

The Northwood Anchor

Federal proposals could jeopardize public safety

Dear Editor:

For many of us, cell phones have become a necessary component of everyday life, helping us do business, stay in touch with the people who matter most to us and call for help in emergencies.

Across Iowa, public safety officers like me depend on wireless service to respond quickly to emergency situations. We rely on cell phones to address domestic violence situations, prevent criminal activity and communicate in areas where police radio is unsecure or unavailable.

That's why a recent proposal by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is so troubling to me and potentially dangerous for rural Iowa.

In smaller communities, wireless carriers cannot always justify the costs of building new cell towers. However, there is a federal program called the Universal Service Fund (USF) that helps build reliable communications networks in rural areas.

Unfortunately, the FCC wants to eliminate half the support we receive in Iowa. Statewide, we could lose up to \$30 million in annual USF support, and dozens of new cell sites would be cancelled or delayed every year.

Northwood was fortunate to receive new service last year, but there is much work to be done to bring reliable cell phone networks to other rural communities in Iowa. Cutting the USF for wireless will not help. Visit www.ConnectingRuralAmerica.org to learn more and take action.

Leo Dorsey, Chief Northwood Police Department