

UC study finds AT&T is expanding digital divide

By J. Stephen McLaughlin
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AT&T, the largest telecom provider in California, through its policies is widening the already-yawning digital divide between urban and rural, and also between wealthy and low-income internet users. That's the conclusion of a study released Tuesday by the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society at UC Berkeley, "AT&T's Digital Divide in California: An Analysis of AT&T Fiber Deployment and Wireline Broadband Speeds in California." It was funded in part by the Communications Workers of America District 9.

The study was unveiled during a statewide conference call on Tuesday. Trish Steel, Executive Committee Chair,

Broadband Alliance of Mendocino County, participated in the call to bring attention to the total lack of any AT&T wireline broadband services to broad swaths of rural California.

The study assesses AT&T's fiber and wireline access using United States Census data overlaid on AT&T's own self-reporting of its coverage to the Federal Communications Commission.

One key finding was that AT&T built its all-fiber network, one of three wireline technologies deployed by the company, "disproportionately in higher income communities. If this pattern continues, it has troubling consequences for low- and moderate-income Californians, leaving many

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Caltrans, Jim Wood strike cable deal

By S. J. Black
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Caltrans will implement a policy to "dig once" for telecommunications projects parallel to state-owned roads and install a broadband conduit, potentially bringing internet service to unserved or underserved rural areas as early as this summer.

After working with legislature, an agreement was made to bypass legislation and establish the idea as Caltrans policy.

For years, the state has attempted to bring 98 percent of Californians broadband access in their homes. The legislature passed the California Advanced Services

Fund in 2007, a program to provide grants to telephone corporations to bring internet service to unserved and underserved areas. CASF gave out hundreds of thousands of dollars to see that goal realized by the end of 2015, according to CASF records.

Two years later, the goal still hasn't been reached. By current standards, about 95.2 percent of Californians have broadband service in their homes, according to an analysis of the CASF annual report of 2015. This leaves 359,000 households still without broadband service, many of which are in priority

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Huffman town hall - 'This is what democracy looks like'

By Zoë Smith

Rep. Jared Huffman, of California's 2nd District, took the mic in front of cheering and applauding constituents at a Town Hall in Cotton Auditorium, Fort Bragg, Wednesday, April 19. Echoing an often-heard chant at recent marches across the country Huffman said, "This is what democracy looks like."

Members of Redwood Coast Democrats, Redwood Coast Indivisible and KGUA 88.3 FM attended, poised to ask questions. Calling it, "An important community conversation," Huffman said he appreciated those who came out to attend the midday, midweek meeting. The town hall was billed as open topics so constituents could ask questions across many issues and raise specific concerns.

Speaking extemporaneously Huffman called this, "an interesting time to be in the United States Congress." But then, refusing to play down recent developments he became more blunt: "This is a pretty dark and dangerous, troubling time." Huffman said the election, transition and divisive politics have, "brought out some of the worst in our country."

"This is not a drill. This is very real," he added. "Outside of the front page of the news there's really bad stuff going on. I'm fighting those fights every single day right now in the House of Representatives."

Huffman enumerated some of those fights, which he said are moving through the House of Representatives and

Senate as well: to stop efforts to deregulate and roll-back environmental protection, consumer protection and citizen protection from overreach in the financial industry. Some of his previous town hall meetings have focused on health care and climate change, which are also on the forefront of Huffman's work in the House.

He said engagement

and positive action are exciting and called what is happening, in communities and town halls across his district, "an awakening. There's a galvanizing underway ... We have had a huge wake-up call about our democracy, about who we are, what kind of country we want to have."

Huffman fielded questions for the remainder

of the one and three-quarter hour meeting. In response to a request that he advocate for a special prosecutor for the Russia-Trump campaign connection, Huffman replied that a special prosecutor would have to be appointed by Attorney General, Jeff Sessions. Huffman is pushing instead for an

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Clinic asks ambulance district for increased urgent care funds

By S. J. Black
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Redwood Coast Medical Services asked for an additional \$150,000 for its urgent care budget for the fiscal year 2017/2018 in the Coast Life Support District Board of Directors meeting Monday, April 24.

"For the first time in three years we're asking for an increase in the amount of funding," said Diane Agee, CEO of RCMS, who presented the budget. "Bottom line, we're estimating ... we'll probably lose about \$43,000 this fiscal year."

Agee said the changes are due to a few different reasons, including a potential loss of patient revenues. "I think some of the people may not buy insurance because of this federal administration change," she said, estimating RCMS would be seeing fewer MediCal patients as well.

To rectify this, RCMS is applying for more federal grants to help pay for what she called the "sliding fee scale." These patients are "low income and uninsured," Agee said, and these grants would cover the costs of their

medical expenses. But much of the additional costs are going toward operational expenses, which are "about \$39,000 higher," than comparative years. These operational expenses include IV fluids, pharmaceutical drugs and lab testing.

"They're very expensive," said Agee. Tests to find out if a patient is undergoing a heart attack cost about \$800 an order,

she said. RCMS is also adding a registered nurse on the weekends to prevent overtime for other medical personnel. "If [physician assistants] have got somebody who walks through the door at a quarter to six, they're in trouble," she said. "So this will also actually save us a little bit of money on the overtime."

The Board discussed **See funding...**
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Judge blocks Trump order on sanctuary city funding

By Sudhin Thanawala
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A federal judge on Tuesday blocked a Trump administration order to withhold funding from communities that limit cooperation with U.S. immigration authorities, saying the president has no authority to attach new conditions to federal spending.

U.S. District Judge William Orrick issued the temporary ruling in a lawsuit against the executive order targeting so-called sanctuary cities. The decision will

stay in place while the lawsuit works its way through court.

The Trump administration and two California governments that sued over the order disagreed about its scope during a recent court hearing.

San Francisco and Santa Clara County argued that it threatened billions of dollars in federal funding for each of them, making it difficult to plan their budgets.

"It's not like it's just some small amount of money," John Kecker, an **See Sanctuary...**
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Katie Pence newest member of GMAC

Katie Pence of Gualala has been named to the Gualala Municipal Advisory Council by the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors, and will be sworn in at the Council's May 4 meeting, according to Chair Robert Juengling. Juengling said GMAC is still short an alternate and is still looking for potential members.

Pence said she has dealt with Mendocino County bureaucracy on a number of issues for which she has needed Coastal Development Permits, building permits and other approvals and has found the

County "very unhelpful." As a member of GMAC, she hopes to be able to change that.

She has lived in the general Mendocino coastal area since 1984, working at Odiyan Retreat Center in Sonoma County for over 30 years. She has also lived in Anchor Bay and Point Arena and now lives on a 40-acre permanent culture farm near Gualala.

"I have a lot of experience with the County," she said as a result of building three houses and doing a remodel. "It will be interesting for me to have a voice," Pence said.

Opioid... from Page 1

and for any number of reasons their finances dwindle," she said. "This is when they switch to heroin, which is cheaper and easier to obtain."

Distribution and purchasing of opioids often takes place using technology including social media, "which makes it more difficult to track," said Harris.

On a nationwide scale, however, drug overdoses in California are considered "statistically insignificant," according to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The CDC found that California has seen a rise of 1.8 percent of drug overdoses from 2014 to 2015. Meanwhile, New York saw an increase of 20.4 percent in the same amount of time.

Dr. Karen Milman, Sonoma County health officer, said that drug-related deaths, in particular to opioid overdoses, are continuing to the rise.

"What's also interesting," Milman said, "is that the amount of opioid prescription medications being produced and sold is going up tremendously

[and] is exactly parallel to the overdose.

"The goal is to educate parents and youth about the epidemic and its consequences," she added.

On Thursday, April 27, a Community Take Back event will be held in Ukiah to allow people to safely dispose of unneeded prescription drugs. The Safe Rx Coalition and the Ukiah Drug Free Coalition will provide medication lock bags for free, said Klimist.

On Saturday, April 29, the Fort Bragg Police Department, Fort Bragg Drug Free Coalition and the Coast Safe Rx Coalition will sponsor a similar event, and more are promised in the future.

"These are a very important deterrent and prevention method to keep our youth safe," Klimist said. "The number one way that youth access prescription drugs is in their parents or grandparents medicine cabinet."

Mendocino County recently received a grant to specifically address opioid abuse and misuse as an issue. The grant will start in July, "so there is more to come," said Klimist.

Telescope... from Page 8

Violette DeGarmo Baker, Elizabeth Vasquez, Isela Gaona, Rachel Malik, Cristina Fuentes, Jackson King, Brynney Zamora, Kaeley Mondragon, Dora Rodriguez, Shayla Buechner, Damien Nelson, Hailey Caughey, Jared

Sundstrom, Estelle Burkhardt, Willa Courdrey, Karina Chavez, Sebastian Reaves, McKena Kramer, Elise Allen, Faye Ritchie, Jessica Hughes, Rachel Kritz, Shayla Hay, Amanda Terlouw, Amelia Ronne, Matt Sanders and Griffin Barry.

Divide... from Page 3

without access to AT&T's gold standard all-fiber network and exacerbating the digital divide."

The study's statistics show the median household income of California communities with access to AT&T's fiber-to-the-home network is \$94,208, to U-verse, the second wireline technology is \$67,021, and to the DSL network, the slowest wireline technology the company offers, is \$53,186.

On Tuesday, co-author Garrett Strain said the study did not address wireless technology, dismissing it as "less reliable, more expensive, and you can't do many critical activities on a small wireless connection."

In the rural Mendocino area, however, AT&T does not offer any of its wireline internet options. Two wireless internet service providers, Further Reach and SkyFiber, have connected hundreds of users here who report reliable and fast connections.

Sea Ranch Connect is a home-grown fiber-to-the-home network that is in the process of connecting every Sea Ranch parcel to the internet. CalNeva Broadband offers broadband through its cable and wireless systems in Gualala, Point Arena, Manchester, Elk and The Sea Ranch.

The study describes the three non-wireless broadband technologies AT&T offers to consumers in California:

DSL is the oldest and slowest wireline broadband technology. DSL delivers data traffic over the traditional copper network at download speeds typically in the range between 0.768 Mbps and 6 Mbps, depending on the customer's distance from the switch. It is limited to 18,000 feet from a central office. This is the only wireline broadband technology available to 2,677,141 California households (27.6 percent) in AT&T's wireline footprint.

VDSL, which AT&T markets as U-verse, is a fiber-to-the-node network that delivers data over fiber to a neighborhood cabinet and then over the traditional copper network to the customer location. This technology typically delivers Internet download speeds between 12 and

18 Mbps over a single copper pair (again depending on the distance from the switch), but the speed can go up to 75 Mbps. Almost three-quarters (71.6 percent) of California households in the AT&T wireline footprint—6,937,319 households—have access to U-verse Internet, almost all in urban or suburban communities. AT&T has largely bypassed rural communities in deploying U-verse.

Fiber-to-the-Home. In the past year, AT&T began to deploy all-fiber networks in communities across its 21-state wireline footprint, including California. All-fiber networks are capable of delivering "Gigapower" speeds of up to 1,000 Mbps download and upload. As of April 20, 2017 AT&T reported that it had deployed all-fiber networks to 4.6 million customer locations across its 21-state footprint.

Some 1.7 million households are underserved by AT&T, according to the study. The California Public Utilities Commission defines communities without access to broadband at a speed of at least 6 Megabits per second download/1.5 Mbps upload as underserved. A full 18.1 percent of California households in AT&T's wireline footprint—approximately 1.7 million households—lack access to AT&T broadband according to this definition.

The study states that 4.1 million households are without access to AT&T high-speed broadband. The FCC defines high speed broadband as digital transmission at 25/3 Mbps download/upload. Based on this definition, 42.8 percent

of California households in AT&T's wireline footprint, or approximately 4.1 million households, do not have access to AT&T broadband that meets the FCC's high-speed definition of 25/3 Mbps, the study states.

"Deregulation is not working to drive AT&T investment to ensure that all California communities have access to the essential infrastructure of the 21st century—high-speed broadband," the study says. "It is critical that policymakers take proactive steps to get AT&T to accelerate its wireline network investment and fiber deployment to bring

high-speed broadband to all California communities."

"Now more than ever, access to high-speed internet is a necessity for all Americans, shaping how we work and learn and giving us the tools we need to get ahead in today's economy," said Eli Moore, Program Manager at the Haas Institute and co-author of the report. "Instead of providing equitable access to this invaluable resource, AT&T is unfairly denying millions of middle and working-class Californians the modern technologies needed to thrive in the data-rich, fast-paced digital world."

Government...from Page 7

ing an armada" to North Korea; however, it was later reported the carrier USS Carl Vinson and its accompanying ships were heading in the other direction, thousands of miles away.

- Outcry over the increase in border searches that require Americans to unlock their phones, laptops, and other digital devices for apps and files to be searched and copied, sparked lawmakers in the Senate and House to introduce the Protecting Data at the Border Act.
- Trump eliminated some Dodd-Frank financial regulations to roll back rules originally aimed at reducing corporate tax avoidance—an action described as doing special favors for Wall Street banks.

Saturday, April 22

- The New York Times reported that Carter Page, an advisor to the Trump campaign, has been tracked by the FBI since 2013 because investigators discovered that a Russian spy was trying to recruit him.
- Based on feedback at recent town hall meetings, support has grown for politicians to make environmental protection and climate action a bigger priority.

Sunday, April 23

- As U.S. lawmakers worked to avoid a government shutdown, Trump offered Democrats a deal: to prevent Obamacare from dying without a cash infusion, Trump wants their agreement to fund his border wall.

Coastal Seniors' Community Lunch Menu

Lunch is served every Monday and Wednesday at the Veterans Hall in Point Arena and every Tuesday at the Gualala Community Center from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Donation is \$8 for seniors, \$10 for others (\$5 for entrée, \$5 for salad bar). Van pickup and meal delivery for shut-ins is available. For more information, call 707-882-2137 or go to www.coastalseniors.org

May 1 - 3

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Wednesday: Pork fajita, corn tortilla, black beans, salad bar, fruit, dessert.

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Wildlife... from Page 2

rehabilitation facility and speak to personnel to determine the best course of action. For an injured, orphaned or sick bear, elk, deer, bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope, wild pig or mountain lion, contact CDFW directly, as most wildlife rehabilitators are only allowed to possess small mammals and birds. Although some wildlife rehabilitators are allowed to accept fawns, injured or sick adult deer should be reported directly to CDFW for public safety reasons.

Anyone who removes a young animal from the wild is required to notify CDFW or take the animal to a state and federally permitted wildlife rehabilitator within 48 hours. These animals may need specialized care and feeding that is best done by trained wildlife care specialists.

It is important to note that wild animals – even young ones – can cause serious injury with their sharp claws, hooves and teeth, especially when injured and scared. They may also carry ticks, fleas and lice, and can trans-

mit diseases to humans, including rabies and tularemia.

To learn more about how to live and recreate responsibly where wildlife is near, please visit CDFW's Keep Me Wild website at keepmewild.org.

Essay... from Page 4

The mission and purpose of the Juvenile Justice Commission is to advocate for a quality system of care for involved juvenile offenders, and the Delinquency Prevention Commission is to promote the development of quality services, employment opportunities, and resources for juveniles.

More information regarding the book and the contest can be found on the internet at inside-outside.me.

Copies of the book are available at Point Arena High School, Pacific Charter School, and Action Network. The contest deadline is May 31, and entries should be mailed or delivered to JJ-DPC/Essay Contest, 589 Low Gap Road, Ukiah, CA 95482.

Cable... from Page 3

areas, regions considered to be either unserved or underserved with broadband service. The California Public Utilities Commission defined "served" as internet speeds of 6 mbps downstream and 1.5 mbps upstream. Priority areas on the Northern California Coast include the area from Elk to Jenner, according to an appendix in a CPUC resolution discussing CASF applicants.

In an effort to continue the work to service these areas, Assemblymember Jim Wood introduced Assembly Bill 1549 last year. This required Caltrans "to notify companies or organizations working on broadband deployment... of specified department-led highway construction projects."

The idea was to bring those companies and organizations and Caltrans to collaborate and install broadband conduit for each project, said Wood. Planned roadwork calling for a trench parallel to state-owned highways would lead to Caltrans installing a broadband conduit to aid Califor-

nians needing service in priority areas.

Installing conduit does not guarantee a community will get service, said Trish Steel, Mendocino Broadband Alliance executive committee chair, "but it is a valuable asset that can make future fiber deployment economically feasible, and so increases the potential interest of a provider in an area."

"Adopting a 'dig once' policy for these priority areas is an important advancement," said Wood.

For two years legislature and Caltrans worked to "move the needle on expanding Californian's access to broadband," said Wood. By July 1, Caltrans' established policy will be to install conduit on trenching projects.

In theory this will cut time and costs, since these trenches will only be opened once to install the conduits rather than multiple times.

"It's just smart planning for the future," said Steel. "If a trench is open, installing conduit costs very little."

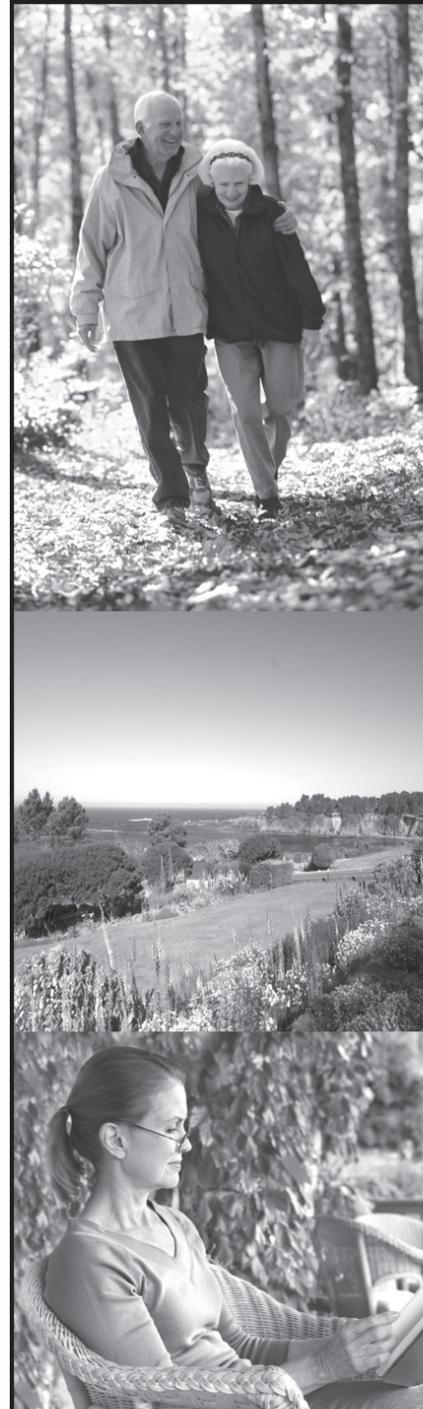
As a result, Wood pulled his most recent bill calling for similar action, Assembly Bill

980, from the legislative agenda completely. The deal also speeds up the timeline marginally, as AB 980 called for guidelines as late as January 1, 2018.

"It makes sense to achieve economies of scale where we can," said Caltrans Director Malcolm Dougherty about installing conduits together.

Other cities have implemented a dig once policy from Washington, D.C., to the City of Santa Cruz for cost savings and for other reasons.

Providers that currently have fiber assets in the area would not be in favor of the new Caltrans policy "as it could facilitate competition," said Steel. Enhancing competition was one of the reasons Santa Cruz adopted the dig once policy according to the Columbia Telecommunications Corporation white paper in its "Technical Guide to Dig Once Policies," released this month. "But if an area is not being served by that existing provider, or not meeting the needs of the community, then competition is a good thing!" Steel added.



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