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Connecting to the Internet or sending an email is as easy as a click of a button.

Joshua Jones, Carlyton School District's (Allegheny Co.) supervisor of information technology, would like to keep it that way throughout the district. Jones informed school board members that the district's computerized system is working well, but that its main infrastructure is well past its prime years. District officials will have a few decisions to make regarding the core switch of the computer system. Carlyton has secured more than \$25,000 in reimbursement from the E-rate program for the core project and access points.

Jones said the main focus would be replacing the core switch, which received a reimbursement of \$20,430. The overall cost of replacing the core and access points after the E-rate would be nearly \$81,000. The E-rate program is administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company under the direction of the FCC. The program helps schools and libraries obtain affordable broadband. The reimburse rate for school districts is based mainly on the free and reduced lunch program.

Jones said the core switch is nine years old and is used to service all district buildings. The equipment, he said, has a life expectancy

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between five and seven years. In addition, the district does not have a service agreement on the main device. If the core switch fails, Jones said the district would be without internet service and students would not be able to access Google Docs. "There are no signs that it will fail soon, but we need to act on this in a timely manner," Jones said. Board members discussed a possible five-year lease to spread out payments but have not made a final decision. – **Pittsburgh Tribune-Review**

Charter Communications Inc. edged past analysts' estimates for third-quarter revenue and profit on Friday, as the cable operator attracted more customers for its broadband services, offsetting a drop in pay TV subscribers. The second-largest broadband provider in the United States added 282,000 residential customers in the third quarter ended Sept. 30.

The growing popularity of streaming services offered by Netflix Inc., Hulu, and Amazon.com's Prime video has encouraged a trend of "cord cutting", hurting cable companies. Netflix added slightly more paying subscribers than Wall Street expected in the third quarter, just as Disney and Apple prepare to launch rival services, heating up streaming video wars.

The change in consumer behavior has driven companies including Charter and Comcast Corp. to focus on their broadband businesses and high-speed internet upgrades as they look to stay ahead of the curve in the rapidly changing media landscape. Comcast beat Wall Street profit and revenue estimates on Thursday, as the company added high-speed internet customers. Charter reported a loss of 75,000 residential video customers in the quarter.

Third-quarter total operating costs and expenses increased by \$423 million, or 6.1%, from a year earlier. Net income attributable to shareholders fell to \$387 million, or \$1.74 per share, in the reported quarter from \$493 million, or \$2.11 per share, a year earlier. The year-over-year drop in net income was due to a pension remeasurement gain in the third quarter of 2018. Total revenue rose 5.1% to \$11.45 billion. Analysts on average had expected revenue of \$11.41 billion and profit of \$1.66, according to IBES data from Refinitiv. Shares in Charter were nearly 4% higher in trading before the bell. – **Reuters**

Verizon Communications Inc. notched large gains in phone subscribers in the third quarter, aided by a revamp of its unlimited plans that shaved about \$5 off customers' monthly bills. The carrier said it added 444,000 net new postpaid phone connections during the period, compared with the 295,000 such connections it added during the same period last year. Those new phone connections in the third quarter handily exceeded analysts' consensus estimates of about 300,000.

Postpaid customers are considered lucrative for carriers because those subscribers typically pay their bills monthly under longer-term contracts. Wireless promotional activity picked up during the period, which included the launch of Apple Inc.'s iPhone 11. Carriers rolled out buy-one-get-one-free offers and other deals in September.

Americans' cellphone bills are falling as carriers compete for customers in an ultra-saturated market and cable companies increasingly offer lower-cost, competing services. The consumer-price index for wireless phone service—an indicator of current offers from cellphone service providers—fell 2.8% in September from a year earlier, the 13th straight month of declines, according to the Labor Department.

Verizon, the largest U.S. carrier by subscribers, is the first big wireless company to report earnings for the period. AT&T Inc. and T-Mobile US Inc. are scheduled to release their results Oct. 28, while Sprint Corp. hasn't yet announced a date. Verizon is trying to prove to Wall Street that it can be more than a connectivity pipe and can find ways to monetize the faster 5G service it is rolling out. Early reviews of its 5G service have been mixed because it is ultrafast but has a limited reach.

Meanwhile, the company is trying to shed costs, promising to cut \$10 billion by 2021. It said it has achieved \$4.6 billion of that total since last year. Verizon has largely balked at buying into Hollywood or directly competing in the streaming wars as rival AT&T has, opting instead to form partnerships with content providers.

The company said earlier this week it would give its wireless customers on unlimited data plans a year of free access to Walt Disney Co.'s new streaming service, Disney+. The arrangement gives Disney a large pool of viewers as it launches and could help Verizon retain current customers and draw more subscribers to its unlimited plans, a priority for the company. Hans Vestberg, the carrier's chief executive, said the agreement proved the model of partnering with top brands that Verizon had decided to pursue. UBS Group AG analysts estimate that there are about 17 million Verizon wireless customer accounts eligible for the Disney+ offer. The streaming service would normally cost \$6.99 a month and is scheduled to launch Nov. 12.

AT&T, meanwhile, is working on its own streaming video service called HBO Max that it plans to unveil next week and formally launch next year. AT&T has aggressively pursued content ownership and creation and is in the throes of a battle with activist Elliott Management over its strategy. Verizon had 118.65 million wireless connections, including tablets, smartwatches and other devices, up from 118.12 million at the end of June.

Verizon's cable offering, Fios video service, continued to lose customers. It shed 67,000 customers in the third quarter. Overall, net income attributable to Verizon was \$5.19 billion, up from \$4.92 billion a year earlier. Quarterly revenue edged up slightly to \$32.9 billion from \$32.6 billion a year ago. Revenue within Verizon's media unit, which includes the Yahoo and AOL properties it acquired, was \$1.8 billion, down 2% from a year ago. Verizon shares rose 0.8%, to \$61.07, in premarket trading. — *Wall Street Journal*



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