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As chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, Ajit Pai has seen his fair share of police and emergency dispatch centers across the country, including large metropolitan centers in Los Angeles and New York and small operations in rural states such as West Virginia and Kansas.

**Associated Press**  
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But he admitted few anywhere are like Burlington County's (NJ) Central Communications, which dispatches for some 134 police, fire and EMS agencies in 40 municipalities across 819 square miles. It is the only county call center in the state to provide both police, fire and emergency dispatch to every one of its municipalities. "Typically the public safety answering points are a lot more localized," Pai said Thursday during an afternoon tour of the Central Communications dispatch center at Burlington County's Public Safety complex. "To have this kind of model that covers such a wide jurisdiction — my understanding is it's the biggest county in the state — it's one way to get some of the efficiencies of scale and also to provide a service to a whole bunch of communities that individually they might not be able to support on their own," Pai added.

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The county's model also shows that regionalizing 911 does not equate to a loss in quality service, he said. "I think even if folks in Burlington County might not know the names of individual call takers or

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[Should Pennsylvania abolish daylight saving time? A state lawmaker thinks it's time to stop springing forward.](#)



dispatchers here, I think they should have confidence that the public safety system is really protecting them every day," Pai said. The tour was part of a two-stop swing through South Jersey for the FCC chairman, who was appointed to the commission in 2012 by President Barack Obama and then elevated to chair in 2017 by President Donald Trump.

As chairman, Pai has made public safety a top priority for the agency and he has pushed for modernization of 911 systems so that they can better pinpoint the location of calls from cellphones, allow operators to receive and respond to cellphone text and video sent to 911 and then also forward that information to first responders. Burlington County Central Communications has many of those advanced capabilities thanks to a recent overhaul of its dispatch center. The improvements, which included new software and work stations, were part of a massive \$40 million upgrade of the county's entire emergency communications system in order to comply with an FCC mandate that all emergency radio frequencies move from 500 megahertz band to 700 MHz.

The switch is expected to improve communications in public safety while cancelling out interference from digital broadcast television channels that now operate on the 500 MHz spectrum. Burlington County started working on the upgrade back in 2016 and is expected to be finished during the first quarter of 2020, which is well before the 2021 deadline set by the FCC. While county officials said they believe the switch to the 700 MHz is the right move for public safety, they noted that the \$40 million cost is being borne entirely by county taxpayers with no funding help from either the federal or state government.

The state collects around \$130 million each year through a monthly 90-cent tax charged on all mobile phone subscribers. The fee is intended to be used for upgrades to the state's 911 emergency systems, but most of it has been diverted to help pay for other state programs like New Jersey State Police operations. "We've never seen a penny of that money in Burlington County," said Freeholder Director Tom Pullion, who accompanied Pai on the tour with Freeholder Dan O'Connell.

Burlington County officials aren't the only ones who are frustrated, as New Jersey is known as one of the worst offenders in the country for diverting 911 fees intended for public safety. Pai said it's a problem in other states as well, and one he has tried to address. "Recently I called it an outrage, and that's what I believe it is. If people are paying fees or taxes that they think are supposed to be going towards public safety, if a state diverts it to another purpose, that sort of violates the basic compact between a government and its citizens," he said. "We need to make sure that money is focused on public safety. I'll keep banging the drum even if the FCC doesn't have any regulatory authority here, we do have a bully pulpit and I'm determined to use it to make sure that the folks in New Jersey are protected."

Pullion told Pai the county also hasn't received any share of special Homeland Security funding awarded for the Greater Philadelphia region. Burlington County and other South Jersey counties are considered part of the region but the money is sent to Pennsylvania for distribution. While the FCC collects millions of dollars from the auctions of licenses for electromagnetic spectrum, Pai said the commission is unable to directly fund improvements to call centers. Rather than direct funding, he said the commission has tried to use its subsidy program

for broadband upgrades to encourage carriers to make sure their geographic territory is ready for 911 improvements.

More direct support would require authorization and appropriations from Congress. “If Congress gives us additional resources we would love to be able to take the lead and work with some of these forward-thinking public safety officials,” Pai said. Pullion and O’Connell said the visit was a chance to showcase the county’s upgrades and improvements, rather than lobby for funding. Although Pullion said they did that too. “We got our digs in and let him know ‘any money you can see come our way, we’re going to utilize it,’” Pullion said.

O’Connell said he believes Pai left impressed with what he saw and heard from the Central Communications staff. “Being in Burlington County, we’re between two major metropolitan areas. So to get a gentleman of this stature and be able to showcase a facility like this, that can only be a good thing going forward. I could sense he was really impressed,” he said. – *Burlington County (NJ) Times*

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Mark Zuckerberg has outlined a new vision for Facebook Inc. that he says is focused on privacy. It is a major shift in direction, but it doesn’t mean what you think it means.

What the Facebook chief executive’s manifesto really promises is a more tightly integrated version of Facebook’s various apps and services, cloaked in the raiments of privacy but, in fact, continuing to operate in contradiction to it. Facebook would still gather data from its existing sources—the core social network, its Instagram app, an web-wide tracking system and countless apps that sometimes send the company deeply personal information—but also increasingly from messaging apps. These would double as interfaces with businesses and, eventually, usurp the functions of our credit cards and digital wallets. (He mentioned “payments” in his note four times.)

Mr. Zuckerberg understood long before most of us did that the public sharing that made his business so successful was a fad. The price he paid for WhatsApp—\$22 billion—seemed like a multiple-zero typo, but now it is considered a prescient investment.

Recent data from Edison Research suggest Facebook’s primary social network has lost an estimated 15 million users since 2017 in the U.S. alone. Most of those are in the coveted 12-to-34-year-old demographic. Yet Facebook’s most recent quarterly report shows a company at the apex of its power, earning record profits and growing its overall user base as people shift to Instagram and WhatsApp. It’s clear Facebook must follow its users to the services they are turning to as alternatives to its flagship, and there can be no doubt that internal numbers, some of which Mr. Zuckerberg referenced, show people devoting more time to messaging, small groups and ephemeral posts like Instagram stories. WhatsApp was Facebook’s quick access into a world that has two dominant players occupying very different spheres: Tencent’s WeChat and Apple’s iMessage. WeChat has become a de facto operating system for life in China. While it doesn’t have the encryption features that Mr. Zuckerberg described, it has all of the revenue-generating services that he covets.

Apple's messaging app truly is an app, with its own end-to-end encryption and a growing roster of built-in services, from payments to stickers. Because it's the default way to send messages on the iPhone, it has devoted users who seem to have no qualms about their time inside Apple's walled garden. The animus between Apple CEO Tim Cook and Mr. Zuckerberg is no secret. Mr. Cook has often called out Facebook for its privacy scandals, and cast Apple as a privacy-protecting alternative. Belatedly, Mr. Zuckerberg seems to have realized that the reputational damage of the [Cambridge Analytica data breach](#) and a half-dozen scandals since could affect his company's bottom line.

The data-hungry advertising business that Facebook has built up over the years will have to adapt to this new direction, but continuing to divine our intents probably won't be as great a challenge as it might seem. The company doesn't need to know what we're messaging each other. Mr. Zuckerberg says Facebook doesn't use message content to target ads, just as Google doesn't scan the contents of Gmail messages to serve ads.

Facebook will be able to [target us with uncanny precision](#) even without access to our messages. In his manifesto, Mr. Zuckerberg wrote, "It also makes sense to limit the amount of time we store messaging metadata. An important part of the solution is to collect less personal data in the first place." These are moves in the right direction, but they amount to streamlining the data operation, not extinguishing it. It's clear his company intends to continue to advertise to us, even on its encrypted platforms.

Mr. Zuckerberg said as much in at least one of his post-manifesto interviews, [with Wired's Nicholas Thompson](#). Knowing where we are, who and what we connect to and when we do it wouldn't fall under Facebook's proposed broader encryption. That metadata is more than enough to characterize us to a breathtaking degree, say academics and engineers who practice "social physics" and "people analytics." Mr. Zuckerberg said he has no plans to eliminate or even change Facebook's News Feed or stories in Instagram, Facebook's groups or any other part of what he calls Facebook's public square. He's effectively taking all that is already problematic about Facebook and growing the messaging layer, using the privacy angle as a selling point for his expanded platform. He did, however, note that "significant thought needs to go into all of the services we build on top of that [privacy] foundation."

That Facebook wants to make it possible for dissidents to use its services to communicate securely is admirable, but must be weighed against the fact that this will put even more of the communications on Facebook beyond the reach of the company's own content filters. Pivoting to privacy is a neat judo move for Facebook, as the company's former chief security officer Alex Stamos [observed on Twitter](#). It allows the company to absolve itself of responsibility for the content that passes through its systems, while also allowing it to claim a victory for individual freedom.

Nothing in Mr. Zuckerberg's manifesto or subsequent statements question the fundamental premise of Facebook's business, which is gathering more data about us in order to reach us with more-targeted and effective advertising. Facebook is rushing to meet users where

they want to be—communicating individually and in small groups—without altering the trade-off the company has always offered: our privacy for its services. — *Wall Street Journal*

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More than a year after the Federal Communications Commission killed net neutrality rules, the internet as we know it, hasn't changed much. But Democrats predict that the internet is going to get worse, unless net neutrality is restored. On Wednesday, Democrats in the House and Senate introduced legislation called the "[Save the Internet Act](#)" that they say will bring back a free and open internet. "When we talk about saving the internet, we're talking about saving the marketplace, we are talking about saving our democracy. It's that important of an issue, net neutrality," said Rep. Frank Pallone (D-N.J.), Chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee. Net neutrality was first put in place in 2015 under the Obama Administration. It was designed to have internet service providers (ISPs) —like Verizon, Comcast, and AT&T— treat all content on the web the same. ISPs could not block, slow down, or give faster access to websites.

In December 2017, the FCC, led by Chairman Ajit Pai, repealed the net neutrality rules. Pai argued that if the rules stayed in place it would cripple innovation. The move has prompted public outcry. "Saving the internet has been a grassroots movement if there ever was one," said Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) at the press conference Wednesday. "Average folks understand that they do not want their costs of using the internet to go up. They do not want their freedom to be constricted, if they should decide to start up a business. But the FCC Chairman defended the rollback, adding that reinstating the rules would hurt consumers. About two dozen states and several big technology companies have sued the FCC for repealing net neutrality. The bill to restore the rules is likely to pass in the democratic-controlled House, but will face an uphill battle in the Senate — *Associated Press*

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T-Mobile has already made it abundantly clear it intends to disrupt the U.S. in-home broadband market. But on Thursday, the company said it plans to replace every service cable companies provide. In a new FCC filing (which has since been made confidential), T-Mobile noted that 74% of households that subscribe to both pay TV and broadband internet do so through a double- or triple-play offer—presumably some combination of TV, internet and phone, or all of the above. The company said that its home internet product coupled with its Layer3 TV service and mobile service offers a "full replacement that will compete with current ISPs for existing double/triple-play subscribers."

That would not only apply to cable provider service bundles (from Comcast, Charter, etc.) but also to service bundles from satellite provider DirecTV and telecoms like Verizon and AT&T. T-Mobile said the combination of home internet and Layer3 will also help reduce New T-Mobile's churn, both in its home internet and core mobile businesses. As an example, the company said that subscribers to both AT&T and DirecTV churn half as much as standalone video subscribers.

In terms of what T-Mobile's TV service will look like, the description makes it sound a lot like the premium product currently offered by Layer3. The company is promising a "supercharged content distribution platform" with packages including more than 275 HD channels, a selection of 4K video, and in-home digital video recording.

T-Mobile added that reliable 4K streaming requires download speeds of approximately 25 Mbps, which will be the minimum speed for customers of the home internet service.

T-Mobile CEO John Legere said that his company will soon begin trialing in-home broadband using a 4G router and T-Mobile's LTE network, and later update to 2.5 GHz spectrum and 5G-capable equipment. The company has said that its TV service—which will launch in the first half of 2019—is tied directly to its home internet plans. T-Mobile expects to have 9.5 million in-home broadband subscribers by 2024. It's unclear how many of those subscribers might opt for T-Mobile's TV service as well.

T-Mobile Chief Operating Officer Mike Sievert last month said the company has already launched a predecessor pay TV product in four cities under the Layer3 TV brand, and he said that's been a learning experience leading up to the official T-Mobile TV launch. He said that T-Mobile's pay TV and home broadband plans will work best in concert but that they can operate independently. — *Fierce Video*



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