

FCC boosts online privacy rules

By Associated Press

New privacy rules may make it easier to escape at least some online tracking.

The Federal Communications Commission on Thursday approved rules that require Internet service providers like Comcast, AT&T and Verizon to ask customers' permission to use or share much of their data.

That could potentially make it harder for them to build advertising businesses that could serve as competition to Google and Facebook. Those digital-ad behemoths are not covered by the new FCC rules.

Industry groups representing the cable, phone and advertising industries criticized the outcome of Thursday's vote. Several consumer-advocacy groups hailed it, while saying it should go further.

Under the measure, for example, a broadband provider has to ask a customer's permission before it can tell an advertiser exactly where that customer is by tracking her phone and what interests she has gleaned from the websites she's visited on it and the apps she's used.

For some information that's not considered as private, like names and addresses, there's a more lenient approach. Customers should assume that broadband providers can use that information, but they can "opt out" of letting them do so.

There will not be much visible difference in the online experience for most consumers. There will be more notices from your home internet or wireless carrier saying what type of

information they collect and that they'd like to use and share it.

"I think the new FCC rules are a step in the right direction," said Mark Bartholomew, a law professor at the University of Buffalo who studies advertising law and privacy. "But ultimately I think people will go ahead and let themselves be tracked. ...We routinely click and agree to get what we want online without thinking too much about being tracked."

The Federal Communications Commission's measure was scaled back from an earlier proposal, but was still criticized by the advertising, telecommunications and cable industries.

Cable and phone companies want to increase revenue from ad businesses of their own – AT&T has said increasing advertising tailored to customers' preferences is one of its goals with its \$85.4 billion purchase of HBO, CNN and TBS owner Time Warner. Verizon has bought AOL and agreed to buy Yahoo in order to build up a digital-ad business.

But the new rules could make doing that more difficult. Companies and industry groups say it's confusing and unfair that the regulations are stricter than the Federal Trade Commission standards that Google and Facebook operate under.

FCC officials approved the rules on a 3-2 vote Thursday, its latest contentious measure to pass on party lines.

"It is the consumer's information. How it is to be used should be the consumers' choice, not the choice of some corporate algorithm," said Tom Wheeler, the Democratic chairman of the FCC who has pushed for the privacy measure and other efforts that have angered phone and cable companies. AT&T and other players have fought the "net neutrality" rules, which went into effect last year, that say ISPs can't favor their some internet traffic. Another measure that could make the cable-box market more competitive is still waiting for an FCC vote.

One of the Republican commissioners who voted against the privacy rules, Michael O'Reilly, said that they were senseless because broadband providers could still buy the information they would have collected, and that the prices consumers ultimately pay could rise.

El Dorado, Placer charter schools named in probe

By Shirin Rajaei, CBS-13

More than two 200 California charter schools are accused of violating state and federal laws.

A recent report by the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California says those charter schools are discriminating when admitting students. They say just like public schools, there needs to be equal access for all students enrolling.

About 20 schools from Sacramento to El Dorado and Placer counties have been named.

[Read the whole story](#)

Calif. pension reforms

haven't reined in costs

By Judy Lin, Los Angeles Times

A year after his 2010 election, Gov. Jerry Brown made a rare appearance at a legislative committee hearing to confront lawmakers about the steep cost of public employee pensions – and to demand that they pass his 12-point pension overhaul.

Brown challenged fellow Democrats to drink political “castor oil” so public retirement costs would not overburden future generations.

State lawmakers eventually passed many of Brown’s proposals, including a higher retirement age for new employees. But they rejected those with the biggest dollar savings – notably his plan for a hybrid retirement system combining smaller pensions with 401k-style savings plans.

The state’s annual bill for retirement obligations is expected to reach \$11 billion by the time Brown leaves office in January 2019 – nearly double what it was eight years earlier.

Read the whole story

Talk to focus on Tahoe’s new economy

The new economy will be the topic of a free talk on Nov. 9 from noon-1:30pm at Lake Tahoe Community College in the Creekside Room.

Learn what local entrepreneurs are doing to bring new ideas to

the region and how to get involved. Speakers are David Orr of Tahoe Mountain Lab, Chris McNamara of Outdoor Gear Lab and Rachel Arst McCullough of Tahoe Silicon Mountain.

For decades Tahoe's economy was reliant on gaming and the casinos. With those days in the past Lake Tahoe is shifting to a more diverse recreation based economy. Future economic success will come from a variety of sources across industries.

500 pounds of pot confiscated in EDC

About a quarter ton of marijuana was confiscated on the West Slope on Sunday.

A California Highway Patrol officer smelled what he thought was fresh marijuana coming from trucks in the Apple Hill area.

A K-9 unit was brought in and then the trailers were opened. Inside, according to officers, they found 500 pounds of cut and processed marijuana.

Two people were arrested.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



· Sierra-at-Tahoe's Dodgeball Tournament returns to Steamers in South Lake Tahoe on Nov. 11 at 6:30pm. Email khunter@sierraattahoe.com to register a team.

· Get scared in the Tahoe Keys on Halloween from 5-9pm. The folks at **1882 Cascade Court** in South Lake Tahoe promise there will be candy if you make it to the door.

· Ian McFeron will play at the Cottonwood restaurant in Truckee for free on Nov. 11 from 7-11pm.

· The Sugar Pine Foundation this month conducted 13 plantings, engaged over 500 volunteers and planted 4,000 sugar pine seedlings in the Lake Tahoe region. Trees were planted near Northstar and Tahoe Donner neighborhoods, along the bike path in North Tahoe Regional Park and Tunnel Creek, near Lake Ella at Waddle Ranch, near the disc golf course at Zephyr Cove Park, in the Angora burn area, at Sand Harbor and next to North Tahoe Middle School.

· Heavenly Mountain Resort plans to fire up the snow guns Nov. 1.

The war against wildfire

By George Wuerthner, Earth Island Journal

Chad Hanson lopez over to a patch of young conifers and waves an arm at me. "Come over here, he says excitedly, pointing to dozens of 1- to 3-foot-tall saplings. "Look at pines and firs growing under these snags. See how healthy they are? And here,

see these holes in the blackened bark? Those were made by black-backed woodpeckers. They are seeking the grubs of beetles that burrow into the dead trees after fires. Can you imagine how much energy it takes to drill these holes?" he says, his voice a mix of amazement and admiration.

We are walking through Stanislaus National Forest, about a mile from the border of Yosemite National Park, in a patch of woodland that the Rim Fire swept through back in the summer and fall of 2013. It's a pleasant summer afternoon. A faint breeze offsets the bright glare of the sun high overhead in the cloudless blue sky. The blackened trunks of the pines Hanson is standing amidst cast linear shadows on the ground. Patches of tender green shrubs and pine and fir seedlings cover the forest floor. Three years after the Rim Fire, this patch of forest is clearly regenerating itself.

Hanson, a tall, lanky figure dressed in khakis, is a forest ecologist who specializes in wildfires. He is also the director of the John Muir Project of the Earth Island Institute, a nonprofit that uses science and legal means to push for ecological management of forestlands, especially ones that have been severely degraded and damaged by decades of commercial logging and fire suppression measures. A California native, Hanson began studying the aftereffects of the Rim Fire – the third largest wildfire in California since the early twentieth century – almost as soon as the smoke cleared. As we walk through the charred trees, he can barely hide his enthusiasm, constantly pointing out signs of new life sprouting up amid the dead stands. "To me this habitat is fascinating. Every time I go out to a burn area I learn something new," he says.

Read the whole story

50-year-old restrooms replaced at North Shore park

The first of two new restroom buildings were delivered to the upper parking lot of the North Tahoe Regional Park in Tahoe City this week.

The lower restrooms will be delivered within the next few weeks. Delivery of those restrooms will necessitate closing the park entry temporarily.

The replacement restrooms, designed with a Tahoe look, are engineered to be vandal resistant, reduce maintenance, are hydronically heated for use during the winter and meet ADA guidelines for accessibility.

North Tahoe PUD received more than \$550,000 in grant funds for the planning, design and construction of this restroom project that replaces two restrooms.

The old restrooms were more than 50 years old.

Placer County to develop countywide parks plan

Placer County about to prepare its first countywide comprehensive park and trail master plan that will be the blueprint for the next 10 years.

“As our communities continue to evolve it is important to meet their unique recreational tastes,” Supervisor Jennifer Montgomery said. “I am truly excited about how this plan hopes to promote healthy and thriving active communities throughout our county. Enjoying activities in these venues with family, friends or even going solo can create some of life’s best moments.”

The master plan is intended to update the county’s General Plan standards put in place in 1994 and to serve new trends and demographics.

The proposed plan will also work with neighboring agencies that border Placer County, such as Truckee, California State Parks, U.S. Forest Service and various cities to develop a connected trail network throughout the region.

Next steps also include determining available countywide inventory, demand, funding availability, priorities, service standards, fee program and strategic plan.

Pot legalization may not alter enforcement in Nev.

By Rachel Crosby, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Should Nevada voters legalize recreational marijuana come Nov. 8, the penalties for the drug’s average recreational user will see a massive overhaul.

But in practice, policing of the drug won’t change much, Metropolitan Police Department narcotics Sgt. Craig Lousignont said. For the average user, at least.

While the preamble to Question 2, the Initiative to Regulate and Tax Marijuana, states an incentive to passing the act is to “better focus state and local law enforcement resources on crimes involving violence and personal property,” Louisgnont said Metro is already doing that.

“We don’t go after (marijuana) users right now,” he said. “There’s more important things to be doing.”

Read the whole story