

BCAP is saddened to report Bill George, President & CEO of longtime BCAP member Ironton Telephone Company, passed away on Monday (April 24). Our thoughts and prayers are with the George family and everyone at Ironton Telephone.

[William George obituary in Allentown Morning Call](#)



**Los Angeles Times**  
[AT&T's rollout of broadband serves the rich, shunts mid- and low-income families to the slow lane](#)

**Zap2it**  
[Cable Top 25 for Week Ending April 23](#)

**phillymag.com**  
[Lt. Gov. Mike Stack Forced to Hitch Rides to Work](#)

**pennlive.com**  
[In Pa., Trump voters stand steadfast in approval of first 100 days](#)

**TVNewsCheck**  
[Data Is The Key To The Future Of Video](#)

**Media Post**  
[Cord-Cutters, 'Cord-Nevers' Differ In Viewing, Demographics, Pay TV Subs](#)

**New York Times**

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[REVOLT](#) and [TVC Communications](#) (FRIENDS)

CenturyLink appears to be in the process of dramatically shaking up its pricing -- including the elimination of a long-controversial sneaky fee -- in response to its ongoing loss of DSL subscribers. Like most second-tier telcos, CenturyLink's failure to upgrade its network at any real scale has resulted in it [losing DSL customers](#) to cable providers, who are now starting to more broadly deliver gigabit speeds. That's especially true across the second and third tier cities and smaller towns and rural markets these telcos simply don't think are worth upgrading.

But users in our [forums](#) note that CenturyLink is shaking up pricing in Nevada -- and potentially several other markets. In these markets, the company is now offering (assuming your line can handle these speeds and has been upgraded) 1.5 to 25 Mbps service for \$40, 25-80 Mbps service for \$50, 81 to 100 Mbps service for \$60, and 101 Mbps to 1 Gbps service for \$80 per month. Users in these markets have the option of either buying their modem for \$100-- or renting it for \$10 a month.

Of particular note is that CenturyLink also appears to be getting rid of the company's frequently-criticized "Internet cost recovery fee." Since [around 2013 CenturyLink](#) has been charging its customers the fee, which the [CenturyLink website](#) explains as such:

[Can Facebook Fix Its Own Worst Bug?](#)

[Lebanon Daily News Pa. has US's only Lt. Gov. mansion. Is it worth the cost?](#)

"This fee helps defray costs associated with building and maintaining CenturyLink's High-Speed Internet broadband network, as well as the costs of expanding network capacity to support the continued increase in customers' average broadband consumption."

The problem is...*that's what the rest of your bill is for*. Again, all CenturyLink is doing is using a misleading fee to artificially keep advertised rates low(er). Were regulators doing their jobs this wouldn't be allowed. But since they're not, CenturyLink notified users late last year that it would be doubling the fee to \$4. Not only do such fees let ISPs falsely advertise a lower rate, it lets them falsely claim that they haven't technically hiked their broadband prices in "x" years.

Centurylink has yet to confirm whether this pricing is going nationwide, only saying it's exploring the potential of such a shift. Of course while revamped pricing can certainly help retain frustrated customers, it only addresses part of the problem. Many of the company's defecting customers simply want faster speeds, something CenturyLink -- like countless other telcos -- has long been hesitant to invest in at any real scale. – *dslreports.com*

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The war over net neutrality is heating up in anticipation of a top regulator's announcement Wednesday, with hundreds of tech startups urging preservation of existing rules and small cable companies pleading for a rollback.

Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai was expected Wednesday to lay out his strategy for overhauling the rules governing how internet-service providers treat traffic on their networks, kicking off what is expected to be a pitched battle among interest groups, technology companies and broadband providers.

In advance of the announcement, about 800 tech companies said in a letter to him that they were "deeply concerned" about his plans. They said their businesses depend on an open internet, and suggested his plan could allow big cable and wireless companies to "discriminate against people like us." "Our companies should be able to compete with incumbents on the quality of our products and services, not our capacity to pay tolls to internet access providers," the tech firms said.

At the same time, more than 20 small-town cable and other internet-service providers said in a letter to Mr. Pai that the rules "hang like a black cloud" over them, discouraging financing and investment. They urged Mr. Pai to move quickly to change the rules, saying the net-neutrality regime has been "all cost and no benefit." "We need a return to data-driven policies and not regulatory overreach driven by speculation" about potential future harm to consumers, that group said in its letter.

The 2015 rules were aimed at requiring internet-service providers to treat all traffic equally. Cable and wireless firms generally have said they are willing to abide by net-neutrality principles such as no blocking or throttling. But they say the rules went too far by reclassifying them as common carriers, subjecting them to potentially heavy government oversight, including rate regulation.

Consumer groups, online activists and many congressional Democrats—as well as internet firms—worry that scaling back the rules could harm competition and give big telecommunications firms too much leverage. Despite the focus this week on startups and small cable firms, the coming battle pits giant telecommunications and internet firms that increasingly view each other as rivals.

Mr. Pai has said he wants to eliminate what he regards as the excesses of the Obama -era rule, while preserving the basic principles of net neutrality. His plan—to be announced in a speech to conservative groups—is expected to focus on building a case for rolling back the reclassification of internet providers as common carriers. He faces a series of legal and political challenges, however, and his speech Wednesday was expected to set off a major battle similar to the one that preceded the adoption of rules by the commission under President Barack Obama. – *Wall Street Journal*; [in TVNewsCheck, Republican Commissioner Michael O'Rielly sees fewer reqs ahead](#)

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Paul Mango will announce his gubernatorial candidacy on May 17 in Pittsburgh. The health care systems consultant and political newcomer will hold an event at Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall at 7:30 that evening, the day after the primary election.

Mr. Mango, of Pine Township (Allegheny Co.), has hired veteran campaign staff and is touring the state, meeting with GOP activists and others. He most recently worked as a senior partner in the Pittsburgh office of consultant McKinsey & Company specializing in the economics of the health-care industry. Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf is running for a second four-year term.

Republican state Sen. Scott Wagner of York County is also seeking the GOP nomination to challenge Wolf's re-election bid. State House Speaker Mike Turzai has told Republican Party officials that he's considering running. – ***Pittsburgh Post-Gazette***

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For any governor, let alone one with re-election ambitions, abusive treatment of state workers by his No. 2 is a damaging embarrassment. And, indeed, Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf couldn't unpack this baggage fast enough.

Lt. Gov. Mike Stack has proffered a pitiful apology for verbally abusing his state police protective detail and staff at the taxpayer-provided lieutenant governor's residence in Fort Indiantown Gap. There's also a pending inspector general investigation. Nevertheless, typically low-key Mr. Wolf stripped the dapper Mr. Stack of his state police detail and cut his residence staff. Even in the "State of Corruption," political pundits do not recall a point so low at which a sitting Pennsylvania governor so disciplined the lieutenant governor publicly. Then there's this: In his apology Stack also said such "unacceptable" actions "were symptoms of a larger problem." Do tell.

The state's lieutenant governor presides over the Senate, chairs the Board of Pardons and oversees the state Emergency Management Council. And even though the governor runs separately from the lieutenant governor in the primaries, the expectation is that they will work together once elected. Stack earlier this month said it had been weeks since he had spoken to Wolf. Heaven knows what will come out of the IG's investigation of Stack's treatment of publicly paid staff. But there should be no question whatsoever about releasing these findings to the public and clearing the air of this latest state stench. – ***Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*** editorial

