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Telecom In Brief

Phoenix Center to Release RBOC Market Power Report

Telecom policy think tank **Phoenix Center** this week is expected to release a scathing white paper – more than 30 pages long – that blasts the **Regional Bell Operating Companies** (RBOCs) for continuing to engage in monopolistic practices aimed at preserving their considerable market power.

According to sources who have reviewed a draft version of the document, the Washington, D.C.-based Phoenix Center's white paper will focus on the RBOCs' domination of the special access market. Many U.S. businesses rely on special access lines connecting them directly to long distance carriers. In fact, it was the business community's high level of reliance on special access that inspired the **Federal Communications Commission** some years ago to "deregulate" the service, citing the existence of ample competition in the marketplace as justification for the move. Now, however, there is growing concern within the business community and elsewhere that the FCC's deregulatory measure may have been premature. In fact, a number of entities have begun pressing the commission to reconsider its earlier decision, among them **AT&T** [NYSE: T].

AT&T late last year filed a petition with the FCC seeking a rulemaking that would, in essence, reverse the FCC's deregulation of special access. The petition to date has been largely ignored at the commission. The Phoenix Center study, combined with other research from independent sources, could nudge FCC Chairman Michael Powell to move the special access issue onto the FCC's radar screen. For more on this rapidly developing story, don't miss this week's edition of *Communications Today's* sister publication *Telecom Policy Report*, the industry's leading source for in-depth investigative reporting. To get a free four-week trial subscription to *TPR*, go to <http://www.telecomweb.com/cgi/catalog/info?TPR>.