essentials has connected more than 500,000 families, or more than 2 million low-income Americans, to the power of the Internet at home. And we're committed to doing much more."

Since the program's inception, Comcast has made 25 key enhancements to Internet Essentials, and this is the third time in four years Comcast has increased speeds for customers. The recent speed enhancement doubled speeds to up to 10 Mbps downstream, which is enough to power multiple devices simultaneously. In addition, by offering Wi-Fi routers, customers will be able to connect any Internet-enabled device, including tablets and smartphones, which could help save money on monthly wireless bills.

For additional information about Internet Essentials, visit [www.internetessentials.com](http://www.internetessentials.com).

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### Trident Urban League receives Comcast grant

As part of its ongoing community service and outreach efforts, Comcast recently awarded a grant in the amount of \$15,000 to the Charleston Trident Urban League. Made available through the Comcast Foundation, the grant will support the organization's Digital Learning Center which will help youth and young adults understand the importance of technology and its ability to increase access to education and employment opportunities.

The mission of the Charleston Trident Urban League is to promote diversity and racial inclusion and provide multifaceted programs that assist African Americans and all other underserved groups to achieve social equality and economic self-sufficiency. The Digital Learning Center goes to the heart of the hope and opportunity the Charleston Trident Urban League provides to the community. The program will include educating participants on the use of the Internet, various software applications and hardware, as well as financial literacy.

## Member News continued...



### DSS Receives Donations from Charter Communications and their employees

The South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS) Spartanburg County received generous donations from Charter Communications (NASDAQ: CHTR) and the company's employees that will benefit foster kids in the area. Foster children are often moved in emergency circumstances by law enforcement or a judge and received by SCDSS at any hour. While transitioning, the children may not have any luggage or duffel bags for their belongings to make the move to a foster home or to a family member's home. The children may also have very few belongings with them and sometimes those belongings are dirty.

Charter's Simpsonville Call Center employees conducted a "Collect and Fill 50" drive, as part of the company's "Charter Our Community" initiative. "We know the importance of home and believe it is critical to enhance safe and healthy homes within the communities in which we live and work," said Patti Michel, Director of Communications for Charter. "Children in the foster system may be in an unsafe and unhealthy situation and Charter Communications, along with our employees wants that to change."

Through "Charter our Community," employees set a goal to collect at least 50 pieces of luggage/duffel bags and fill them with needed safe and healthy items. More than 1700 items, including nearly 150 pieces of luggage, were collected. The items were then matched dollar for dollar with additional items from Charter. Luggage, basic hygiene packs, towels and other healthy necessities will be provided to foster children of all ages to take to their new foster home. Other donated health and safety items, such as smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, safety ladders, booster seats and humidifiers, will be used for foster homes in need.

Charter Communications also purchased a sanitizing washer and dryer for the Spartanburg DSS office to help foster care caseworkers immediately clean any items that are dirty and contaminated through a variety of causes. Detergent and bleach were donated as well.

DSS Spartanburg County Director Angela Talley Robinson was touched by Charter employees' generosity and the company's choosing to recognize children in need they will never meet. "Our kids are often forgotten by the public because they are unseen." said Robinson. "But clean clothes, luggage and basic necessities they can call their own are so very important in time of crisis." In Spartanburg County, South Carolina alone, approximately more than 380 children are in foster care.

## Member News continued...



### Time Warner Cable Partners With The American Red Cross To Aid Flooding Victims In South Carolina

**COLUMBIA, S.C. (October 12, 2015)** - Time Warner Cable announced today a donation of \$50,000 in cash and \$250,000 in local media to support the American Red Cross recovery efforts following historic flooding in South Carolina. Communities served by Time Warner Cable in the Columbia, Florence and Grand Strand areas were among the hardest hit by the recent storm. The donation will assist local families requiring food, water, shelter and other critical services.

"The American Red Cross is on the front line of this recovery, and Time Warner Cable — with our 2,000-plus employees throughout South Carolina — stands with The Red Cross in helping our customers and neighbors," said Doug Davis, area vice president of operations of Time Warner Cable in South Carolina.

"The magnitude of the devastation spanning the state of South Carolina is something that we have never experienced before," said Louise Welch Williams, chief executive officer, Red Cross of the Palmetto South Carolina Region. "Volunteers, staff and partners are all working around the clock to ensure that every family in South Carolina has a warm, dry place to sleep." PSAs have begun airing across Time Warner Cable channels to further assist local fundraising efforts for The American Red Cross. The PSAs ask individuals interested in providing assistance to call 1-800-RED CROSS, visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or text "REDCROSS" to 90999 to make a \$10 donation.

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## Is Wireless Competitive?.....(continued from page 1)

Frontier, FTC, CenturyLink and Windstream filed testimony in support of the Coalition's position. CTIA filed testimony of a consultant who specializes in public policy issues in the communications industry. He testifies that if the relief is granted, wireless carriers and their customers' fees would increase discouraging buildout by wireless carriers. He also opines that the Coalition witnesses do not address the statutory criteria. The S.C. Office of Regulatory Staff's witness Christopher Rozycki's testimony indicates that wireless service is readily available throughout South Carolina citing the FCC's Wireless Competition Report and the National Center for Health Statistics Report on Wireless Substitution.

CTIA filed a motion to dismiss the petition or alternatively to expand the scope of the proceeding to evaluate appropriate reductions in the size of the SC USF. CTIA also requested that the Commission suspend the case schedule pending resolution of the motion. The Commission denied the requests to expand the scope of the hearing and to delay the hearing scheduled for November 3, 2015. The Commission will allow oral arguments on the legal issues raised in the motion to dismiss at the hearing.

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## SOUTH CAROLINA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The first regular legislative session adjourned on July 10 and will reconvene in early January. Gov. Haley has until January 14th to act on ratified legislation or it will become law without her signature. Legislative committees will continue to meet during the fall.

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## FCC BRIEFS

The following documents can be downloaded from the FCC's website at <http://www.fcc.gov>

On July 17, 2015, the FCC's Enforcement Bureau reached a \$17.5 million settlement with T-Mobile resolving an investigation into two 911 service outages that occurred on the national network last year.

On August 6, 2015, the FCC took steps to encourage the on-going transition to next-generation communications networks. The Report and Order requires providers to directly notify consumers of plans to retire copper networks at least 3 months in advance. It increases the notice period for non-residential retail customers and interconnecting carriers from 3 to at least 6 months.

The FCC authorized 10 carriers to receive nearly \$9 billion in support over 6 years for rural broadband deployment from the Connect America Fund. Windstream accepted \$175 million--\$935,383 annually for SC; CenturyLink accepted \$506 million--\$2.9 million annually for SC; and AT&T accepted \$428 million--\$9.7 million annually for SC.



## STATE-ISSUED CERTIFICATES OF FRANCHISE AUTHORITY

As of October 20, 2015, the South Carolina Secretary of State has issued the following certificates of franchise authority. There have been no changes since our last newsletter.

ATLANTIC BROADBAND.....	Aiken, Aiken County, Allendale, Allendale County, Bamberg, Bamberg County, Barnwell, Barnwell County, Blackville, Burnetown, Denmark, Elko, Fairfax, Jackson, New Ellenton, Orangeburg County, Perry, Salley, Snelling, Springfield, Wagner, Williston
BALDWIN COUNTY INTERNET/ DSSI SERVICE, LLC	Beaufort County, Charleston County, Greenville, Greenville County
BELLSOUTH TELECOMMUNICATIONS, INC. d/b/a AT&T SOUTH CAROLINA	Aiken, Anderson, Anderson County, Arcadia Lakes, Bamberg County, Belton, Berkeley County, Blythewood, Burnetown, Calhoun County, Camden, Cayce, Central, Chapin, Charleston, Charleston County, Cheraw, Cherokee County, Chesterfield County, Clemson, Clover, Colleton County, Columbia, Cordova, Dorchester County, Duncan, Easley, Edgefield County, Edisto Beach, Elgin, Fairfield County, Folly Beach, Forest Acres, Fountain Inn, Gaffney, Gaston, Goose Creek, Greenville, Greenville County, Greer, Hanahan, Hollywood, Irmo, Isle of Palms, James Island, Kiawah Island, Kershaw County, Laurens County, Lexington County, Liberty, Lincolnville, Little Mountain, Lyman, Marlboro County, Mauldin, McConnells, Mount Pleasant, Newberry, Newberry County, North Augusta, North Charleston, Oconee County, Orangeburg, Orangeburg County, Pelzer (incumbent portions), Pickens, Pickens County, Pine Ridge, Ravenel, Reidville, Richland County, Rockville, Seabrook Island, Seneca, Six Mile, South Congaree, Spartanburg, Spartanburg County, Springdale, Sullivan's Island, Summerville, Travelers Rest, Union, Union County, Walhalla, West Columbia, West Pelzer, Westminster, Williamston, York, York County
BERKELEY CABLE TV, INC.....	Berkeley County, Bonneau, Charleston, Goose Creek, Harleyville, Jamestown, Moncks Corner, North Charleston, St. Stephens, Summerville
BROADBAND EXPERIENCE d/b/a FAMILY VIEW CABLEVISION ...	Central, Clemson, Pickens County
CAMDEN CORPORATE INVESTMENTS LLC, d/b/a TRUVISTA.....	City of Camden
CAROLINA TELECOM SERVICES.....	Hickory Grove, Sharon, York
CATAWBA SERVICES, LLC .....	Rock Hill
CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS, LLC.....	Abbeville, Anderson County, Belton, Campobello, Central Pacolet, Cherokee County, Chesnee, Clinton, Cowpens, Duncan, Easley, Gray Court, Greer, Greenville, Greenville County, Honea Path, Inman, Iva, Jonesville, Landrum, Laurens, Laurens County, Lockhart, Mauldin, Newberry County, Oconee County, Pelzer, Pickens County, Reidville, Salem, Simpsonville, Six Mile, Spartanburg, Spartanburg County, Starr, Travelers Rest, Union, Union County, Wellford, West Pelzer, Whitmire, Williamston, Woodruff
CHESNEE COMMUNICATIONS.....	Cherokee County, Chesnee, Spartanburg County
CHESTER COMMUNICATIONS, LLC d/b/a TRUVISTA.....	Chester, Richburg
COMCAST CABLE COMMUNICATIONS MANAGEMENT, LLC .....	Brunson, Colleton County, Folly Beach, Hampton, Jasper County, Kiawah Island, North Charleston, Ravenel, Rockville, Walterboro, Yemassee
COMCAST OF CAROLINA.....	Berkeley County, Charleston, Dorchester County, Edisto Beach, Goose Creek, Hampton County, Hanahan, Isle of Palms, James Island, Mount Pleasant, Sullivan's Island, Summerville
COMCAST OF GEORGIA/SC II.....	Beaufort County, Charleston, Edisto Beach, Hampton County, Hollywood, Meggett, Mount Pleasant, Town of Seabrook Island
COMCAST OF GEORGIA/SC INC.....	Aiken County, Burnetown, Hampton County, North Augusta
COMCAST OF THE SOUTH.....	Calhoun Falls, Prosperity
ELK COMMUNICATIONS, LLC.....	Gaston, Lexington County, Swansea
FAIRVIEW COMMUNICATIONS d/b/a TRUVISTA.....	Blythewood, Richland County, Ridgeway, Winnsboro

**State-Issued Certificates of Franchise Authority *continued*...**

FARMERS TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE	Andrews, Clarendon County, Coward, Florence County, Georgetown County, Greeleyville, Lane, Lee County, Lynchburg, Mayesville, Paxville, Pinewood, Scranton, Sumter, Sumter County, Turbeville, Williamsburg County
FTC DIVERSIFIED SERVICES, LLC	Bishopville, Clarendon County, Florence County, Georgetown County, Hemingway, Kingstree, Lake City, Lee County, Manning, Olanta, Summerton, Sumter, Sumter County, Williamsburg County
GREAT FALLS CABLEVISION, INC. d/b/a TRUVISTA	Town of Great Falls
HARGRAY CATV CO., INC.	Bluffton, Estill, Hampton, Hardeeville, Hilton Head Island, Jasper County, Ridgeland
HARGRAY, INC.	Beaufort, Beaufort County, Port Royal
HORRY TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE	Conway, Horry County, Georgetown County, Surfside Beach
HPI ACQUISITION CO., LLC	Anderson, Anderson County, Donalds, Due West
KNOLOGY OF CHARLESTON, INC.	City of Charleston, Charleston County, Dorchester County, Hanahan, James Island, Lincolnville, Mount Pleasant, North Augusta, North Charleston, Summerville
MANAGED SERVICES INC.	Berkeley County, Horry County, Jasper County, Richland County
NORTHLAND CABLE TELEVISION	Abbeville County, Central, Clemson, Edgefield, Greenwood, Greenwood County, Hodges, Johnston, Laurens County, Ninety Six, Norris, Oconee County, Pendleton, Pickens, Pickens County, Saluda, Saluda County, Seneca, Six Mile, Walhalla, Ware Shoals, West Union, Westminster
PALMETTO CABLE TV, LLC	Fort Mill, Lancaster County, Tega Cay
PALMETTO RURAL TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE, INC.	Bamberg County, Colleton County, Cottageville, Lodge, Smoaks, Walterboro, Williams
PASSPORT COMMUNICATIONS	Fort Mill
PINE TREE CABLEVISION	Aiken County, Bamberg County, Barnwell County, Bethune, Cottageville, Gaston, Jefferson, Kershaw County, Lamar, McBee, Orangeburg County, Perry, Salley, Wagener
PBT COMMUNICATIONS	Gilbert, Lexington, Lexington County, Monetta, Pelion, Ridge Springs, Saluda County, Summit, Wagener
RST COMMUNICATIONS, INC.	Gaffney
SANDHILL TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE	Bethune, Chesterfield County, Jefferson, Kershaw County, McBee, Mount Croghan, Pageland, Patrick
SANDHILL ConNEXTions, LLC	McColl, Marlboro County
SOUTHERN COASTAL CABLE, LLC	Georgetown, Georgetown County
SOUTHERN CABLE COMMUNICATIONS	Georgetown, Georgetown County
TECHCORE CONSULTANTS II	Bowman, Dorchester County, Earhardt, Eutawville, Holly Hill, Orangeburg County
TIME WARNER CABLE, SOUTHEAST, LLC	Andrews, Batesburg-Leesville, Beaufort County, Bishopville, Bluffton, Calhoun County, Cayce, Charleston County, Cheraw Clover, Chesterfield County, Columbia, Conway, Cordova, Darlington County, Dillon, Dillon County, Eastover, Elgin, Florence, Florence County, Forest Acres, Fort Mill-rescinded, Georgetown, Georgetown County, Goose Creek, Hardeeville, Hemingway, Hilton Head, Horry County, Irmo, Jasper County, Kingstree, Lakeview, Lane, Latta, Lee County, Lexington, Lexington County, Manning, Marion County, McBee, Moncks Corner, Myrtle Beach, Nichols, North Myrtle Beach, Orangeburg, Orangeburg County, Pamplico, Paxville, Pawleys Island, Pine Ridge, Quinby, Richland County, Saluda County, South Congaree, Springdale, St. Matthews, Surfside Beach, Summerville, Sumter, Sumter County, Timmonsville, West Columbia, Williamsburg County, York County
VIDEO VISION, INC.	Fort Lawn, Heath Springs, Kershaw, Lancaster, Lancaster County
YRT2, INC.	Berkeley County, Columbia, Dorchester County, Greenville, Greenville County, Horry County, Myrtle Beach, Summerville