

Consumer Connections

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

November 2019

November is National Veterans & Military Families Month

- Military service members who are relocating may be able to cancel long-term mobile service agreements if they meet certain criteria. [Learn more](#)
- Military members and families should watch out for imposter scams using illegal robocalls and spoofed caller ID. [Learn how to protect yourself](#)
- Veterans have been targeted in benefits scams. [Learn more](#)
- Military members are always on the go. Be sure to check your phone bill for unauthorized charges. [Learn more](#)
- Know someone in the military who is stationed abroad? Learn more about possible surcharges when you use your landline to call a wireless phone overseas. [Learn more](#)



Left to Right: Ed Bartholme (FCC), Mike Snyder (FCC), Sheriff Larry Koranda (Cedar County Sheriff's Office) and Hartington, NE Mayor Mark Becker

Nebraska and Kansas Rural Tour

From September 17 - 21, 2019, representatives from the Federal Communications Commission visited sixteen cities on its [Nebraska and Kansas Rural Tour](#). This tour was the fifth in a series of trips designed to build partnerships with

local community leaders and to hear concerns directly from the public. The team travelled approximately 705 miles between the two states to host events and give presentations at senior centers, City Halls and libraries. Topics covered included illegal robocalls, the ongoing broadcast transition, recent telecom scams and more. They also met with several law enforcement and elected officials, who told stories about their work, how they are addressing robocalls, and how they assist scam victims. During the tour, the FCC cohosted a public event with AARP at the Keene Memorial Library in Freemont, NE that featured an engaging discussion with panelists from AARP, the Nebraska Attorney General's Office, the Nebraska Public Service Commission and Nebraska Telecommunications Association. Chairman Pai joined the team to provide remarks about the FCC's consumer protection work and ongoing efforts to combat unwanted calls. The last stop on the tour was an event in Leavenworth, KS planned in partnership with the Kansas Attorney General's Office. Ed Bartholme, Associate Bureau Chief of the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau and Acting Deputy Attorney General Kate Carter discussed each of the agencies' roles and consumer protection work.

The next Rural Tour will be to Arizona and New Mexico from January 27-31, 2020. For more information, email us at outreach@fcc.gov.

Events

Open Commission Meetings

November 22, 2019

10:30 am - 12:30 pm EDT

[\(Event Page\)](#)

December 12, 2019

10:30 am - 12:30 pm EDT

[\(Event page\)](#)

Consumer Advisory
Committee Meeting
December 11, 2019

9 am EDT

All FCC Events:

fcc.gov/events

Broadcast Transition Information

Did you know that some TV stations may be changing frequencies in your market?

If you watch TV with an antenna, remember to rescan!

Phase 7 of the transition began 10/19/2019 and ends 1/17/2020.

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

TV Rescan Assistance
Consumer Call Center:
1-888-CALL-FCC; Press 6

FCC Scam Glossary

Check out the newly launched [FCC Scam Glossary](#) to stay updated on current robocall and spoofing scams impacting consumers. The Glossary includes brief scam descriptions and links to detailed information.



Alma Hughes (FCC) discussing robocalls with a consumer at the WBA Clinic

Wisconsin Broadcasters Association Clinic

In October, the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association (WBA) held its 2019 clinic in Middleton, WI. The purpose of this clinic is to bring together the very best in the industry - diverse and dynamic speakers, panelists, and exhibitors - to provide in-depth insight, as well as, actionable and practical tools, models, methods and mechanisms needed in today's broadcasting environment. Alma Hughes of the FCC's Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau discussed robocalls, and spoofing, including tips on how to avoid becoming a victim of telephone scams.



Alma Hughes providing information at HUD's ConnectHomeUSA Summit

Exhibiting in Local Communities

Throughout September and October, CAOD staff exhibited at several conferences and events to share information with local communities. CAOD provided community leaders with educational materials about illegal robocalls, spoofing and recent telecom scams for distribution. Event attendees were able to voice their concerns, providing FCC representatives with valuable first-hand accounts. We participated in SOMEfest hosted by So Others Might Eat (SOME), the House of Ruth and DC Housing Authority Resource Fair and at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s ConnectHomeUSA Summit.

Disability Outreach

On Wednesday October 2 2019, the Federal Communications Commission's Section 504 Compliance Officer Gerard Williams participated at the Family Online Safety Institute's panel discussion on Inclusion, Accessibility, and Tech. Along with representatives from the non-profit sector and other government agencies, Gerard discussed the intersection of emerging technology, family, and safety, highlighting the importance of collaboration with people with disabilities when developing new products or determining whether products are not only accessible but usable. As technology becomes more ubiquitous in our daily lives it is more important than ever to ensure that we can work towards a future that includes everyone, and nowhere is this more apparent than with children. The plethora of technology tools available that can support children with disabilities presents an incredible opportunity to level the playing field for the future generations. It also presents challenges in privacy and security that must be addressed. Balancing these benefits and challenges will require a sustained effort by industry, non-profits, and government agencies.

Join us for our Monthly Consumer Information Call!

CAOD hosts a monthly conference call the second Tuesday of the month.

Upcoming Calls:

December 10, 2019
2:00 p.m. EDT

Topics:

- Holiday Related Consumer Tips
- Scam Glossary Topic:
[Banking/Credit Card Scams](#)

To RSVP and for phone bridge information email
outreach@fcc.gov

**FCC Consumer Help
Center**
fcc.gov/consumers

**FCC Consumer
Complaint Center**
consumercomplaints.fcc.gov

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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



Left to Right: Bill Graham, founder of ALDA
and Gerard Williams, FCC at ALDAcon

October 23-25, 2019, Gerard also exhibited at the Association for Late Deafened Adults (ALDA) 2019 conference in Kansas City, Kansas, to share important consumer information with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. Conference attendees were surprised and enthused to find the FCC exhibiting at ALDAcon. The exhibit booth was heavily trafficked. It will come as no surprise that illegal robocalls, spoofing, and scams were top of mind for most consumers. Sharing the FCC's efforts to combat illegal robocalls while balancing a consumer's right to receive all legitimate phone calls went a long way to reassuring consumers that the FCC is on the case. Attendees also learned about the myriad ways they can reach out to the FCC for information or to file informal complaints.

Port-Out Fraud Targets Your Private Accounts

What's your most important financial number? Is it your Social Security number? The number on your bank account? How about your mobile phone number? Text messages are often used by banks, businesses and payment services to verify your identity when you request updates to your account. Scammers may target your mobile number to access private texts, calls and other personal information. Posing as you, they ask your phone company to 'port' your number to a new device, enabling them to reset your financial and social media access credentials before you know it. Savvy scammers know that by hijacking your mobile phone number they can assume your identity, intercept security protocols sent to your phone, and gain access to your financial and social media accounts. This scam is sometimes referred to as SIM swapping or SIM cloning. [Learn more about port out scams.](#)

How to Protect Yourself

- Be Proactive: If you don't already have a PIN or a password to verify your identity when calling about your account, contact your phone company and ask about adding one.
- Stay Vigilant: Enable both email and text notifications for financial and other important accounts. If you receive notice that changes to your account have been made without your knowledge, contact the business holding that account immediately to let them know that you didn't authorize a change.
- Don't Respond: If someone calls or texts you and asks for personal information, do not provide it. If the caller claims to be from a business you are familiar with, hang up and call that business using a number you trust, such as the number on your bill, in a phone book or on the company's website.
- Don't overshare: Guard personal details that can be used to verify your identity – such as the last four digits of your Social Security number, your phone number, your date of birth, the make and model of your car, your pet's name, or your mother's maiden name. And keep that information off social media.

Act Quickly

Typically, loss of service on your device - your phone going dark or only allowing 911 calls - is the first sign this has happened. If you suspect you have been a victim of a porting-out scam, take immediate action:

- Contact your phone company.
- Contact your bank and other financial institutions.
- File a police report.
- Place a fraud alert on your credit reports and get copies of your report.