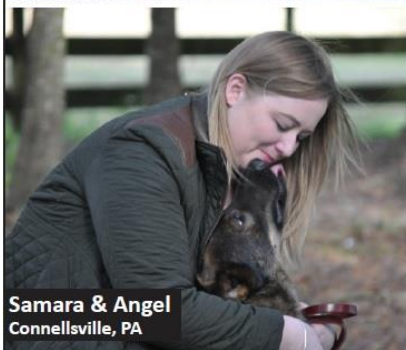




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Bloomberg

Atlantic Broadband, the nation's eighth-largest cable operator, today announced that it has launched Hosted Voice 2.0, which is now available to new and existing customers across the eleven states it serves. The new offering builds upon existing Hosted Voice product offerings with a new Manager Portal web interface that provides businesses and their employees seamless access to calls, voicemails and chat.

Through the Manager Portal, a Call Center feature will add a new level of business visibility into call center activity and training effectiveness. Hosted Voice 2.0 also features new software with an improved design to ensure employees can access their important contacts, calls and voicemails anywhere, anytime. This service is ideal for businesses operating in multiple locations, or those with employees who are working remotely. Businesses and their employees can be assured that they can receive and answer phone calls and voicemails, regardless of location.

With visibility into call center statistics, businesses can ensure their customers' calls are effectively managed. New features allow call center managers to dial or "whisper into" conversations, offering sales employees additional training or help when resolving customer requests. Call recording features allow managers and employees to review performance or refer back to caller requests, ensuring that customers receive the best possible service. "Hosted Voice 2.0 builds on the advanced services and features currently available to make the business user experience more seamless and user-friendly," said John Romagnoli, Senior Director of Commercial Products, Atlantic Broadband. "The new platform is accessed from an internet browser, meaning employees

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can login from any approved device to make and receive calls or communicate with colleagues.

Remote employees have access to their desk phones from home or on-the-go so they can provide high levels of customer service, regardless of location."

The Hosted Voice 2.0 platform was built with additional server redundancy backup to help ensure uptime. Mobile and web applications can be accessed by employees using their unique username and password via any computer, iPhone or Android device. Push notifications alert users of new calls and voicemails.

The benefits of Hosted Voice 2.0 include:

- Unified Communications – A new unified communications account will be available to each employee through a Manager Portal, a web interface available anywhere and on any device via a web browser that enables users to access and control account and settings.
- Call Center – Through the Call Center, supervisors have a new level of visibility into active calls, calls in queue, agent status and training, call recording and history. Business leaders have the option of receiving automated reports on time parameters, call queue stats and agent availability. Through this tool, businesses have control, access and management of their calling assets in one place, at a fraction of the cost of alternate solutions, allowing them to make informed decisions regarding customer support, employee staffing and training.
- Mobility – Convenient access for business users on the go, with seamless call transfer between mobile app, desk phone and laptop; access to internal chat and company contacts.
- Calls from Anywhere – Through the Manager Portal, business users can make and receive calls while on-the-go from their desk phone, mobile phone, laptop or other devices. Phone calls made through the Portal will appear as the user's work phone number. Features like an Attendant Console, Dynamic Call Parking and Call Queues improve the user experience for both business users and customers.
- Never Miss a Voicemail – Received voicemails are clearly displayed, along with caller ID names. Voicemails can be forwarded to other extensions within the organization, downloaded, saved and deleted easily through the Portal.
- Chat Features – Easily communicate with other users in an organization through SMS built into the Portal.
- Control Settings – Users can easily control their organization's settings through the Manager Portal, including contacts and users, department groups, call answering rules, business time frames, music on hold and more. As businesses change, administrators can control their own system seamlessly.

To find out more about Hosted Voice 2.0 and determine if it is right for your business, visit this website and read more in this whitepaper/feature guide. To learn about Atlantic Broadband's internet, phone and TV offerings for businesses, visit atlanticbb.com/business. – **ABB news release**

In a farewell talk with Pittsburgh-area technologists, outgoing Federal Communications Commission Chair Ajit Pai said Tuesday he hoped the federal government's efforts to keep Americans connected during the COVID-19 pandemic continued under the incoming Biden administration.

Mr. Pai — a Republican appointed to the FCC in 2011 by former President Barack Obama — said he believed a shift to tele-health "is going to be most dramatic change, I think, in the next couple of years." "The model of health

care delivery is being inverted, with care being delivered where the patient happens to be, as opposed to where the brick-and-mortar health care facility happens to be,” Mr. Pai said during a Zoom call hosted by the Pittsburgh Technology Council.

Lawmakers in Congress, responding to the pandemic last March, authorized the FCC to create a COVID-19 tele-health grant program. The commission doled out \$200 million to 539 applicants in 47 states, the District of Columbia and Guam. UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh received \$192,500 in the first batch of funding to purchase 400 mobile devices for organ transplant pediatric patients who are immunocompromised and who are at an increased risk for getting COVID-19. “That’s already delivering huge benefits in terms of health outcomes — and also a reduction of anxiety and stress parents might have,” Mr. Pai said.

Mr. Pai, a Kansas native whose wife’s family is from Youngstown, Ohio, has visited the Pittsburgh region numerous times throughout his tenure on the commission, including a visit to a broadband project site in Zelienople. After being elevated by President Donald Trump to chair in 2017, Mr. Pai made headlines for voting with the commission’s Republican majority to repealing the net neutrality rules. The move was one of many that put [Mr. Pai at odds with Rep. Mike Doyle](#), D-Forest Hills, who chairs the congressional panel that oversees issues of telecom policy.

Mr. Doyle and Mr. Pai [clashed during the pandemic](#), too, on whether the FCC should be doing more to encourage remote learning and assisting low-income households with internet connectivity. “Millions of Americans lack [broadband] access, and millions still cannot afford access,” Mr. Doyle said during a May hearing with Mr. Pai. “The shortfalls and inequities of our nation’s broadband networks have been put in stark relief by this crisis. This administration, the FCC and Congress need to do more to close the digital divide.”

But Mr. Pai said Tuesday he wished Congress would have authorized more funding for broadband expansion. He recalled his first major policy speech as chairman — delivered at Carnegie Mellon University in March 2017 — in which he called on Congress to allocate “substantial funding” in the neighborhood of “\$50 billion, \$60 billion, whatever that number is.” “Imagine now, almost four years later, had Congress given us that funding, how much even stronger our broadband networks would be,” Mr. Pai said. “I hope that they will tackle this in a bipartisan way in the future.”

Mr. Pai also said some local governments are standing in the way of faster 5G rollout — a matter of concern to those in the tech council. “Pittsburgh is currently on the small list of cities that are falling behind other parts of the country on deployment of 5G,” Audrey Russo, president and CEO of the tech council. “There are many sticking points, but the issue of permits and fees is currently high on that list. What can the FCC do to help us?”

Mr. Pai said the FCC had been aggressive in promoting 5G rollout, in part by reducing local barriers to development of the [next generation of broadband networks](#). He pointed to FCC actions that capped the costs that municipalities can recover from internet providers and required local officials to make permitting decisions within a “reasonable” timeframe. The commission also drew up a [model code for municipalities](#) interested in advancing 5G networks in a uniform way, he said.

The FCC has “very good partnerships” with cities of all sizes, such as Los Angeles and Sioux Falls, S.D., and “as a result, they’ve seen a dramatic increase in wireless infrastructure they’ve been able to deploy.” He said the 5G infrastructure, composed of cells that tend to be the size of a pizza box, is less conspicuous and more environmentally friendly than many people think. “At the end of the day, I hope we can convince local leaders we’re all on the same page: We want our constituents to get connected,” Mr. Pai said. “Let’s make sure we have a regulatory framework that respects your legitimate prerogatives,” he said, “but doesn’t stand in the way of next-generation

services being delivered in Pittsburgh — when down the road in Zelienople everyone is benefiting from these high-speed networks.”

Asked what's next on his agenda, Mr. Pai said his next pursuit will hopefully “be one that gives me the ability to connect people to the outside world through technology.” – ***Pittsburgh Post-Gazette***

Social-media giants are under attack for censorship, but a few years ago they positioned themselves as champions of free speech. At issue was “net neutrality,” the Obama-era policy that treated internet service providers like Comcast and AT&T as common carriers – akin to the old Ma Bell monopoly – by prohibiting them from discriminating among content providers, including the social-media sites.

“Net neutrality is the idea that the internet should be free and open for everyone,” Facebook CEO [Mark Zuckerberg declared](#) in July 2017 after the Federal Communications Commission’s then-chairman, Ajit Pai, moved to repeal the regulation, which the FCC had adopted two years earlier. Twitter’s public-policy manager, Laura Culbertson, [wrote](#): “Free expression is part of our company DNA. We are the platform that lets users see what’s happening and to see all sides. . . . Without Net Neutrality in force, ISPs would even be able to block content they don’t like, reject apps and content that compete with their own offerings, and arbitrarily discriminate against particular content providers by prioritizing certain Internet traffic over theirs.”

Facebook and Twitter turned out to be more threatening than under threat. Broadband providers haven’t attempted to block content or competitors since the FCC repealed net neutrality. But social media, app stores and cloud providers, which were never subject to the rules, all have engaged in censorship repeatedly in recent weeks. Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat moved in lockstep to shut down Donald Trump’s accounts. Google and Apple banned the social-media app Parler, which promotes itself as a free-speech alternative to Twitter. Amazon Web Services booted Parler from its cloud, banishing it from the web until it could arrange service from another provider.

Appeals by big tech companies to protect an “open and free Internet” were always dubious. They had an interest in supporting net neutrality because it put them at an advantage. Among other things, the rule prohibited broadband providers from charging bandwidth guzzlers like Google’s YouTube, Amazon and Facebook more to upload their content at faster speeds.

Broadband providers also couldn’t “zero rate” content—meaning they were barred from selectively excluding content from their data caps. So AT&T couldn’t offer free unlimited streaming of its own HBO Max service or be paid to do so by Disney+, Hulu or streaming startups. The Obama rules made it harder for telecom carriers that owned content providers to compete with tech giants and finance network expansions. This is one reason [broadband investment](#) declined in 2016.

Mr. Pai’s deregulation encouraged broadband investment, which helps explain why carriers haven’t had to slow speeds amid increased user demand for bandwidth. Mr. Pai also required carriers to make public disclosures of their network-management practices, performance and commercial terms of service and asked the Federal Trade Commission to take action against those that engaged in anticompetitive or unfair and deceptive practices. All this has served consumers well. The nation’s three large wireless providers compete fiercely on price and service. They also face stiff competition from cable companies that offer mobile service and many small prepaid services that don’t require annual contracts.

If AT&T were to slow or block YouTube to promote HBO Max, customers could move to another carrier. [Between 1% and 3%](#) of users switch wireless carriers

each month. Cable companies no longer enjoy a monopoly in fixed broadband, since wireless carriers now offer at-home service too. Satellite upstarts like Elon Musk's Starlink are also getting into the broadband business, thanks in part to other deregulation by Mr. Pai's FCC.

Tech companies, on the other hand, boast far more market power because of so-called network effects. Customers of different phone and internet carriers can call, text and email one another, but social-media platforms aren't interoperable. This makes it harder for startups to compete. Facebook and Twitter have to worry less about losing ground to competitors if they censor or unfairly treat users.

As for Apple and Google, they enjoy an app-store duopoly due to policies locking out competitors. If Google bans an app from its Play Store, users with smartphones that run on its Android operating system—virtually all of them except iPhones—would have to use [technological back doors](#) or buy an iPhone to install the app. Vice versa for Apple. Because of the high costs of switching phones, Apple and Google can essentially block or restrict apps with impunity. If both do, as with Parler, it's finished.

There's more competition in cloud services, but websites face serious technical and financial hurdles in migrating to other providers if they get booted. Cloud providers that selectively shut down websites are unlikely to lose customers to competitors in the near term, though they may draw fewer new ones.

All of which is to say big tech companies today more closely resemble the old telephone monopolies that Congress sought to regulate as common carriers in 1930s than broadband providers do. They have used their market power to suppress speech and competitors, even while pretending to defend an "open and free Internet." They supported a legal challenge to Mr. Pai's deregulation, which the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia mostly dismissed. Democratic states including California and Washington have since imposed their own net-neutrality policies. Which leads to an idea: While Republicans now have little clout in Washington, those in Florida or Texas might consider imposing their own neutrality rules on Big Tech. – **Wall Street Journal**

