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**BCAP offices will be closed  
Thursday & Friday, November 22 &  
23**

A malfunction over the weekend disrupted Internet service for about a third of the roughly 300 subscribers to the LanCity Connect broadband service. The incident, which began around 9 a.m. Saturday, turned out not to be related to the ongoing court battle between PPL Corp. and MAW Communications, the Reading-based utility that provides LanCity Connect, customer service manager Mindy Wiczowski said.

Rather, MAW determined the issue was with some of its own hardware, she said. It was repaired and service restored by Sunday afternoon, she said. Some customers needed help reconnecting to the network; they were all back up and running Monday, she said. However, more outages are expected in coming days that will be due to PPL, she said.

MAW and PPL are engaged in a bitter legal dispute over MAW's ability to place equipment on PPL's poles. PPL says MAW has made numerous unauthorized and unsafe attachments, and has received court permission to remove them. MAW disputes PPL's characterization. Earlier this year, about 15 customers lost service when PPL conducted a round of removals, Wiczowski said. MAW can't restore their service until PPL lets it, and so far it hasn't, she said.

More removals are in the works. PPL confirmed to LNP it is planning to take down MAW equipment on West James Street, College Avenue and nearby areas in northwest Lancaster, beginning the week after Thanksgiving. More than 50 LanCity Connect customers could be affected, Wiczowski said. PPL said it could have started this week, but decided to wait as a courtesy to avoid affecting users' Internet service over the holiday. In an email sent out Monday, MAW advised those 50-some customers to obtain backup internet service by Friday.

So that they don't have to choose between disconnecting LanCity Connect or paying for two services, MAW has suspended their billing as of Monday. LanCity Connect will remain free for them as long as their Internet connection is at risk, Wiczowski said. "We don't want our customers to be without (service) due to this legal battle," she said.

LanCity Connect runs on a fiber-optic backbone installed for Lancaster city government, and the city provided MAW financial assistance for the rollout. However, officials have stressed that LanCity Connect is not a city service, and that city government's legal role in PPL's and MAW's dispute is limited to

safeguarding its own use of the network and related functions such as the Lancaster Safety Coalition's camera network.

That said, "we understand, and share, the frustrations of LanCity Connect customers," City Hall said in a social media post. The city is pleased that MAW is informing its customers and giving them a clear sense of what to expect, Chief of Staff Matt Johnson said. – **Lancaster Intelligencer-Journal**

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Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai said Tuesday he wants the agency to classify text messaging as an "information" service -- a move that would allow carriers to block SMS messages. Pai's proposal is a blow to mobile marketing company Twilio - which had petitioned the FCC to classify text messaging as a "telecommunications" service -- as well as Public Knowledge and other advocacy groups.

The FCC Chair contends that classifying text messages as a telecom service -- which would subject carriers to some common carrier rules, such as a ban on blocking - would harm companies' ability to combat text-spam. "Aside from being a more legally sound approach, this decision would keep the floodgates to a torrent of spam texts closed, remove regulatory uncertainty, and empower providers to continue finding innovative ways to protect consumers from unwanted text messages," Pai **said** Tuesday in a blog post.

But Public Knowledge says that carriers can block robo-texts even if text messaging generally is considered a telecom service, regulated under Title II of the Communications Act. "Title II designation does not prevent filtering or other technological means to block unwanted robocalls or spam texts," Harold Feld, Public Knowledge senior vice president, stated Tuesday. Feld added that Pai's proposal "would give carriers unlimited freedom to censor any speech they consider 'controversial.'"

In 2015, Twilio asked the FCC to prohibit wireless carriers from blocking or otherwise restricting messages based on content. The company **called** the practice "an increasing threat to the ubiquity and seamlessness of the nation's telephone network." Public Knowledge, Free Press and Common Cause sided with Twilio, **arguing** that carriers currently are able to "abuse their gatekeeper petition."

Public Knowledge first raised concerns about the issue back in 2007, when Verizon Wireless prevented a prominent abortion rights group from sending text messages to its supporters. After an article about the issue appeared in *The New York Times*, Verizon changed its position and allowed NARAL Pro-Choice America to send SMS alerts. -- **MediaPost**



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