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Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile, Comcast and Philadelphia officials are holding their breath as millions of Eagles fans converge on the Philadelphia parade route on Thursday with their smartphones. What will happen when they try to connect on FaceTime? Or upload, en masse, photos and videos? “The telcos and the city worked together quickly to boost capacity along the route,” Philadelphia spokesman Mike Dunn said in an email. But he added, “While providers have boosted capacity, parade-goers should expect service to be challenged.”

Companies have **put tens of millions of dollars into boosting the city's wireless capacity for the Pope Francis visit**, the Democratic National Convention, and the National Football League draft. But celebratory Eagles fans will place huge and unpredictable demands on the city's cellular and WiFi networks along the parade's five-mile route from the South Philadelphia sports complex to the Art Museum. Telecom companies have concentrated much of the wireless upgrades on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway — the site of the NFL Draft and the Welcome America concerts.

Responding to the city's call for more wireless for the Eagles parade, Verizon Communications Inc. has parked a mobile cellular site at Marconi Plaza, in South Philadelphia. “We're prepared,” Verizon spokesman David Weissmann said. Verizon considered the parade an “all hands on deck” day and that network managers would be adjusting to the capacity demands as the Eagles make their way to the Parkway, Weissmann said.

T-Mobile director Kerri Strike-Stahler said that “Philadelphia officials contacted us last Wednesday to start preparing for this” and that she was confident in the company's network. T-Mobile has invested significantly to upgrade its Philadelphia network and it has boosted capacity for the Eagles parade with a mobile cell site around City Hall, she said. Strike-Stahler — who said she will attend the parade — suggested that data-hogging parade videos be shared later with friends and family members, “so we can all enjoy the network.” AT&T expanded its 4G capacity in Philadelphia by 35 percent in 2017, spokeswoman Brandy Bell-Truskey said. “We feel confident that fans will be able to share those once-in-a-lifetime moments from the parade through texts, tweets and selfies,” she said.

Comcast, which has been gingerly entering the wireless business, won't open its extensive WiFi network to the public along the parade route because it likely doesn't have the capacity for the crowds. “While Xfinity continues to expand our WiFi network – we have more than 14,000 access points across Philadelphia – it's difficult to predict the impact this kind of data use may have in such a concentrated area,” the company said on Wednesday. One suggestion for Eagles fans who are Comcast cable customers: Find a WiFi hot spot a block or two away from the parade route and upload photos or videos there away from the crowd. Comcast has many spots along South Broad, according to **its WiFi map**. There are fewer along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, but more a block or so east. – *Philadelphia Inquirer*

[bill to reduce its size](#)

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[Philadelphia Inquirer Editorial: For Pa's sake, Wolf and GOP must cooperate on budget](#)

A trade group representing Alphabet Inc, Facebook Inc. and other internet firms on Thursday backed a congressional reversal of the Trump administration's December repeal of net neutrality rules. U.S. Senate Democrats said last month they had the backing of 50 members of the 100-person chamber for repeal, leaving them just one vote short of a majority. The Internet Association, which also represents Amazon.com Inc., Microsoft Corp. and many others, said in a letter Thursday to Senate leaders it backed the Senate effort to reverse the vote, but also called for a legislative fix. "The internet industry urges Congress to legislate a permanent solution," the group said in the letter reviewed by Reuters. A group of more than 20 U.S. state attorneys general are mounting a legal challenge to the Federal Communications Commission's vote along party lines to reverse rules introduced in 2015 that barred internet service providers from blocking or throttling traffic or offering paid fast lanes, also known as paid prioritization. The new rules have not taken effect. – **Reuters**

^z 21st Century Fox, which is preparing for a smaller media empire with the sale of its movie and TV studio to Disney, said revenue at its cable TV division rose 10% in the most recent quarter. The parts of the company that Fox will keep after [the \\$52.4 billion deal](#), announced in December 2017, include the Fox network, Fox News Channel and Fox Business Network, as well as sports networks FS1, FS2 and Big Ten Network, and its 28 local TV stations.

The cable TV segment reported higher advertising, syndication fees and affiliate fees from cable and satellite providers, which increased revenue to \$4.4 billion. Fox reported total revenue of \$8.04 billion, up 4%. That beat expectations of \$7.9 billion, based on analysts polled by S&P Global Market Intelligence. Net income more than doubled to \$1.83 billion, or 99 cents per share. Analysts expected \$703 million or 38 cents per share. Helping the bottom line: a \$1.34 billion benefit from recently passed tax reform. Excluding that benefit and restructuring charges, it would have earned 42 cents. Fox shares rose 2% in after-hours trading, before returning to the closing price of \$36.06. The stock is up 29% over the last six months, while the Nasdaq is up 10%.

The quarter's success came despite a tough comparison to the previous year, which included political campaign advertising. "Our results also reflect increased investment behind higher volumes of global sporting events as well as film releases from our studio, which led the industry in Golden Globe awards and Oscar nominations," said Rupert Murdoch and Lachlan Murdoch, both executive chairmen of 21st Century Fox. Murdoch controls 21st Century Fox with his sons James and Lachlan.

The company remains focused on completing two pending deals, the [\\$15 billion acquisition](#) of the 61% of U.K.-based TV and Internet provider Sky that it doesn't own and the sale of assets to Disney, and "planning for the exciting launch of the new 'Fox'," they said. Fox has faced some hurdles in acquiring Sky, and two weeks ago the U.K. competition regulator issued a preliminary ruling that the deal would not be in the public interest. The U.K. culture secretary, who will get the report, is expected to make a ruling in several months.

"We'll continue to engage constructively with the (the Competition and Markets Authority) to address their concerns ahead of their May 1 final report," Fox CEO James Murdoch said in a conference call with analysts after the company released its earnings. Fox expects to gain regulatory approval for the deal by the end of June, he said. Fox is already preparing for its next phase, last week landing [a five-year deal](#) for the NFL's *Thursday Night Football* broadcasts, valued at more than \$3 billion. Despite declining NFL viewership, live events bring a concentrated audience that advertisers covet, James Murdoch said.

"NFL programming is hands-down the most powerful in all of media," he said. "And if you look at our decades-long relationship with the league, I think you'll agree, having the most important sports rights over a longer term has always served us well." Fox has gained about four million subscribers across broadband-delivered TV services such as Hulu and DirecTV Now, helping offset declines of traditional pay-TV subscribers, James Murdoch said. Making Fox channels available on Net TV services, "makes our content and our brands more available and not less, it's all about enabling that competition," he said. "We're very encouraged by the growth of these new platforms and encouraged by that sector." – **USA Today**

Gov. Tom Wolf's address to a joint session of the General Assembly Tuesday drew mixed reactions from pundits statewide and from our own community members of the Westmoreland and Valley News Dispatch editorial boards. Here are their responses to the governor's remarks and his 2018 proposed budget:

"In listening to Gov. Wolf's address, the one item that struck me is his quote that Pennsylvania is a better place to do business because of the tax structure. Overall Pennsylvania is in the top 15 states

of the country with the highest tax burdens when you look at the overall tax structure. Our personal tax burden may be in the bottom 10 states, but you also need to look at our gas tax, which is in the top 10 states; our sales tax and real-estate taxes are in the top 15 states; our beer tax is one of the lowest in the country; our cigarette and liquor taxes are in the top 15 states; our spending per pupil and teacher pay are in the top 15 states; our higher education is in the bottom of the states; our police and roads spending is in the top 20 of the states. With all these other tax burdens, is Pennsylvania's burden on its businesses and individual families mild or steep?" — Eric Elia Bononi, *Westmoreland Tribune-Review* Editorial Board

"I thought the governor's speech was very reasonable and forward-looking. I like the emphasis on education at all levels and especially the need for a severance tax. I've never understood why Pennsylvania allows out-of-state industries and businesses to take our natural resources (that can only be found here) and pollute our environment without paying the state for it. Seems rather shortsighted, given that we're still cleaning up the mess from the last industrial age." — Phyllis Framel, *Valley News Dispatch* Editorial Board

"We need more "investment." Translation: We need more money. It's like a broken record. Never a thought about spending less. Despite the governor's streamlining government and reducing costs, we always see an increase in the budget; just once can we see it not increase? Another plea for a severance tax — sure, only if a law is passed that reduces our state income taxes dollar for dollar with severance tax dollars." — Reed Pederson, *Westmoreland Tribune-Review* Editorial Board

"I read through the text of the governor's address a couple times. It sounds more like a campaign speech than a budget, long on past successes and short on specific details. It did not address the billions of dollars of state deficit. In fact, he is increasing spending — not a good recipe for fiscal responsibility." — Vince Mercuri, *Valley News Dispatch* Editorial Board

"As a mother to two school-aged boys, investing in our schools is of the utmost importance. However, Western Pennsylvania houses a good portion of the worst districts in the state. Which makes me question if investing money really equates to better performance. With an astronomical amount of student debt, brought on by my chosen (or lack thereof at the beginning) profession, I was pleased to hear Gov. Wolf push for an increase in Pennsylvania's trade and apprenticeship programs. I was also pleased to hear Wolf address the opioid epidemic. However, arming law enforcement with "the tools they need" is just the tip of the iceberg: You save lives and then allow them to go right back to it, creating a habitual cycle that is draining the already limited funds.

All in all I was pleased to hear of no new tax increases and trimming government officials, pensions and pay. " — Anna Morcheid Joyner, *Westmoreland Tribune-Review* Editorial Board — *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

