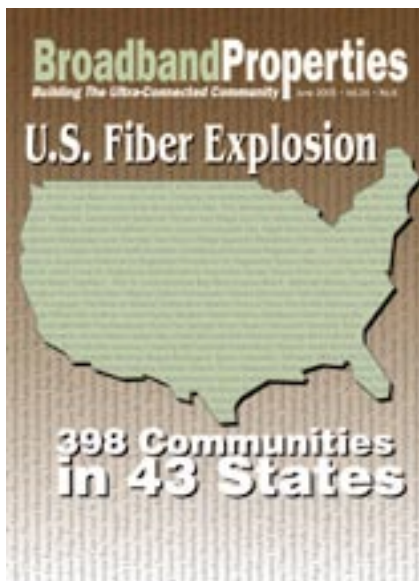


# “If we are to become socialists, we should at least become good ones!”



## For Municipal Broadband

When is Dave McClure going to stop pretending he speaks for Independent ISPs, when in fact he is nothing more than a Verizon mouth-piece hidden in another one of the Verizon sponsored non-profit vehicles, the USIIA (Opinion: The Case Against Public Broadband, May)?

Dave, in your opinion on muni wireless, you rant well, but state very few facts. There are more success stories than failures. And people are learning from the failures.

Some of the costs associated with muni broadband include litigation brought on by your sponsors (RBOCs and MSOs). Instead of fighting municipal broadband projects, these entities should be asking themselves why the municipality feels it's necessary. They should also be asking how they can help.

The reason muni broadband is necessary is because broadband has become a utility required to attract businesses, jobs and the "creative class." We are in a global economy now, Dave. We are competing against a hungry guy in

India with a laptop and Internet.

The RBOCs chose to spend billions on fines, lobbying and litigation instead of meeting the promise of FTTx that they made as far back as 1996. Local governments are losing tax dollars, jobs and industries. If they want to be competitive, they have to have broadband.

How are tax incentives, tax breaks, and rate increases based on a promise of broadband deployment any different than your rumblings about muni money?

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## Mr. McClure responds:

There is no such thing as an "independent" ISP – we all interconnect and depend on one another. Our members include large and small ISPs, wired and wireless. You can join the association and run for the board, which actually runs the organization.

Obviously you have a deep antipathy toward Verizon. Verizon is a major dues payer, but only a small part of our funding. This is the 21st Century. The phone company is no longer a monopoly, government ownership of the means of production is a failed economic model, and private companies should not have to endure predatory abuse of power from their own local governments.

Private companies have the right to sue governments. The courts may not always side with the private companies, but that doesn't obviate their right to sue. And private companies understand this is a cost of doing business – suing, and defending against suits. If municipal governments want to pretend to be private companies, they will have to expect to be burdened with all of the costs of doing business. Build it into the cost

structure just like real companies do in the real world.

As for muni networking, what is "success?" These networks do not bring lower costs than the private sector, they do not in themselves spur economic development, and they do not help to heal the digital divide. Broadband is a consumer commodity, not a public utility. Your hungry guy in India doesn't have anywhere near the connectivity that any business in America has right now.

Any American company can get broadband service. Alaska included. Sure, it may cost more than \$15 per month. That, too, is a cost of doing business. If broadband is critical to your company's mission, you will pay more – for service, for redundancy, and for Quality of Service agreements.

Why should taxpayers get stuck with the bill? What are the measurable benefits, and who gets them? Until proponents of municipal networking can show real data documenting real benefits to taxpayers and ratepayers for the money they are asked to put up, I will continue to believe that private service providers represent the best chance of deploying broadband in the United States.

## Conflict on Muni Wireless?

The cities that are being encouraged to develop wireless networks are naive, at best, to what is really involved in building an ISP. It takes money, of course, but more importantly it takes people – 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 1<sup>st</sup>-level telephone support technicians (one for every 300-400 customers), network administrators with experience in ISPs (which is completely different than a city system administration job), field technicians, installers, and so forth. And all this does not take into consideration the sales and marketing piece or how to handle authentication and illegal or immoral activities on the network. It just goes on and on.

# FIBER TO THE HOME IS HERE

Team Fishel and Corning are teaming up to bring broadband access to smart communities through the Corning Total Access Program (TAP)<sup>SM</sup> of design, engineering, construction, installation and maintenance.

Your magazine seems to be conflicted on municipal wireless. First, with your June editorial, it seems clear which side of the fence your magazine is on with regards to the municipal Wi-Fi issue, especially since you had a “lousy connection” in a hotel in Washington DC. The free markets are obviously not working and only when the government becomes involved can we get this problem addressed. “Free Internet for all” should be the mantra. But wait, this is socialism, which I thought had been proven a poor system and a definite innovation killer!

Second, using the same thought process as the editorial, the story “You Don’t Know Jack?” has a very obvious answer. Since there is such an obvious shortage of antenna sites, the cities should step in. The recent ruling of the Supreme Court allows for cities to use eminent domain for economic development. This is surely the case with the need for full coverage of wireless networks. That will control the costs, and if they use the same economics to run the numbers they used for pushing Wi-Fi networks, it will be a profitable endeavor.

Then the government must step in to stop this terrible experiment Verizon and Sprint are doing with CDMA. The world must unite on GSM, even if it is an inferior technology. And while they are at it, municipalities can increase the number of HDTV broadcast antennas using the same towers. HDTV is suffering the same problem and with it, the poor are not able to have “equal access” because they can not afford cable or small dish systems, causing them to fall further behind.

If we are to become socialists, we should at least become good ones!

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*Broadband Properties welcomes letters to the editor; send letters via email to [steve@broadbandproperties.com](mailto:steve@broadbandproperties.com).*