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The more wireless broadband service consumers get, the more they want, experts say. A huge increase in demand has led companies to boost capacity by installing distributed antenna system networks, or DAS, to fill service gaps in densely populated areas using public rights of way.

Municipalities across Pennsylvania are moving to regulate the placement of such systems. "They have not approached Marshall yet, but we want to be ready when they do," township Manager Neil McFadden said. Marshall Township (Allegheny Co.) supervisors hired Daniel Cohen of the Cohen Law Group, an O'Hara firm specializing in cable and telecommunications work, to amend the township's cell tower ordinance. If nothing on the books addresses DAS, municipalities may have no say about where companies install antennas, said Cohen, whose firm is drafting DAS-related ordinances for several towns to address placement, design, context and the approval process.

The systems have led to some legal battles. In 2012, Northampton Township in Bucks County, represented by Cohen, sued American Tower Corp. in federal court over the company's installation of DAS on utility poles when residents complained about their appearance. American Tower agreed to move them to major roadways with above-ground poles. Cell service providers or infrastructure companies install DAS, sometimes referred to as "small cells," on streetlights or traffic lights.

Shorter and less powerful than typical cell towers of 90 to 100 feet high, DAS networks attach antennas to several poles 25 to 45 feet high. The poles connect to a central hub by buried fiber-optic cables to provide more coverage and capacity for cellular networks. Crown Castle International Corp. of Houston is the largest wireless infrastructure provider in the United States. The company, with an operations base in Canonsburg, has 13,000 small-cell nodes and 40,000 traditional cell towers nationwide. Carriers such as Verizon and AT&T pay for access to Crown Castle's infrastructure, and the company seeks approval from municipalities to expand it, said Robert Ritter, government relations counsel. "We are investing a very significant amount of our capital in these communities to build our network that we intend to operate for decades," he said.

Crown Castle has two small-cell node systems in Allegheny County: 13 nodes cover portions of Fox Chapel and O'Hara, and five are on light poles on Mt. Washington's Grandview Avenue. The company is developing 34 node locations in Butler County, Ritter said. Some sections of Mt. Washington are known for

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Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

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Today (Monday, October 6) is the deadline for Pennsylvanians to register to vote in the November 4 election. Individuals wishing to register for the first time or to change their address or political party need to complete applications that must be postmarked or delivered to the applicant's county board of elections by the close of business Monday. Applications can be downloaded from the [Pennsylvania State Department's website](#) or obtained at places that include county voter registration offices, the state departments of Public Welfare and Health, PennDOT photo and license centers, armed forces recruitment centers and area agencies on aging.

spotty cell service, said James Eash, director of economic development for Mt. Washington Community Development Corp. Cranberry has 11 traditional telecommunication towers or antennas but no DAS. Township supervisors last week unanimously approved allowing DAS. Manager Jerry Andree said officials just want them "in a location that is consistent with our community's character."

Cohen's firm is reviewing ordinances or drafting DAS-related ordinances for 12 of the North Hills Council of Governments' 19 member municipalities, said Wayne Roller, executive director of the council. Wilkins will need to revise its ordinance, township Manager Rebecca Bradley said, because cell companies eventually will seek locations there. "We have areas in the township where cell calls are dropped routinely because of poor service areas," she said. — *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

Google Inc. had said it would wire all of Kansas City and a handful of suburbs by year's end. Now it's telling prospective customers across town that the work may not wrap up until next summer.

Once Google Fiber finally blankets the market, few places in the world will have broadband so speedy for home users at such a low cost. Yet Kansas City's coming-soon great bandwidth edge looks slightly less impressive as Internet service elsewhere continues to move at ever increasing speeds. "We're seeing faster speeds everywhere," said David Belson, who authors the State of the Internet Report for Akamai. "Part of that is that the technology is improving to get better speeds out of existing networks. ... Part of it's consumer demand. ... And part is the pressure that Google Fiber's existence creates on everybody else."

Google has wired thousands of homes, selling back-and-forth data speeds of 1 gigabit per second. When the company picked Kansas City for its service in 2011, that was more than 100 times the national average for home Internet connections. It's still far speedier than the American average, but not by as much. Akamai Technologies reports that average peak connection speeds in the United States nearly tripled since Google started its work in Kansas City. Internet speeds in Missouri more than tripled and in Kansas — like Missouri, boosted by the Google Fiber in the Kansas City market — they are almost six times faster.

Meantime, Time Warner Cable dominates the Kansas City market and sells speeds of 50 megabits per second for what it used to charge for just 15 mps. Google Fiber is still 20 times faster than that, but few people have much use — yet, anyway — for anything faster. AT&T now has a deal to sell speeds as fast as Google's in Overland Park. It's not saying when it might deliver that service in the sprawling suburb, but neither has Google.

After Google tabbed Kansas City for Internet service, it promised the same light-speed hookups in Austin, Texas. It's not yet installed the connections in homes there, but AT&T began firing data to residential customers there late last year at the speeds Google hopes to someday deliver. As it trenches through lawns and strings fiber-optic lines from utility poles here and in Texas, Google is also exploring nine other markets in the country. The company has suggested it will go where local government clears away red tape that can slow down construction and push up costs. Google Fiber recently named Dennis Kish, a former executive for computer chipmaker Qualcomm, as its vice president. That's sparked speculation in trade publications that the company is serious about a national service on the scale of Time Warner Cable or Comcast.

All the while, the broadband landscape continues to evolve. "When Google announced it was offering a gigabit, everybody was, 'Huh? What are you going do with that?'" said Heather Burnett Gold, the president of the Fiber to the Home Council Americas. Her organization promotes the deployment of fiber-optic data

lines for click-swift Internet for residential customers. "Now people are taking the approach that when they put a new line in," she said, "they need to make it as fast as possible." More than 50 companies across the country now sell gigabit speeds to home consumers, she said. But getting there isn't always easy.

When Google came to Kansas City, it spoke of rolling out the network at "Google speed." The firm announced evolving timetables, then regularly missed them. An executive leading the project in its early days said the first 10 neighborhoods or so could expect service by the fall of 2012. It came almost a year later. The company later said it would finish installing hookups in the central third of Kansas City and all of Kansas City, Kan., by Christmas 2013. It's still not done with those areas and won't say when it expects to finish.

For a time, the company stopped making predictions on when it would clear various stages of production. Then this March, Google Fiber went to the southern and northern parts of Kansas City and to Gladstone, Raytown and Grandview for its latest "rallies." Those subscriber-hunting periods are when the company prods customers to urge people living nearby to sign up to qualify their neighborhoods to buy service from Google. Agree to a contract, the company said last spring, and expect installation before the year is done. Last week, the company emailed customers saying it couldn't live up to its own projections. "We're not quite ready to install Fiber in your home," the email said. "We suggest that you have a way to access the Web until Fiber is up and running in your home."

On Friday, the company issued a statement that did little to clarify why its taking longer to hook up those customers than Google said seven months ago. "We've run into a series of construction challenges, resulting in longer-than-expected installation wait times," the company said in an email. "We don't have a specific timeline on when installation will be done." That's prompted some disappointment. Said one waiting customer on Twitter: "Ugh, summer of 2015! I was hoping for #GoogleFiber this year." – **Kansas City Star**

Redbox Instant, a streaming video service operated by Verizon Communications Inc and Outerwall Inc's Redbox, will shut down next week because the venture has not been as successful as hoped, the two companies announced Saturday. The service, which combined the Redbox DVD rental kiosk business with a streaming video offering from Verizon, was launched in 2013 to compete against online video company Netflix Inc, but never caught on with consumers. Redbox Instant will shut down on Oct. 7th, the companies said in a joint statement. "The joint venture partners made this decision after careful consideration," the statement said. "The service had not been as successful as either partner hoped it would be."

Subscribers will receive an email notifying them of the termination of the service. A separate email will be sent on Oct. 10 with details on refunds, the statement said. The alliance marked Verizon's first foray into video streaming outside its network operating region, but it never gained a foothold against online rivals such as Netflix, Amazon.com Inc and Hulu Plus. The telephone company had only offered Web video services to subscribers using its FiOS TV service, which competes with cable providers such as Comcast Corp and Time Warner Cable. – **Reuters**

The Federal Communications Commission on Friday paused the 180-day "shot clock" to make a decision on Comcast Corp.'s proposed acquisition of Time Warner Cable Inc. for \$45.2-billion. The delay until Oct. 29 will give critics more time to file responses with the FCC. The deadline for critics to file their latest opposition had been Wednesday. The FCC also said it was seeking more

information from Comcast, Time Warner Cable and Charter Communications Inc. Comcast says it expects the federal regulatory agency to complete its review in early 2015. – *philly.com*



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