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Verizon Communications Inc. is exploring a combination with Charter Communications Inc. that would unite two giants in search of growth in a rapidly consolidating media and telecom landscape, according to people familiar with the matter. Verizon CEO Lowell McAdam has made a preliminary approach to officials close to Charter and Verizon is working with advisers to study a potential transaction, the people said, though there's no guarantee a deal will materialize.

It is unclear whether Charter executives, including Chief Executive Tom Rutledge, would be open to a transaction. The effort could be complicated by Charter's ownership structure, which includes cable tycoon John Malone and the Newhouse family. A combination would bring together Verizon's more than 114 million wireless subscribers and what remains of its landline business with Charter's cable network, which provides television to 17 million customers and broadband connections to 21 million. Verizon has a market capitalization of \$194 billion and more than \$100 billion in debt, while Charter ended Wednesday's session valued at about \$85 billion. – **Wall Street Journal**

A business that mostly everyone is connected to in one way or another has moved to the Valu Home Center Plaza on East Main Street in Bradford.

Atlantic Broadband, which provides high-speed broadband internet, cable television and phone service, [has re-opened at 669 E. Main St.](#) on Tuesday after being on Main Street in the city for several years. "The new location is larger, which provides the option to add future jobs in the Bradford area, and the new location is also in a small plaza which provides improved customer access and additional parking,"

Atlantic Broadband's Senior Vice President and General Manager Curt Kosko told *The Era* on Tuesday. Kosko said the new location provides a better customer experience. The former location of Atlantic Broadband on Main Street remains empty, and Bradford City Main Street Manager Chelsea Schwab said she is not aware of a business committing to occupy that building. "However, it is a prime location and I mention it to anyone seeking potential locations downtown," she said. "With Main Street nearly full, and a line of people waiting for the right space for them to open up, I don't foresee that property sitting empty for very long." – **Bradford Era**

The Mifflin County Internet Advisory Committee is one step closer to being able to assess the internet needs of Mifflin County. The group met Wednesday afternoon to continue following up on information discussed at other meetings as well as new details.

A survey, discussed at the December meeting that would ask questions about internet usage, is in its final stages of being developed by Walt Whitmer, from Penn State Learning Extension. There are two different versions of the survey geared toward residential and business owners throughout the county. Overall the group liked the survey and suggested to Whitmer that he look into other platforms other than SurveyMonkey, an online survey system. The survey could potentially be sent out after the committee's next meeting on Feb. 15.

Also during the meeting, representatives from Comcast, Verizon and Nittany Media were in attendance to discuss the issue of pole connections and engineering fees associated with the use of poles. The representatives from Comcast said there are extra costs for engineering to attach new lines to the poles. The company works with a third party engineering firm, which is why Comcast charges the fees for the poles.

**Philadelphia Inquirer Fattah surrenders to begin serving 10-year prison term**

The group learned the cost for poles varies based on how much work would need to be done to existing lines to fit new ones if possible. According to the representatives, the cleaner the pole, the cheaper the pole will cost to attach lines. Kenrick Gordon, a general field representative from the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development, spoke about grants available to help create a network for broadband internet services. Gordon explained the loan would cover the building and service instillation of internet in areas that currently have very little, weak or no access to broadband services.

While there are grants available to cover costs, Gordon said the area would not be easy qualifiers for grants. He explained the grants are awarded based on an economic need as well as other qualifiers, which many towns in the northeastern portion of the country do not qualify. The committee voted to continue monthly meetings to find a solution for the internet issues. – **Lewistown Sentinel**

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Comcast Corp. has agreed to broadcast anti-Mormon Church cable ads in Utah, with some modifications, resolving a two-week-long dispute between the media giant and a California-based LGBT activist. "I'm elated that Comcast heard our cries," the activist, Fred Karger, said in a phone interview Wednesday, adding, "It would have been easier if we didn't have to go through all this."

Karger's goal is to glean tipster information from insiders to challenge the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' tax-exempt status. **In the ads**, young former Mormon Church members -- who answered a casting call in Utah -- ask viewers to help uncover the church's "vast business holdings" and "secret political activities," directing tipsters to mormontips.com. Karger said the Mormon Church discriminates against gays and their children.

Karger will have to reshoot a few seconds of the 30-second cable ads to make it clear that he is speculating that the Mormon Church owns \$1 trillion in assets, both he and Comcast said. But other parts of the advertisements will not be changed. To resolve the dispute, Karger, who had posted a letter to Comcast CEO Brian Roberts on his California group's website, rightsequalrights.com, had a one-on-one meeting at the Comcast Center on Saturday with a senior vice president. Karger was traveling on the East Coast, allowing him to come to Philadelphia.

Company spokeswoman Tara Hunter confirmed Wednesday that Comcast and Karger had agreed on changes to the ads, and that Comcast will show them after they are made and approved. There is no broadcast schedule yet, she said. Through its Comcast Spotlight subsidiary, Comcast is one of the nation's largest sellers of local advertising. The company initially approved the cable ads for broadcast in five Utah television markets. But Karger said they were canceled after he held a news conference in Salt Lake City two weeks ago announcing the launch of the ad campaign.

Comcast told Karger after it canceled the ads that it would not broadcast unsubstantiated claims or advertisements that demeaned individuals or organizations. Karger said he has now substantiated the claims, pointing Comcast to public documents. – **Philadelphia Inquirer**



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