

# NEWS

## FCC Fines

The proposed fines—against T-Mobile, AT&T, Verizon, and Sprint—total more than \$200 million for their role in breaches of privacy.

**IN MAY 2018**, *The New York Times* reported that a company called Securus had sold law-enforcement agencies access to the locations of people's cellphones. Police were supposed to provide a warrant or other documentation proving they had authority to see the data, but the *Times* said Securus often didn't check. Subsequent stories by ZDNet and Vice Motherboard revealed an industry of middlemen that acquired location information from AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, and Verizon and resold it to companies like Securus. Some of the information came from the bail bonds industry, raising concerns that stalkers could buy their victims' location information.

The big four carriers all promised to stop selling location data to data aggregators. But months later, many companies still had access to carrier data.

Now, nearly two years later, the Federal Communications Commission is taking action against the four carriers for their role in these breaches of privacy. Friday, the agency said it has proposed tentative fines against the companies totaling more than \$200 million: \$91 million for T-Mobile, \$57 million for AT&T, \$48 million for Verizon, and \$12 million for Sprint. The fines are based on the amount of time that the carriers sold access to customer location information "without reasonable safeguards" and the number of outside companies to which they sold it.

"The FCC has long had clear rules on the books requiring all phone companies to protect their customers' personal information," FCC Chair Ajit Pai said in a statement. "And since 2007, these companies have been on notice that they must take reasonable precautions to safeguard this data and that the FCC will take strong enforcement action if they don't." FCC commissioner Geoffrey Starks, who dissented from part of the decision, said the carriers "did not treat the protection of their customers' data as a key responsibility. Instead, they delegated responsibility for protecting this sensitive

information to aggregators and third-party location service providers." he carriers can dispute the fines, which T-Mobile says it will do. "We take the privacy and security of our customers' data very seriously," the company said in a statement. The company said it took quick action to restrict "bad actor third parties" and ended its location aggregator program in February 2019. Sprint said it is reviewing the notice and takes its customers' privacy and security very seriously. AT&T, Verizon, and Securus did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Critics see the FCC's response as too little, too late. Senator Ron Wyden (D-Oregon) was among the first to call attention to Securus and has been asking the FCC to act since the beginning. "It seems clear Chairman Pai has failed to protect American consumers at every stage of the game," Wyden said in a statement. "He only investigated after public pressure mounted. And now his response is a set of comically inadequate fines that won't stop phone companies from abusing Americans' privacy the next time they can make a quick buck."

Wyden and others said the incidents highlighted the need for new privacy laws. "The importance of having rules that protect consumers before they are harmed cannot be overstated," former FCC lawyer Gigi Sohn said in a statement. Harold Feld of the organization Public Knowledge argued that the FCC's lax attitude toward privacy rules emboldened carriers to disregard consumer privacy. For example, one of Pai's first major actions after becoming FCC chair in 2017 was to suspend parts of an Obama-era FCC order that would have required broadband providers to take reasonable action to protect personal data. Soon after, the Republican-controlled Congress overturned the entire Obama-era order, which would also have banned providers from selling your personal data without your permission.

"Small wonder that carriers felt safe flouting the law," Feld said in a statement. "Congress should conduct an immediate investigation into the FCC's handling of privacy enforcement, and take suitable action to empower consumers when the FCC chair fails to act."

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## TAB 2021

Those of you who have attended this great event in the past already know that it would be impossible to have any kind of "social distancing" at Cooper's BBQ. The upstairs holds about 250 people and we spill over into the downstairs.

Hopefully by Fall/Winter we all will be comfortable in attending our local SBE meetings in person. It's just too soon for such a large gathering at Cooper's BBQ.

Please continue to support our past Dinner sponsors so they will be able to support us in 2022. Attached is the last 2019 Engineer's Dinner flyer. If you are considering an equipment purchase, do look at the products they have to offer. And of course, GBS and BGS are ready to be your trusted equipment dealers.

**BUT the TAB is full speed ahead with the Convention & Trade Show – set for TUESDAY and WEDNESDAY, Aug. 3-4, 2021.**

They will have plenty of space to "spread out" at the [JW Marriott in Austin](#).

GBS will be in booth 104 and BGS in booth 119. We do look forward to visiting with you on the exhibit floor (Wed., Aug. 4 from 9 AM-5 PM).

[Here's the link for everything convention related.](#)

As always, the TAB puts together a fantastic program for us engineers. [View the schedule here.](#)

**GBS / BGS** do have free exhibit codes if you wish just to ONLY the Trade Show: GBS2021 and/or BGS2021.

Until we can actually catch up in person – your Dinner Hosts wish you the best,

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## EL PASO, TX SBE CHAPTER 38 MEETING MINUTE

DATE 5/11/2021

LOCATION: ZOOM MEETING

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** 11:06 AM, BY ANTONIO CASTRO.  
THERE WERE 9 (NINE).

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY:** MINUTES IN THE MAY NEWSLETTER.  
ACCEPTED BY DAVID HALPERIN, SECONDED BY DAVID GRICE.

**REPORT OF THE TREASURER:** \$ 5,104.92 IN THE BANK , ACCEPTED  
BY NORBERT MILES, SECONDED BY MARIO TELLEZ.

**REPORT OF THE CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE:** NO REPORT.

**REPORT OF THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE:** NO REPORT.

**REPORT OF THE FREQUENCY COORDINATOR COMMITTEE:** NO  
REPORT.

**REPORT OF THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE:** NO REPORT.

**REPORT OF THE WEBSITE COMMITTEE:** NOW 3220 VS. 3194 EQUAL  
26 HITS.

**REPORT OF THE EAS CHAIRMAN:** TEXAS AND NEW MEXICO-  
MONTHLY TEST WERE FINE.

**REPORT OF THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE:** ALONG WITH THIS CHAP-  
TER MEETING, WE HAD THE PRESENTATION OF PHIL LARSEN FROM  
Q-COMMUNICATIONS, AIRBORNE DIVISION.

**NEW BUSINESS OR ANY ITEMS FOR THE CHAPTER INTEREST:**  
THE GROUP AGREED TO HAVE THE ENNES WORKSHOP IN THE  
ZOOM MODE. WILL TALK TO CATHY OROZ TO FIND OUT THE  
POSSIBILITIES..

**OTHER IN JULY,** POSIBLE LUNCH MEETING AT KVIA BACK YARD.

**NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION:** NO MEETING FOR THE  
MONTH OF JUNE.

**MEETING ADJOURNED:** AT 12:06 PM.

THE 2021 SBE CH-38 ENGINEER OF THE  
YEAR GOES TO:.....

**ELI GARCIA MENDOZA !!!!!!!**

HE WILL REPRESENT US IN THE  
NATIONAL ROBERT FLANDERS AWARD



# JUNE PROGRAM

LAST MONTH OF MAY IT WAS THE REGULAR CHAPTER MEETING PLUS THE PRESENTATION OF PHIL LARSEN INTRODUCING THE AIRBONE DIVISION OF Q-COMMUNICATIONS SHOWING TOWER INSPECTIONS WITH THE USE OF DRONES.

THIS WAS A LAST MINUTE ADITION TO THE PROGRAM. IT WAS A GREAT PRESENTATION.

THANKS PHIL !!!

NO PRESENTATION AT THIS TIME,

