

NATIONAL NEWS

Former Chattanooga Mayor Andy Berke Named to Broadband Role at NTIA

WASHINGTON – February 2, 2022, NTIA announced that it is continuing to build out its senior leadership following the confirmation of Alan Davidson as Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information. Andy Berke, former mayor of Chattanooga, Tenn., is joining NTIA as a special representative for broadband.

Andy Berke served as the mayor of Chattanooga, Tenn., from 2013 to 2021. Under his leadership, Chattanooga established several digital equity programs, including Tech Goes Home, which offers technology training, skills, and access to families. At the end of

his term, Mayor Berke led a partnership to provide high speed broadband at no cost to every family with a child on free or reduced lunch, making Chattanooga the first community in the country with such a benefit. A native of Chattanooga, Berke served in the Tennessee Senate for five years prior to his mayoralty.

“Chattanooga has led our country in making sure that our residents have access to high-speed broadband and the skills



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to use it,” said Berke. “With the funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Biden Administration is determined to make sure that every American has that same opportunity.” (NTIA is an agency in the

Department of Commerce that is implementing a number of the broadband programs in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.)



Dr. Edna Varner receives Distinguished Service Award from Kiwanis Club

From left: Dr. Edna Varner’s four living brothers: Rev. Alexander Bullard; Justino Varner; Dr. Edna Varner; Ernest Varner; and Dr. Andrew Bullard. (A host of other family members were also present to celebrate this achievement for Dr. Varner)

Louisiana Judge Apologizes, Resigns After Caught Using N-Word in Video



Judge Michelle Odinet from Lafayette, Louisiana, was caught on video using a racial slur at her home. She has since apologized and resigned from her seat on the court.

NATIONWIDE — Judge Michelle Odinet from Lafayette, Louisiana, was caught on video using a racial slur at her home. She has since apologized and resigned from her seat on the court.

In the past weeks, Odinet had faced calls for resignation after the video became public. The video showed a television displaying surveillance footage of a foiled burglary at her home. Odinet and other people who were reviewing the footage could not be seen in the video but were heard laughing and using racial slurs.

Odinet initially said she would take an unpaid leave of absence following the incident. She claimed she had “zero recollection” of the

video and was given a sedative at that time. The Louisiana Supreme Court disqualified her, suspending her without pay.

Eventually, after a few weeks, Odinet said she decided to resign “after much reflection and prayer.”

“I take full responsibility for the hurtful words I used to describe the individual who burglarized the vehicles at my home,” Odinet wrote in a resignation letter to the Louisiana Supreme Court, according to NBC News. “I am sorry for the pain that I have caused my community and ask for your forgiveness, as my words did not foster the public’s confidence and integrity for the judiciary.”

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