

# Phillips Lytle partner to lead national broadband review panel

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Douglas Dimitroff's already heavy work load is about to get even busier.

Not that he minds.

Dimitroff, a Phillips Lytle LLP partner, has been named chairman of the newly-christened Model Code for Municipalities working group for the Federal Communications Commission's Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee. The committee meets for the first time on April 21.

The model code working group will spend the next two years working a game plan for municipalities who want to increase broadband service and coverage in their respective regions.

"We do need to figure out how to deploy more and better broadband service," Dimitroff said.

Increasing broadband coverage has been a top initiative in the past few years and has taken on a new sense of urgency as more people rely on their mobile devices than traditional land line options. Gov. Andrew Cuomo, last summer, said during a stop at the University at Buffalo, he was starting a push to bring update high-speed broadband service to "every corner of New York." Cuomo set 2018 as his targeted goal.

"Your constituents demand it," Dimitroff said. "You have to have (the broadband) infrastructure. It's expected."

Currently only 57 percent of the county has access to high-speed Internet service. Left out are rural areas and even poorer neighborhoods in Buffalo.

Nationally, some 99.7 percent of the citizens have or need access to 4G or better, according to the FCC.

All of which ties into the growth and demand for smart devices service. Recent surveys found that 78 percent of all adult U.S. citizens own at least one smart device.

Some 49 percent of all households nationally rely solely on wireless options and have foregone traditional land lines.

More than 92 percent of young adults, ages 18 to 29, exclusively use a smart phone or similar device. Even older adults, those above 65 years of age, are relying more on smart phones or mobile devices with 54 percent owning one of those.

"Closing the digital divide across America is a top priority," said Ajit Pai, FCC chairman.

Taken together, the rise in reliance on smart phones and other mobile devices is fueling the new FCC committee and Dimitroff's working group.

"There are so many areas that are ripe for enhanced infrastructure," Dimitroff said.



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Dimitroff said he views the charge of his working group as one that is open to all options. From its review, recommendations will be made to the committee and then passed on to federal lawmakers and leaders.

The working group's recommendations may set a short- and long-term set of municipal broadband expansion game plan that could serve as key blueprint.

"With all this next generation technology, we need to get everyone together," Dimitroff said.

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