



OFFICE OF CHAIRMAN BRENDAN CARR

FCC Chairman Carr Presents First ‘Build America Hard Hat’

Visited Crews Opening a New Cell Tower in Western North Carolina to Restore and Expand Internet Connectivity in Communities Damaged by Hurricane Helene

WASHINGTON, May 27, 2026—During a visit to the Chimney Rock and Lake Lure region in Western North Carolina, FCC Chairman Brendan Carr presented the very first ‘Build America Hard Hat’ to Phillip Morrow. After Hurricane Helene destroyed connectivity and roads in the area, Phillip and his crew stepped up. Phillip waded into the Broad River and hiked over three miles from Chimney Rock up to Bat Cave. Once there, Phillip used a kayak to pull conduit through the river and restore connectivity to Chimney Rock. Chairman Carr will be recognizing tower and telecom crews with ‘Build America Hard Hats’ to thank them for going above and beyond to get the job done – building and extending next-generation communications infrastructure. Supporting these workers is a key part of the FCC’s Build America Agenda, which is supercharging infrastructure builds across the country through smart policies.

Chairman Carr issued the following statement:

“After Hurricane Helene unleashed devastating floods across Western North Carolina, President Trump surged support and resources to aid recovery. In my first trip as FCC Chairman in January 2025, I visited the communities hit hard by Helene, and I met with the dedicated telecom crews working hard even then to restore connectivity, including Phillip and his team. His story stuck with me. With roads and connectivity into Chimney Rock washed out, Phillip waded into the Broad River and hiked over three miles up to Bat Cave. Once there, Phillip managed to wrangle some fiber conduit and a kayak. He then got back into the river and made his way back down to Chimney Rock, restoring connectivity. He ultimately made that journey seven times.

“Now, a year later, I had the chance to return to see the great progress Phillip and his crews have continued to make. The telecom crews in Western North Carolina have worked tirelessly to restore service and expand connectivity. I was privileged to present a Build America Hard Hat to Phillip in recognition of the work he has done restoring connectivity. Phillip has gone above and beyond to ensure communities gain access to advanced infrastructure.”

Additional Background Information:

On Friday, Chairman Carr visited crews lighting up a new cell tower in Western North Carolina and also visited the world’s largest optical fiber plant. From factories to innovators to crews on the ground, all these efforts are now in motion to connect American households and businesses.

This trip is just the latest of Chairman Carr’s Build America visits across the country since becoming Chairman. He joined tower workers on a 2,000 foot tower climb in [New Bern, N.C.](#); visited an American drone manufacturer as well as crews splicing fiber in [West Texas](#); joined crews installing a new light system on a 1,800 foot TV tower in [Spanish Fort, AL](#); and joined a telecom crew pulling conduit and running a directional boring machine in [Sioux Falls, S.D.](#) These trips follow years of

similar visits as an FCC Commissioner to meet telecom workers and learn about the policies that can make their jobs a little bit easier.

Chairman Carr's [Build America Agenda](#) is guided by principles of innovation, deregulation, and competition. It emphasizes forward-looking policies, simple and clear rules, and a bias toward action to drive economic growth. Its ultimate goal is to ensure the U.S. not only keeps pace with global advancements but leads the world in next-generation networks and technologies.

You can see the full video of the Build America Hard Hat presentation [here](#).

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