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Allentown Morning Call

The cable industry's top lobbying groups filed comments this week related to an April NPRM intended to spur deployment of fiber wireline services.

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“Attachers face problems in obtaining access to poles, ducts, and conduit for two primary reasons. First, many utilities oppose mandated access to these facilities and have little, if any, incentive to provide access on a reasonable basis,” said the American Cable Association. “The second problem attachers face is that the Commission’s complaint process has proven to be of little value to attachers, especially smaller entities, in addressing all but the most serious and substantial attachment problems,” ACA added.

Charter Communications also rhetorically weighed in, saying, “Charter is committed to expanding the reach of its high-speed broadband network including to rural communities. In the last year alone we have taken steps to deploy high-speed broadband to unconnected homes and businesses across the country, including in

Wisconsin, California and Massachusetts. We look forward to working with the Commission on solutions that protect consumers from service disruptions and duplicative fees which can make broadband less accessible for consumers.”

NCTA said that utilities are artificially extending FCC deadlines for handling pole-attachment applications, and that cable operators are being charged fees already incurred in their pole rentals. On April 20, the FCC established the notice of proposed rulemaking, “In the Matter of Accelerating Wireline

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Broadband Deployment by Removing Barrier to Infrastructure Investment,” which is intended to help operators build new networks. Understandably, cable lobbyists are eager to chime in with suggestions.

The ACA, for example, is asking FCC to simplify hoops operators endure when they overlash and install drops to existing customers. The group wants to enable operators to receive compensatory damages and recoup legal fees when utilities cause unreasonable delays on pole attachments. ACA also wants symmetrical indemnification provisions between attachers and utilities, and it wants to limit penalties for unauthorized attachments to “an amount no greater than that provided under the recent Oregon Public Utility Commissions ruling.”

“The declarations of ACA members—who are investing in network upgrades and new deployments—provide abundant evidence that they continue to face hurdles in obtaining fair and reasonable access to poles and that the FCC needs to act in its Wireline Infrastructure rulemaking to remedy them,” said ACA President and CEO Matthew Polka, in a statement.

“By removing barriers to infrastructure investment and reforming rules that increase costs and slow network deployment as ACA details in its comments, the FCC will make the pole attachment process work better for attachers and utilities alike and foster the expansion of high-performance broadband service, including to rural and unserved areas,” Polka added. – *Fierce Cable*

Facebook Inc. and Alphabet Inc.’s Google tower so far above the rest of the digital advertising world that no company can claim the mantle of No. 3. But many are trying.

Snapchat parent Snap Inc. believes it has the young eyeballs advertisers crave. Amazon.com Inc., ever the disrupter, has the ability to upend the whole business with its extensive data. Verizon Communications Inc. [is betting on its blend of web content, location data and ad technology](#) following the purchases of AOL and Yahoo , while [AT&T Inc. thinks buying Time Warner Inc. will give it an edge](#). With the exception of Chinese internet giants Alibaba Group Holding Ltd., Baidu Inc. and Tencent Holdings Ltd., which dominate their home market—where their Western rivals are restricted—none of the would-be challengers to the Google-Facebook “duopoly” even cracks a 3% share of global digital advertising.

Google and Facebook together collect nearly half of global spending. Last year, the U.S. online ad market expanded by nearly \$12 billion and the two firms accounted for over 77% of that spending growth, according to eMarketer. Advertisers are hoping for the emergence of a legitimate third player to provide competition that can give them more leverage and help keep prices in check. For ad agencies, the matter is existential: Google and Facebook have the resources to deploy entire teams to work with marketers directly, cutting out the middleman.

Wenda Harris Millard, vice chairman at advertising and media consulting firm MediaLink, said that to compete with Google and Facebook, other players will need to create premium content that appeals to advertisers or use new technologies that aren’t yet mainstream. “Maybe the third player competes on different grounds,” Ms. Millard said. Many ad executives believe Amazon, which has expanded successfully beyond its core retail business into areas like streaming video and artificial intelligence, has the greatest chance of taking on the “duopoly.”

[Amazon already allows marketers to place search ads on its website](#), as well as display ads on all its platforms. The company also built a tool that lets companies tap the e-commerce giant’s data on its consumers’ shopping habits in order to more efficiently place ads elsewhere on the web. And [Amazon is helping publishers make more money from the ads](#) on their sites with a so-called “header bidding” product that gives multiple buyers a chance to bid on their ads at the same time. EMarketer predicts Amazon will generate \$1.81 billion in ad revenue world-wide in 2017, a tiny fraction of Google’s \$74 billion. Amazon declined to comment.

“Amazon is going to be an increasingly important force and one we have to better understand and link with effectively for our clients,” Martin Sorrell, the chief executive of ad holding giant WPP PLC said at the company’s annual meeting earlier this month. He said the company was “highly disruptive in many ways.” On Amazon’s first-quarter earnings call in April, Chief Financial Officer Brian Olsavsky said the company was “very happy” with the growth of its ad business.

Snap is the newest contender for the third-place rosette. In 5½ years, [Snapchat has grown to 166 million active users](#)—a mere blip compared with Facebook’s 1.24 billion daily active users, though the gap is much narrower in strong ad markets like the U.S. and Canada. Snapchat’s advantage is that its audience is mostly made up of the 18- to 34-year-old segment. On average, each Snapchatter spends more than 30 minutes daily in the app, giving advertisers lots of opportunities to target them. Snapchat

has also brought on board several TV companies and publishers for the app's "Discover" section, offering marketers the opportunity to position their ads next to curated content.

Snap's ad business still has some catching up to do: Its average revenue per user in North America in its first quarter was \$1.81, while Facebook clocked \$16.56 per user in the U.S. and Canada. Snap declined to comment.

Verizon also is emerging as a "new" player, having just merged AOL and Yahoo to form an advertising and content unit of the company called "Oath." "There are only three companies in the world that touch one billion consumers digitally—Facebook, Google, and Oath," said former AOL boss Tim Armstrong—now the CEO of Oath—in an interview.

Mr. Armstrong believes the company can expand its reach to two billion people world-wide and ratchet up revenue to between \$10 billion and \$20 billion by around 2020. The recipe: ad technology it has spent years investing in, location data and well-known web brands including HuffPost and Yahoo Sports. He said rivals to Google and Facebook can zero in on "white spaces" with no dominant player: promoting brands instead of specific products, and using newer technologies such as augmented reality and virtual reality, for example.

Verizon's chief rival, AT&T, has its own lofty ambitions. AT&T CEO Randall Stephenson said at a conference in May that the Time Warner acquisition would create an entity that **delivers nearly "one trillion" ad impressions a year**. Mr. Stephenson said his company will be able to make money from Warner Bros. and Turner shows at a higher rate because it has data on AT&T subscribers' internet usage that can help marketers more accurately target their intended audiences.

For the foreseeable future, Madison Avenue will have to get used to dealing with two dominant players, a dynamic that isn't totally alien in the ad business. "From a small-business perspective it's not much different than when Yellow Pages was the only game in town," said Pivotal Research analyst Brian Weiser. "For large brands, it's not that different than the era where there were three [TV] networks." — **Wall Street Journal**

Pennsylvania ranks 49th out of 50 states - and the U.S. is 100th globally - in female representation in elected office, according to Representation 20/20, a political advocacy group whose goal is to have more women running for and winning office. The reasons for that are complex, said state **Rep. Lynda Schlegel Culver**, R-108, of Sunbury.

Culver is one of "about 37 female representatives" from both parties among the 203 House members, she said. "I would think that for any woman with a family it is challenging to balance family, children and the job," Culver said. "It's a difficult balance, and you have to have your entire family committed to you participating in public service." She also believes that for generations, women weren't really pushed into running for public office. "We see that changing," she said Friday afternoon. "A lot of women's programs come down through Harrisburg. And we'll go down and meet with them before a session or during lunch and get a feel for what women are thinking."

When you talk to the general population, Culver said, "Most people don't say, 'I'm going to run for public office someday.' And that is why you have programs like Leadership Susquehanna Valley and similar programs, to get people to understand that every experience you have is beneficial to public service." Why more women don't hold leadership roles in Congress is an age-old question, she said. "But I think you'll begin to see a natural turnover of more women to run for office," she said.

Beth Kremer, chairwoman of the Northumberland County Republican Committee, agrees. "I'm hearing little girls saying, 'I want to become president,'" Kremer said. "And that kind of thinking should be encouraged." Kremer, like Culver, said that balancing family, kids and job responsibilities is difficult and a tough decision for women to make when considering entering public service. "I didn't really get involved earlier when I was starting a family," she said.

Penn State graduate Ferris Eanfar, an expert in international economics and politics, has posted a blog on the university's website on the topic. "Regardless of gender," Eanfar said, "you must have an extremely competitive and aggressive predisposition to even consider going into national-level politics. And to excel in national-level politics requires a nearly maniacal, single-minded competitive impulse. An electoral system that rewarded wisdom and discernment over competitive aggression would yield very different results, including participation from many more smart and educated women."

Mississippi is No. 50 among states in female representation in elected office. New Hampshire ranks first. — **Pittsburgh Tribune-Review**



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