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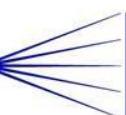
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NewsClips

November 19, 2020

**WTAE-TV,
Pittsburgh**
**Lack of broadband
during pandemic is
having a major
impact in some
areas**

The U.S. wireline broadband business continued its rapid pandemic-fueled customer expansion in the third quarter, with the leading providers adding 1.53 million subscribers, the industry's best growth since the first quarter of 2009. In all, services that deliver the internet through cable, fiber or DSL added 915,000 more customers than they did in the third quarter of 2019, according to Leichtman Research Group (LRG), which tallied the performances of the top 16 ISPs covering 96% of the U.S. market.

Fierce Video

[Comcast launches interactive livestream app for X1 and Flex](#)

The leading cable operators continued their incendiary growth, adding 1.32 million customers in Q3—down slightly on a sequential basis from the nearly 1.4 million they added in Q2, but up big from around 832,000 adds in the third quarter last year. Comcast's 633,000 net adds in Q3 were more than in any quarter in the past 15 years.

[LightReading Dish facing \\$3.3B in spectrum troubles – reports](#)

The differentiating factor in Q3 2020 was the return to growth for AT&T (added 174,000 subscribers) and Verizon (up 110,000), with both companies gaining momentum with their fiber-to-the-home offerings. The top wireline phone companies added about 210,000 subscribers in the third quarter, compared to a net loss of about 220,000 subscribers in Q3 2019. On a pro forma basis, this was only the second quarter since Q1 2016 that telcos have had positive net adds. The last quarter when they had more net adds was in Q1 2013.

[Washington Post Why it's easy to hate Facebook but hard to leave](#)

"With the continued impact of the coronavirus pandemic, there were more quarterly net broadband additions in 3Q 2020 than in any quarter in over eleven years," said [Bruce Leichtman, president and principal analyst for LRG and popular Cable Academy presenter](#), in a statement "Over the past year, there were about 4,550,000 net broadband adds, compared to about 2,550,000 net broadband adds over the prior year. This marks the most broadband net adds in a year since 3Q 2008-2Q 2009." — [Next TV](#)

[New York Times How to Have a Fully Remote Family Thanksgiving](#)

Locked in a tight race, a Republican candidate asked the Pennsylvania Supreme Court on Wednesday to overturn a ruling in Allegheny County that permitted the tallying of 2,349 ballots that were submitted on time but missing printed dates on their outer envelopes.

[Associated Press State House Republicans vote for election procedures study](#)

[State Senate candidate Nicole Ziccarelli](#) — who is neck and neck in her race against [Sen. Jim Brewster](#), D-McKeesport, in the 45th District — alleged that the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas had erred earlier in the day in approving the ballots for counting. Asking the state's highest court to invalidate the ballots, lawyers for Ms. Ziccarelli argued that the election code mandates — and doesn't just direct — voters to write the date on the declaration form on the outside of the envelope.

[Philadelphia Inquirer Jake Corman, the Pa. Senate Republican leader, on the election, voter fraud claims, and who won the presidency](#)

In a ruling Wednesday morning, Allegheny County Common Pleas Senior Judge Joseph M. James said the ballots — which were time-stamped when they were delivered on or before Election Day, signed and otherwise qualified — are "sufficient even without a voter supplied date." "In light of the fact that there is no fraud, a technical omission on an envelope should not render a ballot invalid," Judge James wrote. "The lack of a written date on an otherwise qualified ballot is a minor technical defect that does not render it deficient." Ms. Ziccarelli was down by 28 votes as of Wednesday evening.

In Allegheny County, where Ms. Ziccarelli is seeking to invalidate the 2,300-plus ballots, Mr. Brewster had built a 6,128-vote margin. He hasn't fared as well in the portion of the district in Westmoreland County, which still had provisional ballots left to tally and had gone to Ms. Ziccarelli by 6,100. Ms. Ziccarelli's lawyers said they're appealing the trial court decision to the Commonwealth Court, but decided to ask the state Supreme Court because the justices had just picked up a similar case out of Philadelphia on Wednesday.

That case pertains to challenges to more than 8,000 ballots in Philadelphia filed by President Donald Trump's campaign, among the lawsuits launched by the Republican and his allies amid President-elect Joe Biden's victory in the state. The high court's five-member Democratic majority agreed to take up the case, at Philadelphia's request, and the question of whether state law requires counties to disqualify mail-in or absentee ballots where a voter didn't write certain information. The 8,329 ballots in Philadelphia were cases in which voters signed their ballot's outer envelope, but didn't handwrite their name, their address or a date on it. Just like in Allegheny County, the tallying of the ballots in that case was upheld by a Philadelphia judge.

In her lawyers' memo to the state Supreme Court, Ms. Ziccarelli is arguing that language in the election code — that voters "shall ... fill out, date and sign the [voter declaration]" — should be "construed as mandatory and any ballots that do not meet this requirement should be deemed invalid." The appeal was obtained and posted by Democracy Docket, a site that has tracked election litigation in the wake of the Nov. 3 election.

The trial court had agreed with Allegheny County, whose lawyers said that in cases where no fraud or malfeasance is alleged, the law should be read to ensure that voters are enfranchised, not disenfranchised. The code does not tolerate tossing out votes because of technical mistakes, attorney Virginia Scott said in a Tuesday hearing. "Specifically, the use of the word 'shall' does not make a statutory phrase mandatory," Judge James wrote in his decision. "It is well settled Pennsylvania law that election laws should be construed liberally in favor of voters, and that 'technicalities should not be used to make the right of the voter insecure.'" — **Pittsburgh Post-Gazette**

I gotta think that these days it's hard for many to sing.

So, hats off to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. It's not only pressing forward with a virtual rendering of its annual, unique and amazing Farm Show. It's also offering a competition for a chance to sing the national anthem to start each day of the online show, January 9 through 16. More on the ["Oh, say, can you sing?" contest](#) in a bit. First, there are reasons singing "these days" presents a challenge.

State COVID-19 numbers, like the nation's, continue climbing: [thousands of new cases daily, rising hospitalization and death counts](#), no evident end in sight. When I ask an official at the Department of Health if the department is seeing modeling that suggests when the current wave might peak, the answer I get is, "Not yet."

This as the holiday season starts. Thanksgiving with no guests. Whatever passes for Black Friday. No neighborhood parties, office parties, holiday lunches. All of which, in normal times, leads to good paydays for caterers, restaurants, bars and food services. All of which leads to overtime pay for their workers. And all of which now can lead to less singing. Plus, who knows what to think beyond fear, frustration and anger in such an unsettled, unbalanced time?

On Tuesday, state Health Secretary Dr. Rachel Levine, during a virtual media briefing, read from a White House coronavirus task force report to states. It said: "There is now aggressive, unrelenting, expanding broad community spread across the country, reaching most counties, without evidence of improvement, but rather further deterioration." First of all, who knew the task force was still around? Second, its message is like a blaring klaxon with somebody yelling "RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!" Or the pandemic equivalent: "HERMETICALLY SEAL YOURSELVES IN YOUR HOMES!"

Yet Levine's response was "new mitigation efforts" with a reach well below the level of alarm. She told hospitals to brace for bad stuff, told colleges to test students coming back to campus after the holidays, told anybody traveling into the state to get tested or quarantine (as if), and "strengthened" a masking order to something along the lines of "we really, really want you to wear masks." Some must wonder, that's it? Armageddon's at the door, flip the welcome mat over? Don't get me wrong. Levine's mitigation efforts are good. And who *wants* anything harsher? But how are record cases and projected overruns of intensive care units eased or dented by unenforceable travel orders for testing and quarantines?

Wearing masks? Who doesn't know to wear a mask? And those who choose not to mask? They're suddenly going to turn compliant? Testing? Yeah, get tested. It's just that like everything else to do with this virus there are mixed views and results. Take the widely reported case of billionaire genius inventor,

entrepreneur [Elon Musk](#). Had four tests for COVID-19. Two were positive. Two were negative.

Since somebody with a net worth of \$97 billion is likely to get the best possible testing and medical care, such results aren't quite confidence-building. Meanwhile, [more than 700 nurses go on strike in Bucks County](#) over low staffing, low wages and fear of increased COVID-19 hospitalizations, which has to raise anxiety levels across the state's already-stretched health care system.

And in Washington, especially in Congress, [there's contentment to maintain a spectator status while awaiting a new administration](#) in hopes, one assumes, of more aggressive antivirus effort. Put it all together, mix in Philadelphia shutting down gyms, museums and indoor dining, and it becomes hard not to think such restrictions and maybe more are likely coming down elsewhere. Which gets me back to "Oh, say, can you sing?"

Contestants – individuals, families, groups – have until noon December 7 to submit videos of their signing the anthem, without musical accompaniment, to the Farm Show's Facebook page (facebook.com/PAFarmShow). The contest seeks simple creativity. Nothing flashy. No special effects.

I hope there's a flood of entries. I hope millions of Pennsylvanians see them. I think, more than hearing words of public officials, hearing voices of fellow citizens whose chosen lives feed our bodies, might also feed our souls. I think it could help us embrace the "collective responsibility" repeatedly cited as needed to combat the virus. I think it could touch us. I think it might remind us of the unerring value of being part of "the land of the free and the home of the brave." – **John Baer's column in Harrisburg Patriot-News**

