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Zoom, the video-conferencing software company whose popularity has skyrocketed in the social-distancing age, announced Thursday it will open two new research and development centers, including one in Pittsburgh.

The company is seeking an office location near Carnegie Mellon University in Oakland. It will open another center in the greater Phoenix area near Arizona State University. Zoom's existing research and development facility is in San Jose, Calif. "Both Phoenix and Pittsburgh have incredibly well-educated, skilled and diverse talent pools that are well-positioned to help support Zoom's ongoing growth and continued success," CEO Eric S. Yuan said in a statement.

Yuan said Zoom will hire up to 500 software engineers in the Pittsburgh and Phoenix locations over the next few years and hopes to draw recent graduates from the nearby universities. "With our visionary faculty and exceptionally talented students, Carnegie Mellon is catalyzing revolutionary work to accelerate digital transformation across markets and industries, and we look forward to partnering with Zoom to enhance their remarkable momentum in defining the future of virtual interactions," CMU president Farnam Jahanian said.

Zoom [will begin hiring](#) software engineers in Pittsburgh and Phoenix immediately. New employees will work from home until at least the fall or whenever coronavirus-related restrictions are eased. The company has seen an astronomical rise in demand as businesses have adjusted to work-from-home environments and social gatherings have largely been halted during the pandemic. In April, Zoom said it had about 300 million daily meeting participants, compared to about 10 million in December, [according to Reuters](#).

Zoom CFO Kelly Steckelberg told Reuters the Pittsburgh and Phoenix locations will be for longer-term projects and development, not for the 90-day plan to improve privacy and security that Zoom is currently about halfway through. Steckelberg also pointed to the high costs of living in Silicon Valley, which may make prospective engineers leery of moving to work in the San Jose office. The company also has a location in China.

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The median home value within the city of San Jose and neighboring Santa Clara is more than \$1 million, according to data from real estate tracking website Zillow. By stark contrast, the median home value in Pittsburgh is about \$180,000, and for all of Allegheny County it's about \$170,000. The median home value in Phoenix is \$269,000. "This will be a really great opportunity to extend our talent base across the U.S.," Steckelberg said.  
– **Pittsburgh Tribune-Review**

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The debate about whether 5G represents a viable alternative to fixed wireline broadband won't end anytime soon, but Charter Communications isn't overly worried about 5G becoming a major competitor. "I think the 5G threat has subsided," Charter CFO Chris Winfrey, said Wednesday at the J.P. Morgan Global Technology, Media and Communications Conference, an event held online, due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Charter is interested in 5G mobile services – it recently added 5G service to the Spectrum Mobile product it delivers via its MVNO with Verizon – and does see 5G playing an important role in other areas. "I think there will be applications for 5G, whether it's for the enterprise space ... We'd like to take part in that," he said. "As a standard or replacement to a quality fixed wireline product with Wi-Fi attached to, it is difficult to match."

Several service providers that lean on wireless and emerging 5G-based technologies to deliver home broadband, such as Starry, Verizon, Common Networks, T-Mobile and even Charter's MVNO partner, Verizon, would no doubt disagree with that assessment. But Charter has good reason to feel confident. It and other cable operators continue to dominate US residential broadband. In a first quarter that saw a spike in broadband subscribers and network traffic during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic took hold, the top US cable operators added about 1.23 million subs, the most they added collectively in any period since the first quarter of 2007, according to Leichtman Research Group. By comparison, the top US telcos lost 65,000 subs in Q1 2020.

Charter is also starting to position itself to help with cellular data offload with small cells that connect to its widely deployed cable network. The Verizon MVNO gives Spectrum Mobile national coverage (though about 80% of Spectrum Mobile traffic goes over Wi-Fi, per Charter's estimates). Still, there are areas within the cable operator's footprint with a lot of LTE traffic today that could be offloaded to Charter-operated small cells.

Charter, Winfrey said, is taking a build-versus-lease approach to how it weighs whether the company can achieve a better return on investment by building out small cells that can offload that traffic or continue to lease access on the cellular network. "We'll be very disciplined around how we build out any small cell infrastructure similar to what we would do with Wi-Fi outside the home," he said.

Meanwhile, Charter has also been conducting wireless tests in various bands, including the 3.5GHz CBRS band, millimeter-wave bands as well in the C-Band to see how both fixed and mobile applications perform. In the case of CBRS, Charter has already been testing it for mobile as well as a fixed option to deliver a bundle of services to areas that are not reached by its wired network.

And the result of those tests, particularly those centered on CBRS, will play a major role in determining how Charter will apply wireless technologies in the future. "We're pretty confident as we start to deploy CBRS, for licensed or unlicensed spectrum, it will work the way we think it does because we've done it already," Winfrey said. Charter also remains a big proponent of Wi-Fi and will be looking to use that technology to help it pursue network convergence strategies and new services via Wi-Fi as spectrum in the 6GHz band opens up for unlicensed use. – **LightReading**

The U.S. economy is in free fall due to the coronavirus pandemic, but political advertising is expected to reach new heights because of it. A new, [joint report from the ad tracking firm Advertising Analytics and analytics company Cross Screen Media](#) projects that the total ad spending on the 2020 election cycle will reach \$6.7 billion, up 12 percent over their initial \$6 billion projection for the cycle.

The bump is due partially to a record level of primary spending, but the coronavirus is also expected to help boost that total, according to the report, which was shared first with POLITICO. The new projection is a result, in part, of “the lack of face-to-face campaigning driving higher shares of budgets to paid media,” the report read. “In terms of political spend, [the coronavirus] has not impacted it negatively,” said Kyle Roberts, the president and CEO of Advertising Analytics, a sharp contrast to the rest of the advertising industry, which has [seen significantly lower spending](#) due to the pandemic. “These dollars can’t be allocated to ground game right now. That does open up more dollars … that are getting appropriated to the air war.”

Spending so far this cycle has been massive, thanks in part to an expensive Democratic presidential primary. So far, a cumulative \$2.19 billion has been spent this cycle, over \$1 billion more than was spent at this point in the 2016 presidential cycle. Even excluding former New York City Mayor Mike Bloomberg’s [short-lived campaign](#) from the analysis, \$1.58 billion has been spent this cycle, nearly double any previous cycle.

Spending on the presidential general election is expected to make up about a third of total political ad spending in the cycle, at a bit under \$2.2 billion. Spending on congressional races is projected to account for \$2 billion, with the battle for the House expected to be slightly more expensive than Senate races. The spending will be spread out across the country. Fourteen different markets across the country are expected to top at least \$100 million in spending, with three — Phoenix, Philadelphia and Atlanta — all expected to exceed at least \$150 million.

All three are expected to be key battlegrounds for the presidential race, and all have competitive downballot elections as well. In Arizona, Democrat Mark Kelly and GOP Sen. Martha McSally have already spent millions on the airwaves and have stockpiled more than \$20 million combined. Both Senate seats in Georgia are up in November, and the Philadelphia market includes several swing House seats in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Traditional media is still expected to rule the day, even as campaigns increasingly turn their attention online. The report projects that \$4.9 billion will be spent on broadcast, cable and radio ads, with \$1.8 billion spent on digital videos. Much of that digital spend will be on Facebook and Google, which are still considered close to a duopoly in online advertising. But digital advertising is also experiencing significant growth, with spending projected to more than double from the 2018 midterms, a much higher growth rate than television.

Roberts also pointed to the potential for explosive growth in advertising on streaming services, which are attracting more viewers during the pandemic. Democrats have fretted about Joe Biden’s digital capabilities, compared to President Donald Trump and his extensive online operation. The Biden campaign’s smaller digital shop is scrambling to adapt the [campaign of a distinctly analog candidate](#) to a world that’s increasingly been forced online due to the pandemic.

However, so far most digital spending from the campaigns has been tied to “direct response” advertising, sometimes known as acquisition ads, which either seek to directly fundraise or build candidates’ contact list, as opposed to either persuasion or get out the vote advertising. The Trump campaign has spent \$48 million on direct response ads, accounting for 94 percent of its total

spending, while the Biden's campaign \$16 million accounts for 86 percent of its total spending. – ***Politico***

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President Donald Trump's [visit to Allentown on Thursday](#) demonstrates just how much he is counting on [swing-state Pennsylvania](#) to help him win a second term in November. But Trump isn't depending on the Pennsylvania Republican Party to secure that victory. Trump's campaign and the Republican National Committee "walked away" from the state party in late February, according to two GOP consultants who spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to discuss the rift.

The parting of ways includes the Trump campaign and the RNC moving out of the state party's Harrisburg headquarters and renting their own offices. The two consultants used the phrase "walked away" independently of each other in describing the split, and a third Republican consultant confirmed their assessment.

Rick Gorka, a spokesperson for Trump Victory, the joint effort between the campaign and the RNC, suggested that the national GOP infrastructure Trump directs would limit its work with the state party to "litigation and voter contact tools." "As the President's campaign, with the RNC, builds the biggest state campaign in Pennsylvania in political history, we felt it best to fully operate the program ourselves," Gorka told Clout in an email.

In a statement, Pennsylvania GOP chairman Lawrence Tabas said the state party "works closely" with the Trump campaign and the RNC on the presidential election and down-ballot races. "Our organizations have and will always advise and support each other," Tabas said. Another prominent Republican, who also spoke on condition of anonymity, shrugged off the significance of the breach, noting that Trump's 2016 campaign also took a go-it-alone approach to Pennsylvania, with fewer resources — and still narrowly won the state.

The GOP consultants cited three sources of friction: There were tensions about issues like who decided which delegates to the Republican National Convention would be endorsed by the campaign. There were concerns on the campaign and RNC side the state party wasn't raising enough money. And there was residual resentment that Tabas, [who took control of the state party](#) in July, had bested Bernadette "Bernie" Comfort, the party vice chairperson [favored by Trump's camp](#). Comfort, who dropped her bid for the post, was instead named chairperson of Trump's campaign in Pennsylvania.

The top job was open because former GOP chair Valentino "Val" DiGiorgio [III resigned in June](#), just hours after The Inquirer reported that he [had traded sexually charged messages](#) with a Philadelphia City Council candidate. Tabas lost by two votes to DiGiorgio in a 2017 election for chair. It remains to be seen whether the national party's financial support for the state party will change. Trump's campaign had been sending the Pennsylvania party about \$95,000 per month for payroll for about 50 employees, field offices, insurance, and typical election costs like setting up voter outreach booths at events, [according to federal records](#) and one of the consultants. The RNC had given the state party almost \$210,000 from the start of the year through March, the [most recent round of campaign finance reports](#) showed.

The consultants said the campaign and RNC also moved out of the state party's headquarters, down State Street from the Capitol in Harrisburg. But it was not clear if the new offices have been occupied due to stay-at-home orders during the coronavirus pandemic. – **Chris Brennan's "Clout" column in *Philadelphia Daily News***

# Stay safe



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