



U.S. Cellular invests \$3 million to add 10 new Missouri towers

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To underscore the importance of continued federal funding for rural wireless infrastructure, U.S. Cellular Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer Jay Ellison, Missouri 6th District Senator Carl M. Vogel and other community partners gathered recently in Columbia to announce a major network expansion.

U.S. Cellular will invest \$3 million to build 10 new cell sites in rural Missouri, the first towers the company will build using federal Universal Service Fund (USF) support.

The 10 new cell sites will be added to enhance coverage in and around Cole Camp, Dell Junction, Ellsinore, Fayette, Lincoln, Mansfield, Spring Fork, Stover and Warsaw. This investment will add to the extensive network of more than 500 U.S. Cellular towers across the state.

Despite this announcement, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has signaled its intent to cap the USF "very soon" - most likely in the next few weeks. This is especially dangerous for Missouri as the USF provides critical support for wireless companies to build new cell towers in high-cost areas across the country, including rural communities in Missouri. If the proposed federal cap goes through, the \$11 million in new federal funds that would have come into Missouri annually will be put on hold indefinitely, compromising U.S. Cellular's planned investment of 39 new sites during the next two years.

"It is U.S. Cellular's pleasure to serve rural communities throughout Missouri with support from the Universal Service Fund," said Jay Ellison, Executive Vice President and COO of U.S. Cellular. "We can't understand why the FCC is moving forward with the cap in the face of resounding opposition from rural citizens across the country. U.S. Cellular recently testified before the U.S. Senate Commerce Committee because this is such an important issue for Americans. Fourteen members of Congress have submitted letters to the FCC describing how important the federal USF is to their constituents, and this ill-informed political agenda will only compromise rural communities across the country."

Area first responders, including police officers and firefighters, have said that without adequate wireless coverage they cannot quickly and reliably deal with critical safety issues. As more people rely on cell phones to make emergency calls, E-911 technology is useless in areas without wireless coverage and in high-cost rural areas wireless companies rely on federal support to make these resources available to smaller communities.

"Fayette is excited and grateful that U.S. Cellular will soon be bringing our community the same access to a robust and high-quality wireless network that the residents of



larger cities enjoy,” said William Fisher, Mayor of the City of Fayette. “A cap on the Universal Service Fund would be an unfortunate step backward for rural communities like mine throughout the state of Missouri.”

“For victims of domestic violence, reliable wireless service can literally mean the difference between life and death,” said Colleen Coble, CEO of the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic Violence. “We serve many rural women who often struggle with poor wireless coverage. That’s why we support U.S. Cellular and the Connecting Rural America coalition, because they’re working to improve access to quality wireless service in Missouri and across America.”

Congress created the USF to make sure that telecommunications technology doesn’t leave rural communities behind. The USF has enabled wireless carriers such as U.S. Cellular to build hundreds of towers in rural communities nationwide and bring new service to areas that would not have otherwise had access.

U.S. Cellular is calling on Congress and the FCC to protect universal service funding for wireless carriers serving rural America. Rural consumers pay into the fund and deserve access to the same reliable wireless service and choices found in urban America. With universal service support, U.S. Cellular stands ready to deliver high-quality wireless service in rural parts of Missouri - everywhere that Missouri customers live, work and play. For more information, consumers can visit www.connectingruralamerica.org.

U.S. Cellular is the nation’s sixth-largest wireless service carrier, providing wireless service to six million customers in 26 states. The Chicago-based company employs 8,000 associates and operates on a customer satisfaction strategy, meeting customer needs by providing a comprehensive range of wireless products and services, superior customer support and a high-quality national network. For additional information, email Public Relations Counsel Kim Furlow at DramaticLicensePR@charter.net or Jonathan Guerin, Media Relations, at jonathan.guerin@uscellular.com.



Missouri Senator Carl M. Vogel, Boone Co. Sheriff's Sgt. Lance Billings, U.S. Cellular VP/COO Jay Ellison, Fayette Chamber President Jim Steele and Boone Co. Fire District Chief Steve Paulsell, shown above, from left, recently gathered to announce 10 new cellular towers in rural Missouri.