

Scenic Watch



May
2016

"Are digital billboards spying on us? Senator Chuck Schumer thinks so"



Photo: Kathy Willens

"Schumer calls for investigation into some ads"

"A U.S. senator is calling for a federal investigation into an outdoor advertising company's latest effort to target billboard ads to specific consumers."

New York Sen. Charles Schumer has dubbed Clear Channel Outdoor America's so-called RADAR program



Fun Festivals and Events

Central and West

June 1-14
Savor Sarasota Restaurant Week,
Sarasota
June 3
Jazz Friday at Foosner Museum of
Art, Melbourne
June 3-4
Historic Cocoa Village's BBQ &
Blues, Cocoa
June 4
World Oceans Day Family Festival,
Sarasota
June 4-5
Corey Avenue Craft Festival, st

'spying billboards,' warning the service may violate privacy rights by tracking people's cell phone data via the ad space.

'A person's cellphone should not become a James Bond-like personal tracking device for a corporation to gather information about consumers without their consent,' Schumer, a Democrat, said in a statement ahead of a planned news conference Sunday in Times Square, where the company operates billboards.

But the company, which operates more than 675,000 billboards throughout the world, argues that characterization of its program is inaccurate, insisting it only uses anonymous data collected by other companies.

In a statement, company spokesman Jason King said the RADAR program is based on a years-old advertising technique that 'uses only aggregated and anonymized information' from other companies that certify they're following consumer protection standards.

King also provided The Associated Press a copy of a letter it sent earlier this year to another lawmaker who has similarly raised concerns about the ad service and consumer protections.

The company 'does not receive or collect personally identifiable information about consumers for use in Radar,' CEO Scott Wells wrote in a March letter to Sen. Al Franken, a Minnesota Democrat. 'It's not necessary for the insights we are offering our advertising customers.'

The ad program is a partnership between Clear Channel and other companies, including AT&T and technology companies that collect location data from smartphone apps, company officials have said...

Clear Channel uses 'aggregate and anonymous mobile consumer information,' the company said. The program gives marketers a 'solution that provides a more accurate way to understand and target specific audience segments,' Clear Channel's vice president, Andy Stevens, said in a news release announcing the

Petersburg Beach
June 4-5
Kite Festival, New Smyrna Beach
June 9-25
Sarasota Music Festival, Sarasota
June 10-12
Silver Spurs Rodeo, Kissimmee
June 10-12
Harvest Festival, Clermont
June 11
Sand Art Festival, New Smyrna Beach
June 11-12
Major Beach Soccer Tournament, Daytona Beach
June 11-12
St Armands Circle Craft Festival, Sarasota
June 16
Sea Side Fiesta, New Smyrna Beach
June 17-18
Celebrity Mascot Games, Orlando
June 18
Cruisin' Downtown DeLand Classic Car Show, DeLand
June 18
Juneteenth Arts & Cultural Festival, Cocoa
June 18
Art Walk, Sanford
June 20
Climb to the Moon, Ponce Inlet
June 25
Wine Walk on Flagler Avenue, New Smyrna Beach
June 25
Mixon Fruit Farms Antiques, Arts and Crafts Fair, Bradenton
June 25-26
Downtown Dunedin Craft Festival, Dunedin
June 27
Cocoa Beach Pirate Fest, Cocoa Beach

South

June 5
Founder's Day at Whitehall, Palm Beach
June 4
Suntrust Sunday Jazz Brunch, Fort Lauderdale
June 3-5
West Palm Beach Antiques Festival, West Palm Beach
June 10-12
Mystery Writers' Key West Fest, Key West
June 11
West Palm Beach Carnival, West Palm Beach
June 16-19
Africana Festival, Key West
June 18
Florida Keys Community College Swim Around Key West, Key West
June 18
Third Thursday Art Walk, Islamorada
June 18-19

initiative in February.

But an investigation into the company is necessary because most people don't realize their location data is being mined, even if they agreed to it at some point by accepting the terms of service of an app that later sells their location information, Schumer said.

The Federal Trade Commission did not immediately respond requests for comment."

-- Associated Press

[Read entire article here](#)

Presentation promoting beautiful highways now available



Video:Scenic America

"A presentation on promoting beautiful highways is the first video from Scenic America's October 2015 symposium now available for free public viewing.

The presentation by Margaret Lloyd and Bill Brinton looks at issues affecting our highway roadsides including billboard control, beautification and landscaping programs, tree protection and planting and legal issues around protecting our highway vistas, including billboard valuation and taxpayer subsidies."

-- Scenic America

Redland Summer Fruit Festival, Homestead
June 18-19
Downtown Venice Craft Festival, Venice
June 25
The Weekley Brothers Davie Pro Rodeo, Davie
June 24-26
Vero Beach Air Show, Vero Beach
June 24-26
Super Boat International Offshore Race, Marathon
High-speed powerboats compete during this three-day event
For details, visit www.superboat.com
June 24-26
Blues, Brews & BBQ Festival, Punta Gorda

North

June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
Music by the Sea, St Augustine Beach
June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
Concerts In The Plaza, St Augustine
June 3-6
Billy Bowlegs Pirate Festival, Fort Walton Beach
June 4
Wellborn Blueberry Festival, Wellborn
June 4
First Friday Art Walk, St Augustine
June 4
Drake's Raid, St Augustine
June 4
Guided Tour at Kanapaha Botanical Gardens, Gainesville
June 4
Watermelon Festival, Chiefland
June 6-20
Watermelon Festival, Monticello
June 13
Living History Day at Fort Matanzas, St Augustine
June 9
Fiesta All Krewe Ball, Pensacola
June 10-11
The Ride for Hope, Tallahassee
June 11
Artrageous Artwalk, Fernandina Beach
June 11
Annual St George Island Mullet Toss, St George Island
June 16-18, 23-25
The Annual St Augustine Music Festival, St Augustine
June 18
Battle of Bloody Mose Anniversary Commemoration, Fort Mose Historic State Park
June 22-26
Emerald Coast Blue Marlin Classic, Destin
June 27-28
Seawalk Music Festival,

[Watch Youtube video here](#)
[Visit Scenic America here](#)

Jacksonville: Turning a dump site into a vibrant Arboretum

"In your backyard - Jacksonville Arboretum interview on News 4 Jax"



Video: News 4 Jax

[Visit News 4 Jax here](#)

Prestigious National Garden Club medal awarded to William D. Brinton



Image: The Garden Club of America

William D. Brinton has been awarded the Cynthia Pratt Laughlin Medal "for his inspirational leadership in protecting scenic beauty, dedication to controlling the

Jacksonville
June 29-July 2
International Billfish Tournament,
Pensacola
June 24
River Rhythms, Ocala
June 24-25
Panhandle Watermelon Festival,
Chipley/p>

[For many more events and details please visit the Orlando Times Travel Calendar here](#)



proliferation of billboards and consistent policy of unreservedly sharing his vast knowledge about complex sign legislation with municipalities and organizations around the country."

-- The Garden Club of America

[Read entire article here](#)

Bus shelters:

LA and San Francisco illustrate unexpected result of advertising's influence. Low income areas got left out!



Photo: Maya Sugarman, KPCC

Hundreds of LA bus shelters go unbuilt, millions in promised revenue evaporate under city contract

"More than half of the bus shelters planned under a city of Los Angeles contract have not been built, leaving riders at more than 800 locations without shelters and depriving the city of millions in unrealized advertising revenues, a KPCC investigation has found.

While the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority runs most buses and decides the locations of bus stops, shelters fall on city property so they're administered by individual municipalities within the county.

The city of L.A. contracted with the contractor CBS Decaux in 2001 to install more than 1,000 bus shelters over two decades, but the agreement has unraveled, and many bus riders face a long, hot summer without protection from the elements.

The virtual collapse of the bus shelter program has major ramifications for city coffers as well: as much as \$80 million in projected revenue that could have been generated through advertising on the shelters and other street furniture like kiosks has not materialized.

What was once considered an innovative system to pay for bus shelters has fallen apart, partially because the City Council denied or slowed the permitting of the structures when complaints arose about the visual blight of street advertising in the 2000s.

Despite a highly critical audit of the program in 2012 bringing these issues to light, city officials have made little progress in following through with recommendations to fix the contract and allow installations of bus shelters to move forward.

How it doesn't work

Bus rider Steve Santana knows the tricks of finding shade where there is none. At a bus stop in Pacoima on an especially hot San Fernando Valley morning recently, some people milled on the sidewalk but a line of about eight deep squeezed into a shady alley between two buildings near the stop.

'It's the sweat. You just feel nasty and unmotivated to work or do anything,' Santana said as the sun beat down. 'It kind of kills your day sometimes.'

Of the nearly 8,000 bus stops in Los Angeles, about 6,200 of them lack shelters. If the bus shelter contract had been executed as intended, at least 662 more shelters would have been built by now.

To understand how things unraveled, return to the year 2001 when the city first reached agreement with CBS Decaux, a joint advertising venture of the Paris-based JCDecaux SA and CBS Outdoor Americas Inc., a one-time division of CBS renamed Outdoor Media.

The deal was an attempt by the city to install more shelters

without having to come up itself with the needed construction funds. The business model was one that many cities adopted in the 1970s and 1980s. To pay for the bus shelters, municipalities partnered with a private company that agreed to install the structures in exchange for the right to sell advertising on them while sharing the revenue with the local governments.

But it was not a perfect system.

Brian Taylor, a professor of urban planning and director of the UCLA Institute of Transportation Studies, has researched how competing interests have influenced where bus shelters have and have not gone up in Los Angeles over the years.

'There is this conflict between the goals of the transit system, the goals of the city managing the sidewalks and the goals of the advertising company, and all those goals are not aligned,' he said.

Bus riders and transit agencies want the shelters where they are most needed, often at busy bus stops in low-income communities where bus ridership is high. But advertising ventures like CBS Decaux have other priorities.

'The advertising company may be interested in putting their shelters on high-traffic streets where there are relatively few people waiting for buses,' Taylor said. That's because crowded bus stops block the views of the ads and may not be located in neighborhoods where the displays sell for higher amounts.

In his 2001 study, Taylor found in the 1980s and 1990s, the interests of advertisers carried more weight, resulting in the disproportionate location of shelters in higher-income areas with low bus ridership.

The study offered Los Angeles officials several recommendations on how to more effectively distribute the shelters. Taylor suggested the city be given more control over where to place the shelters to better serve bus riders, even if it meant less ad revenue.

Then, to offset the lost dollars, he recommended the city sell more freestanding ads in other areas more desirable to advertisers, such as in central business districts with attractions like shopping centers and movie theaters.

When the city developed a new contract with CBS Decaux in 2001, officials incorporated many of Taylor's ideas into the deal, but it didn't take long for the agreement to break down.

'This is probably a case study of what not to do from both sides,' said Wendy Greuel, the former city controller who in 2012 issued a sharply critical audit of the bus shelters program.

She found the process of approving permits to build the shelters had stalled during the early years of the contract, preventing the city from collecting more than \$23 million in projected ad revenue at the time of the audit and potentially \$57 million more over the life of the contract.

The delays came during a period of public backlash against billboards when advertising on the streets had become highly unpopular. The City Council was slow to approve some permits, and because the whole web of advertising kiosks and bus shelter construction interconnected, the rollout schedule for new shelters collapsed.

Greuel made several recommendations in her audit. But four years since they were issued, many still haven't been completely adopted. Most importantly, she had urged the CBS Decaux contract and the rollout schedule for construction be renegotiated...

...According to Taylor's research, granting the transit agency more say over bus shelters can improve their effectiveness. That's what San Francisco does.

San Francisco's roughly 1,200 shelters are administered by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Authority and funded by advertisements, in some cases not placed directly on the bus shelter. So advertising can be placed on kiosks in high traffic areas, for example, and ads aren't blocked by bus riders using the shelters.

Following San Francisco's model would no doubt be more complicated in Los Angeles, where the city and transit agency jurisdictions are not the same. There are 88 cities and more than 20 smaller transit agencies in Los Angeles County.

But for Lopez-Ledesma, the Pacoima community advocate,

bus shelters are not a minor matter.

'This is a huge issue,' she said. 'It's about people, and really trying to get dignified places for people to wait for their mode of transportation.'"

-- Meghan McCarty with Aaron Mendelson, KPCC

[Read entire article here](#)

