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Allentown Morning Call

The FCC unanimously adopted rules at its open meeting Thursday to make the 1200MHz of spectrum sitting in the 6GHz band available for unlicensed use. The 6GHz band is currently occupied by microwave services used to support wireless backhaul, utilities and public safety. The action will give WiFi 6 access to the spectrum it needs to reach its full potential and pave the way for greater growth in the Internet of Things. The action had everyone from cable providers like Comcast and Charter to consumer advocacy groups like Public Knowledge cheering.

"Broadband and WiFi are enabling our economy and society to continue functioning during our current public health crisis, and cable networks are holding up very well to these demands," CableLabs vp, technology policy Rob Alderfer wrote in a blog post. "This is an important time for the Commission to enable continued Wi-Fi progress." Broadcasters, on the other hand, were irked by the order, which they claimed would cause harmful interference to electronic newsgathering.
– **Cablefax Daily**

Verizon Communications Inc. said the coronavirus pandemic slowed its core wireless business in the March quarter as Americans bought fewer new smartphones amid widespread store closures. The largest U.S. wireless carrier by subscribers tempered its financial forecasts for the rest of the year, lowering its profit goals and withdrawing its revenue targets. In the first quarter, the company reported a slight drop in wireless subscribers as gains in business accounts were offset by a steep decline in new consumer accounts.

Verizon increased its bad-debt reserve by \$228 million based on the number of customers it expected won't be able to pay their bills. It and other carriers signed a pledge with the Federal Communications Commission not to cut off service for 60 days or charge late fees to consumers facing pandemic-related hardships. Rival AT&T Inc. set aside

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\$250 million to cover bad debt from customers skipping payment and [pulled its financial targets](#) earlier this week.

Verizon lost 68,000 postpaid phone connections during the first three months of the year, compared with a net loss of 44,000 such connections during the same period a year earlier. Retail store closures led to a "significant drop" in customer activity, the company said. Postpaid phone customers are [considered lucrative](#) because they typically pay bills monthly under longer-term contracts and are less likely to switch carriers. AT&T added 163,000 postpaid phone subscribers during the first quarter.

Residential internet and wireless connectivity has become more important than ever as millions of people work and learn remotely. That could lead some U.S. households to upgrade their speeds or prompt businesses to use more VPNs, or virtual private networks, to tunnel into corporate networks, analysts say. Still, major carriers have agreed to cap their roaming and overage fees, and some have offered more data than consumers pay for. Telecommunications and internet providers have so far said the shift to remote work and learning has reshaped usage, but [not significantly strained their networks](#).

Verizon had 115.6 million wireless postpaid connections across its business at the end of March, including tablets, smartphones and other gadgets like smartwatches. Verizon's pay-television service, Fios video, lost 84,000 connections in the quarter and the company added 59,000 Fios internet connections. Verizon has closed 70% of its retail stores and sees customers by appointment only or for contactless pickups at the facilities that remain open. Store closures by the large carriers could reduce churn, but may also limit the sale of new devices and accessories, analysts say.

It has also stopped allowing technicians to enter customer homes, instead putting together boxes of equipment to leave on their doorsteps. Technicians then use videoconferencing to talk customers through how to install service. The carrier last week [announced plans to buy](#) videoconferencing service Blue Jeans Network Inc.

Net income attributable to Verizon was \$4.2 billion in the first quarter, compared with \$5 billion a year earlier. Excluding one-time charges, the profit was higher than Wall Street expected. Revenue fell to \$31.6 billion from \$32.1 billion a year ago. Revenue in the company's media unit, which includes Yahoo and AOL properties, fell 4% to \$1.7 billion. The company said those declines were almost entirely caused by the coronavirus crisis, which hurt advertising revenue. The company has cut \$6.3 billion of the \$10 billion in costs it vowed to shed by 2021. It had 135,500 employees at the end of the first quarter, compared with 135,000 a year ago. – **Wall Street Journal**

Stay safe



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