

Consumer Connections

Brought to you by the Consumer Affairs and Outreach Division
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau, FCC

June 2019

June is National Internet Safety Month

The FCC would like to remind consumers about these Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connection security tips.

- Make sure all websites you exchange information with have "https" at the beginning of the web address. If so, your transmitted data will be encrypted
- Adjust your smartphone's settings so it does not automatically connect to nearby Wi-Fi networks. This gives you more control over where and when you connect.
- When transmitting sensitive information, using your cellphone data plan may be more secure than public Wi-Fi.
- Turn Bluetooth off when not in use. Keeping it active enables hackers to discover what other devices you connected to before, spoof one of those devices, and gain access to your device.

For more about protecting yourself online, read our [Consumer Guide](#)

Southeast Region Rural Tour



Left to Right: Anthony Butler (FCC), Holly Steuart (WTVM9), Sherry Dawson (FCC), Ed Bartholme (FCC) Bob Houghton (Georgia Association of Broadcasters) and Lyle Banks, (WGCL-TV) at a Community Meeting in Conyers, GA

In May, Consumer Affairs and Outreach staff covered 710 miles while visiting 18 communities in South Carolina and Georgia as part of our [Southeast Rural Tour](#). The tour included nine meetings with elected officials, seven community meetings and 11 material drop offs.

While such meetings provide us with a chance to share best practices and tips on a variety of pocketbook issues, they also give us an opportunity to learn directly from consumers and local officials about issues that impact and annoy them the most. It is probably no surprise that robocalls and spoofing remained the topics of greatest interest to consumers and elected officials alike.

One local police officer told us about an imposter scam in which the officer was called by a scammer claiming to be him, seeking payment on an outstanding warrant. The scammer had taken the officer's name and phone number from the local police department website and was using [spoofing](#) to target the local community. At another meeting, we spoke with a rural phone service provider who was being spoofed as part of a utility payment scam. These stories and others learned on the trip will help inform our outreach and education efforts moving forward.

This was our third Rural Tour and we look forward to continuing them once a quarter in different regions. The CAOD team will be in Minnesota and Wisconsin for our Midwest Tour June 24-28. Please contact us at outreach@fcc.gov, if you are in the area or want to work with us to set up community engagement events on future tours.

Events

Consumer Advisory Committee Meeting

([Event page](#))

June 3, 2019;
9:00 am EDT

Open Commission Meetings

June 6, 2019

([Event page](#))

10:30 am - 12:30 pm EDT

July 10, 2019

([Event page](#))

10:30 am - 12:30 pm EDT

The Chairman's Awards for Advancement in Accessibility (Chairman's AAA)

June 18, 2019

Ceremony held at M-Enabling Summit in Arlington, VA

More info:

fcc.gov/chairmansaaa

Chairman Pai Announces Robocalls Summit

July 11, 2019

More info:

[News Release](#)

All FCC Events: fcc.gov/events

CAOD Staff Radar

June 1-9 NAAC Hope Booth Ribbon Cutting Tour – CA

June 20-25 American Library Association Conference – DC

June 24-28 Midwest Rural Tour – MN & WI

June 26 AARP Scam Jam – MN

July 7-10 Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Annual Conference – RI

July 10-13 LULAC Convention - WI

FCC Joins AARP Webinar for Consumers on Phone Scams

In May, the FCC participated in an AARP two-part webinar, [Who's Really on the Line? Fending Off Illegal Robocalls & Spoofing](#). More than 5,000 consumers watched FCC experts Ed Bartholme and Kristi Thompson discuss how to avoid phone scams and how the agency is helping consumers through enforcement actions. The webinars covered FCC initiatives that will enable service providers to improve caller ID and call blocking technology for use on both landlines and cell phones. The event also launched the results of a [survey](#) on spoofing and robocalls.

You can find recommendations for avoiding unwanted calls in our consumer guides about [spoofed caller ID](#) and [illegal robocalls](#).

View the newly released FCC animated video on spoofing: [Don't Hang On, Hang Up](#)

Older Americans Month



Webinar Speakers Left to Right: Alma Hughes (FCC), Jean Kiddoo (FCC), Dan Stepanicich (FCC), Ed Bartholme (FCC), Chantal Virgile (FCC), Ron Mori (AARP) and Dr. Chris Gibbons

In recognition of Older Americans Month, the FCC hosted a webinar to share some helpful consumer information. During the webinar FCC and AARP representatives provided tips and resources to raise awareness

about caller ID spoofing scams, along with information on a variety of other consumer topics:

- **Broadcast Transition:** fcc.gov/TVrescan
 - Rescan Assistance Consumer Call Center: Consumers can access the call center by dialing the toll-free number 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) and pressing "6" to speak to a help desk representative. The call center operates between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. Eastern time, seven days a week.
- **Robocalls and spoofing:**
 - fcc.gov/robocalls
 - fcc.gov/spoofing
- **Telehealth:** fcc.gov/health
- **FCC Consumer Help Center:** fcc.gov/consumers
- **AARP Resources:**
 - The Fraud Watch Network, aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork, provides consumers with access to information about identity theft, investment fraud and the latest scams.
 - Consumers can call when they spot a scam or if they suspect a family member has fallen victim: Fraud Watch Network Helpline 1-877-908-3360.
 - *Facing Fraud or Saving Face? A Survey of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders 50 years and Older on Fraud and Scams:* aarp.org/AAPIfraudsurvey

View Archived Webinar: [Information for Older American Consumers](#)

Broadcast Transition Information

Did you know that some TV stations may be changing frequencies in your market? If you watch TV with an antenna, please remember to rescan!

Phase 3 of the broadcast transition began 4/13/2019 and ends 6/21/2019.

Phase 4 begins 6/22/2019 and ends 8/2/2019

More info including a map that allows viewers to insert an address to see the frequency change timeframe for most local channels:

fcc.gov/TVrescan

Rescan Assistance

Consumer Call Center:

1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322); Press 6

FCC Consumer Help Center

fcc.gov/consumers

FCC Consumer Complaint Center

consumercomplaints.fcc.gov

Stay Connected with the FCC:

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[YouTube](#)

Contact CAOD:

If you have questions about consumer issues and outreach at the FCC or recommendations for this newsletter, please contact outreach@fcc.gov

Visit CAOD's Webpage:

fcc.gov/outreach



Deandrea Wilson presenting at Holiday Park Senior Center.

In addition to the webinar, CGB staff provided information at three senior centers during the month of May. Led by Alma Hughes, staff visited the Washington Wellness Senior Center (Washington, D.C.), the Holiday Park Senior Center (Wheaton, Md.) and the St. Martin de Porres Senior Center (Alexandria, Va.).

Emergency Communications Tips for Hurricane Season

Be prepared! This year's Atlantic and Pacific hurricane seasons are now underway, with both running through November 30. The FCC and FEMA recommend the following tips on how to prepare for an emergency and what to do during a communications network outage.

Preparations:

- Check landline phone back-up batteries and replace if necessary.
- Fully charge mobile phones, devices, batteries and portable rechargers.
- Back up computer data and print out important personal emergency information.
- Note local emergency and non-emergency numbers.
- Ask local public safety officials if the 911 call center in your area supports text-to-911.
- Consider buying a battery-operated, solar powered or hand-cranked radio or portable TV.

During and After:

- Seek shelter and monitor emergency broadcasts.
- Switch phones and devices to power-saving modes and turn off when not in use.
- Call 911 only when necessary and limit non-emergency calls.
- Avoid repetitive redialing. Try texting if calls don't go through.
- If evacuated, forward your landline to your cell phone, if possible.

Additional Online Resources:

- fcc.gov/emergency
- ready.gov
- fema.gov

Tips for Consumers to Remember While Travelling

As you head out of town for vacation, remember to take steps to secure your devices. Mobile phones, tablets and laptops store personal information that can be as valuable as the contents of your suitcase, if not more so. Leave any electronic equipment you won't need on your trip at home. If you do take a device with you, be sure you protect it: back up your electronic files, remove sensitive data, install strong passwords, and make sure your antivirus software is up to date. While traveling, be vigilant about where and how you use your devices. Make sure you keep your devices secure in public places such as airports, hotels and restaurants. Be aware of your surroundings and take care that nobody is trying to steal information from you by sneaking peaks at your device screen while you're using it. Never enter passwords or other sensitive information over unsecure public Wi-Fi connections.