



## Progress Through Regional Cooperation In The Alleghenies

State of the Southern Alleghenies APEX Accelerator - March  
by James Gerraughty  
SAP&DC APEX Accelerator Program Manager



Spring seems to have come early, according to the flowers in my garden. As a lifelong resident of central PA and student of meteorological history, they are likely to have a rude awakening this month.

It has been a fast-paced couple of months since our last newsletter. The CMMC rule had comments due on February 26, 2024, so some changes will be coming (and put into contracts/contract flow-downs). There are also the budget delays which cause havoc on federal contracting/subcontracting. APEX Accelerators across the country have had a lot of client interactions, and our center was one of them.

With regards to training, please review our training opportunities that are coming up in March 2024 (and beyond for our APEX Accelerator and PREP Partners, once our funding is confirmed). Some items of note:

- Bringing the World to PA (all 3 of our centers are having separate events)
- A webinar on CMMC regarding the above changes (March 18, 2024)
- A multiday, multi-APEX event on CMMC and DPA Title III (March 19-21, 2024)

You can review and register for upcoming events on our [eCenter page](#).

Stop back often, as the training events do pop up there pretty frequently!

Finally, if you have ideas for topics, or would like to learn more about something, please drop us a line at (814) 949-6500 or by [email](#). We'd love to hear from you!

### Commerce announces AI safety consortium

By Alexandra Kelley, Staff Correspondent, Nextgov/FCW

The new stakeholder group, based at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, will help drive AI safety standards.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology unveiled the first consortium dedicated to promoting safe design and practices when creating and deploying

artificial intelligence systems.

Announced on Thursday, the U.S. AI Safety Institute Consortium will convene leaders working with AI and machine learning technology with the objective of meeting goals established in President Joe Biden's October 2023 executive order on AI.

Among the initial tasks the consortium will undertake is the development of guidance for topics within AI software and system development, like red-team testing, capability evaluations, risk management and watermarking synthetic content. [Continue Reading](#)

(Accessed 3/01/2024)

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### **County Officials Lobby of Internet Subsidies**

By Kery Murakami, Senior Reporter, Government Executive

The FCC is currently turning away hundreds of thousands seeking assistance. If Congress doesn't soon approve more funding, rural and urban county officials warn, millions will be plunged into "digital darkness."

County officials on Tuesday urged Congress to fund the Affordable Connectivity Program, rather than risk millions of low-income families losing internet service when money for the program runs out at the end of April.

At a press conference outside the U.S. Capitol, rural and urban county officials said that as many as 23.3 million people receiving the \$30-a-month subsidy under the program could be cut off from essential telemedicine services or unable to complete schoolwork at home. Smaller internet companies could also be forced to lay off workers if they lose customers. [Continue Reading](#)

(Accessed 3/01/2024)

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### **Biden to Sign Executive Order Boosting Cybersecurity of Ports, Maritime Vessels**

By David DiMolfetta, Cybersecurity Reporter, Nextgov/FCW

The order empowers the Coast Guard to shore up cyber protections for maritime systems and harden current cyber incident reporting rules.

President Joe Biden is expected to sign an executive order on Wednesday [February 21, 2024] that would give the Homeland Security Department more authority to address maritime cybersecurity threats.

The order, previewed by officials in a call with reporters, would give the U.S. Coast Guard — DHS's maritime security arm — further authority to respond to cyber threats on the sea. It will also require seafaring vessels and their port facilities to shore up cyber defenses and comply with mandatory cybersecurity incident reporting rules.

The Coast Guard will also announce a new maritime security director and seek public comments through late April on a proposal to establish minimum cybersecurity standards for vessels and ports. This would extend current maritime security regulations into the cybersecurity domain and harden incident reporting rules to include compulsory data breach reporting to authorities, including the FBI and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. [Continue Reading](#)

(Accessed 3/01/2024)

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### **About US**

The Southern Alleghenies APEX Accelerator at SAP&DC is an economic development entity that bridges the gap between supplier and buyer in the government marketplace. The APEX Accelerator stands ready to support businesses in the central PA Alleghenies region in the pursuit to secure contracts with local, state and/or federal government agencies nationwide.

