
UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 10-Q

☒ **QUARTERLY REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934**

For the quarterly period ended September 30, 2015
or

☐ **TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934**

For the transition period from _____ **to** _____

Commission File No. 001-03040

QWEST CORPORATION

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Colorado

(State or other jurisdiction of
incorporation or organization)

100 CenturyLink Drive, Monroe, Louisiana

(Address of principal executive offices)

84-0273800

(I.R.S. Employer
Identification No.)

71203

(Zip Code)

(318) 388-9000

(Registrant's telephone number, including area code)

THE REGISTRANT, A WHOLLY OWNED INDIRECT SUBSIDIARY OF CENTURYLINK, INC., MEETS THE CONDITIONS SET FORTH IN GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS H(1) (a) AND (b) OF FORM 10-Q AND IS THEREFORE FILING THIS FORM WITH REDUCED DISCLOSURE FORMAT.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant: (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days. Yes ☒ No ☐

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically and posted on its corporate website, if any, every Interactive Data File required to be submitted and posted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T (Section 232.405 of this chapter) during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit and post such files). Yes ☒ No ☐

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer or a smaller reporting company. See the definitions of "large accelerated filer," "accelerated filer" and "smaller reporting company" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act.

Large accelerated filer ☐

Accelerated filer ☐

Non-accelerated filer ☒
(Do not check if a smaller reporting company)

Smaller reporting company ☐

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act). Yes ☐ No ☒

On November 12, 2015, there was one share of common stock outstanding.

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* All references to "Notes" in this quarterly report refer to these Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements.

PART I—FINANCIAL INFORMATION

ITEM 1. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

QWEST CORPORATION
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF OPERATIONS
(UNAUDITED)

	Three Months Ended September 30,		Nine Months Ended September 30,	
	2015	2014	2015	2014
	(Dollars in millions)			
OPERATING REVENUES				
Operating revenues	\$ 1,670	1,665	4,924	5,037
Operating revenues - affiliates	617	533	1,802	1,578
Total operating revenues	2,287	2,198	6,726	6,615
OPERATING EXPENSES				
Cost of services and products (exclusive of depreciation and amortization)	734	701	2,169	2,097
Selling, general and administrative	266	271	792	830
Operating expenses - affiliates	249	197	735	573
Depreciation and amortization	466	501	1,392	1,499
Total operating expenses	1,715	1,670	5,088	4,999
OPERATING INCOME	572	528	1,638	1,616
OTHER (EXPENSE) INCOME				
Interest expense	(119)	(115)	(356)	(347)
Interest expense - affiliates, net	(13)	(13)	(39)	(38)
Other (expense) income	(1)	1	—	1
Total other expense, net	(133)	(127)	(395)	(384)
INCOME BEFORE INCOME TAX EXPENSE	439	401	1,243	1,232
Income tax expense	171	156	490	478
NET INCOME	\$ 268	245	753	754

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

QWEST CORPORATION
CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEETS
(UNAUDITED)

	September 30, 2015	December 31, 2014
	(Dollars in millions)	
<u>ASSETS</u>		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 9	6
Accounts receivable, less allowance of \$49 and \$38	706	740
Advances to affiliates	1,383	812
Deferred income taxes, net	161	163
Other	129	125
Total current assets	2,388	1,846
NET PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT		
Property, plant and equipment	11,918	11,157
Accumulated depreciation	(4,624)	(3,956)
Net property, plant and equipment	7,294	7,201
GOODWILL AND OTHER ASSETS		
Goodwill	9,354	9,354
Customer relationships, less accumulated amortization of \$3,117 and \$2,660	2,582	3,039
Other intangible assets, less accumulated amortization of \$1,384 and \$1,247	663	808
Other, net	215	209
Total goodwill and other assets	12,814	13,410
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 22,496	22,457
<u>LIABILITIES AND STOCKHOLDER'S EQUITY</u>		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Current maturities of long-term debt	\$ 644	117
Accounts payable	491	464
Note payable - affiliate	827	796
Accrued expenses and other liabilities		
Salaries and benefits	249	220
Income and other taxes	210	197
Other	178	140
Advance billings and customer deposits	321	327
Total current liabilities	2,920	2,261
LONG-TERM DEBT	7,120	7,262
DEFERRED CREDITS AND OTHER LIABILITIES		
Deferred revenues	140	153
Deferred income taxes, net	2,003	2,247
Affiliates obligations, net	1,266	1,271
Other	61	80
Total deferred credits and other liabilities	3,470	3,751
COMMITMENTS AND CONTINGENCIES (Note 5)		
STOCKHOLDER'S EQUITY		
Common stock - one share without par value, owned by Qwest Services Corporation	10,050	10,050
Accumulated deficit	(1,064)	(867)
Total stockholder's equity	8,986	9,183
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND STOCKHOLDER'S EQUITY	\$ 22,496	22,457

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

QWEST CORPORATION
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
(UNAUDITED)

	Nine Months Ended September 30,	
	2015	2014
	(Dollars in millions)	
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Net income	\$ 753	754
Adjustments to reconcile net income to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Depreciation and amortization	1,392	1,499
Deferred income taxes	(242)	(260)
Provision for uncollectible accounts	59	44
Net long-term debt premium amortization	(15)	(34)
Accrued interest on affiliate note	31	21
Impairment of assets	—	16
Changes in current assets and liabilities:		
Accounts receivable	(25)	(52)
Accounts payable	34	(31)
Accrued income and other taxes	13	—
Other current assets and liabilities, net	57	79
Other current assets and liabilities - affiliates, net	9	17
Changes in other noncurrent assets and liabilities, net	(26)	1
Changes in affiliates obligations, net	(5)	(54)
Other, net	5	8
Net cash provided by operating activities	2,040	2,008
INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Payments for property, plant and equipment and capitalized software	(899)	(799)
Changes in advances to affiliates	(571)	(567)
Net cash used in investing activities	(1,470)	(1,366)
FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Net proceeds from issuance of long-term debt	495	483
Payments of long-term debt	(112)	(33)
Dividends paid to Qwest Services Corporation	(950)	(1,100)
Net cash used in financing activities	(567)	(650)
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	3	(8)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of period	6	14
Cash and cash equivalents at end of period	\$ 9	6
Supplemental cash flow information:		
Income taxes paid, net	\$ (732)	(738)
Interest paid (net of capitalized interest of \$14 and \$13)	\$ (347)	(343)

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

QWEST CORPORATION
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF STOCKHOLDER'S EQUITY
(UNAUDITED)

	Nine Months Ended September 30,	
	2015	2014
	(Dollars in millions)	
COMMON STOCK		
Balance at beginning of period	\$ 10,050	10,050
Balance at end of period	10,050	10,050
ACCUMULATED DEFICIT		
Balance at beginning of period	(867)	(437)
Net income	753	754
Dividends declared to Qwest Services Corporation	(950)	(1,100)
Balance at end of period	(1,064)	(783)
TOTAL STOCKHOLDER'S EQUITY	\$ 8,986	9,267

See accompanying notes to consolidated financial statements.

QWEST CORPORATION
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
(UNAUDITED)

Unless the context requires otherwise, references in this report to "QC" refer to Qwest Corporation, and references to "Qwest," "we," "us," and "our" refer to Qwest Corporation and its consolidated subsidiaries.

(1) Basis of Presentation

General

We are an integrated communications company engaged primarily in providing an array of communications services to our residential and business customers. Our communications services include local, high-speed Internet, private line (including special access), network access, Ethernet, information technology, wireless, video and other ancillary services. In certain local and regional markets, we also provide local access and fiber transport services to competitive local exchange carriers.

We generate the majority of our revenues from services provided in the 14 -state region of Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington and Wyoming . We refer to this region as our local service area.

Our consolidated balance sheet as of December 31, 2014 , which was derived from our audited consolidated financial statements, and our unaudited interim consolidated financial statements provided herein have been prepared in accordance with the instructions for Form 10-Q. Certain information and footnote disclosures normally included in financial statements prepared in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America have been condensed or omitted pursuant to rules and regulations of the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC"); however, in our opinion, the disclosures made are adequate to make the information presented not misleading. We believe that these consolidated financial statements include all normal recurring adjustments necessary to fairly present the results for the interim periods. The consolidated results of operations for the first nine months of the year are not necessarily indicative of the consolidated results of operations that might be expected for the entire year. These consolidated financial statements should be read in conjunction with the audited consolidated financial statements and the notes thereto included in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014 .

The accompanying consolidated financial statements include our accounts and the accounts of our subsidiaries. Intercompany amounts and transactions with our consolidated subsidiaries have been eliminated. Transactions with our non-consolidated affiliates (referred to herein as affiliates) have not been eliminated.

In the first quarter of 2015, our ultimate parent company, CenturyLink, Inc. ("CenturyLink"), changed their allocation methodology with respect to their now centrally managed pension and post-retirement plans. Specifically, under this new methodology, CenturyLink will allocate current service costs to subsidiaries relative to employees which are currently earning benefits under the pension and post-retirement benefit plans. The net periodic benefit cost allocated to us is now paid on a monthly basis through CenturyLink's intercompany cash management process. The change in methodology resulted in an increase of less than \$1 million and \$3 million to our net periodic benefit cost for the three and nine months ended September 30, 2015, respectively.

Connect America Fund

On August 27, 2015, CenturyLink agreed to accept funding from the Federal Communications Commission's ("FCC") Connect America Fund ("CAF") of approximately \$500 million per year for six years to fund the deployment of voice and high-speed Internet capable infrastructure for approximately 1.2 million rural households and businesses in 33 states under the CAF Phase 2 high-cost support ("CAF Phase 2 Support") program. The funding from the CAF Phase 2 Support program in these 33 states will substantially supplant funding from the legacy Universal Service Fund ("USF") high-cost support program that we previously utilized to provide support for voice services in high cost rural markets (collectively, the "Legacy USF Support"). Of these amounts, approximately \$150 million is attributable to our service area, to provide service to approximately 0.3 million rural households and businesses in 13 states. In September of 2015, we began receiving payments from the FCC under the new CAF Phase 2 Support program, which included (i) monthly payments at a higher rate than the Legacy USF Support and (ii) a one-time cumulative catch-up payment representing the incrementally higher funding under the CAF Phase 2 Support program over the Legacy USF Support program for the first seven months of 2015. During the third quarter of 2015, we recorded \$64 million more revenue than we would have otherwise recorded during the quarter under the Legacy USF Support program, most of which was attributable to the one-time cumulative catch-up payment. During the fourth quarter of 2015, we expect to record revenue from the FCC, under the CAF Phase 2 Support program, approximately \$23 million higher than amounts we would have otherwise recorded during the quarter under the Legacy USF Support program.

Recent Accounting Pronouncements

Debt Issuance Costs

On April 7, 2015, the Financial Accounting Standards Board (“FASB”) issued Accounting Standards Update (“ASU”) 2015-03, “Interest - Imputation of Interest (Subtopic 835-30) Simplifying the Presentation of Debt Issuance Costs” (“ASU 2015-03”). ASU 2015-03 is effective for annual and interim periods beginning after December 15, 2015, and must be adopted by retrospectively applying the new standard to all periods presented in the financial statements. ASU 2015-03 may be adopted early for any financial statements that have not been issued.

ASU 2015-03 requires that the deferred costs associated with a debt issuance be recognized as a reduction in the carrying amount of the related debt rather than presented as a deferred charge included in other assets in our financial statements. ASU 2015-03 does not change the standards for recognizing deferred debt issuance costs. As of September 30, 2015, we had approximately \$124 million of unamortized debt issuance costs that upon adoption of ASU 2015-03 will be reclassified from other assets and recognized as a reduction in the carrying value of our long-term debt. We plan to adopt the new standard effective December 31, 2015.

Revenue Recognition

On May 28, 2014, the FASB issued ASU 2014-09, “Revenue from Contracts with Customers” (“ASU 2014-09” or “new standard”). The new standard replaces virtually all existing generally accepted accounting principles (“GAAP”) on revenue recognition and replaces them with a principles-based approach for determining revenue recognition using a new five step model. The core principle of ASU 2014-09 is that an entity should recognize revenue to depict the transfer of promised goods or services to customers in an amount that reflects the consideration to which the entity expects to be entitled in exchange for those goods or services. ASU 2014-09 also includes new accounting principles related to the deferral and amortization of contract acquisition and fulfillment costs. We currently do not defer any contract acquisition costs and defer contract fulfillment costs only up to the extent of any revenue deferred.

On July 9, 2015, the FASB approved the deferral of the effective date of ASU 2014-09 by one year until January 1, 2018. Early adoption is permitted as of January 1, 2017. ASU 2014-09 may be adopted by applying the provisions of the new standard on a retrospective basis to the periods included in the financial statements or on a modified retrospective basis which would result in the recognition of a cumulative effect of adopting ASU 2014-09 in the first quarter of 2017, if adopting early, otherwise in the first quarter of 2018. We have not yet decided which implementation method we will adopt. We are studying the new standard and are in the early stages of assessing the impact the new standard will have on us and our consolidated financial statements. We cannot at this time, however, provide any estimate of the impact of adopting the new standard.

(2) Long-Term Debt and Revolving Promissory Note

Long-term debt, including unamortized discounts and premiums and note payable - affiliate, is summarized as follows:

	Interest Rates	Maturities	As of September 30, 2015	As of December 31, 2014
			(Dollars in millions)	
Senior notes	6.125% - 8.375%	2016 - 2055	\$ 7,629	7,311
Term loan	1.950%	2025	100	—
Capital lease and other obligations	Various	Various	14	32
Unamortized premiums, net			21	36
Total long-term debt			7,764	7,379
Less current maturities			(644)	(117)
Long-term debt, excluding current maturities			\$ 7,120	7,262
Note payable - affiliate	6.658%	2022	\$ 827	796

New Issuance

On September 21, 2015, we issued \$400 million aggregate principal amount of 6.625% Notes due 2055, in exchange for net proceeds, after deducting underwriting discounts and other expenses, of approximately \$386 million. The underwriting agreement included an over-allotment option granting the underwriters for the offering an opportunity to purchase additional 6.625% Notes due 2055. On September 30, 2015, we issued an additional \$10 million aggregate principal amount of the 6.625% Notes under this over-allotment option. All of the 6.625% Notes are unsecured obligations and may be redeemed by us, in whole or in part, on or after September 15, 2020, at a redemption price equal to 100% of the principal amount redeemed plus accrued and unpaid interest to the redemption date.

Repayment

On June 15, 2015, we paid at maturity the \$92 million principal amount of our 7.625% Notes.

Term Loan

On February 20, 2015, we entered into a term loan in the amount of \$100 million with CoBank, ACB. The outstanding unpaid principal amount of this term loan plus any accrued and unpaid interest is due on February 20, 2025. Interest is paid monthly based upon either the London Interbank Offered Rate ("LIBOR") or the base rate (as defined in the credit agreement) plus an applicable margin between 1.50% to 2.50% per annum for LIBOR loans and 0.50% to 1.50% per annum for base rate loans depending on our then current senior unsecured long-term debt rating. As of September 30, 2015, the outstanding principal balance on this term loan was \$100 million.

Revolving Promissory Note

We are currently indebted to an affiliate of our ultimate parent company, CenturyLink, under a revolving promissory note that provides us with a funding commitment of up to \$1.0 billion aggregate principal amount through June 30, 2022, of which \$827 million was outstanding as of September 30, 2015. As of September 30, 2015, the weighted average interest rate was 6.658%. As of September 30, 2015 and December 31, 2014, this revolving promissory note is reflected on our consolidated balance sheets as a current liability under note payable - affiliate. As of September 30, 2015, \$18 million of accrued interest is reflected in other current liabilities on our consolidated balance sheet. In accordance with the note agreement, all accrued interest and unpaid interest is capitalized to the unpaid principal balance on June 1 and December 1 of each year.

Covenants

The indentures governing our notes contain certain covenants including, but not limited to: (i) a prohibition on certain liens on our assets; and (ii) a limitation on mergers or sales of all, or substantially all, of our assets, which limitation requires that a successor assume the obligation with regard to these notes. These indentures do not contain any cross-default provisions.

Our senior notes were issued under indentures dated April 15, 1990 and October 15, 1999. These indentures do not contain any financial covenants, but do include restrictions that limit our ability to (i) incur, issue or create liens upon our property and (ii) consolidate with or merge into, transfer or lease all or substantially all of our assets to any other party.

As of September 30, 2015, we believe we were in compliance with the provisions and covenants of our debt agreements.

Subsequent Events

On October 13, 2015, we redeemed all \$250 million of our 7.200% Notes due 2026, which resulted in an immaterial gain.

On October 13, 2015, we redeemed \$150 million of our 6.875% Notes due 2033, which resulted in an immaterial loss.

(3) Fair Value Disclosure

Our financial instruments consist of cash and cash equivalents, accounts receivable, advances to affiliates, accounts payable, note payable - affiliate and long-term debt, excluding capital lease and other obligations. Due to their short-term nature, the carrying amounts of our cash and cash equivalents, accounts receivable, advances to affiliates, accounts payable, and note payable - affiliate approximate their fair values.

Fair value is defined as the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between independent and knowledgeable parties who are willing and able to transact for an asset or liability at the measurement date. We use valuation techniques that maximize the use of observable inputs and minimize the use of unobservable inputs when determining fair value and then we rank the estimated values based on the reliability of the inputs used following the fair value hierarchy set forth by the FASB. We determined the fair values of our long-term debt, including the current portion, based on quoted market prices where available or, if not available, based on discounted future cash flows using current market interest rates.

The three input levels in the hierarchy of fair value measurements are defined by the FASB generally as follows:

Input Level	Description of Input
Level 1	Observable inputs such as quoted market prices in active markets.
Level 2	Inputs other than quoted prices in active markets that are either directly or indirectly observable.
Level 3	Unobservable inputs in which little or no market data exists.

The following table presents the carrying amounts and estimated fair values of our long-term debt, excluding capital lease and other obligations, as well as the input level used to determine the fair values indicated below:

		As of September 30, 2015		As of December 31, 2014	
	Input Level	Carrying Amount	Fair Value	Carrying Amount	Fair Value
(Dollars in millions)					
Liabilities—Long-term debt, excluding capital lease and other obligations	2	\$ 7,750	7,856	7,347	7,702

(4) Products and Services Revenues

We are an integrated communications company engaged primarily in providing an array of communications services, including local voice, high-speed Internet, private line (including special access), network access, Ethernet, information technology, wireless, video and other ancillary services. We strive to maintain our customer relationships by, among other things, bundling our service offerings to provide our customers with a complete offering of integrated communications services. We currently categorize our products, services and revenues among the following three categories:

- *Strategic services*, which include primarily high-speed Internet, private line (including special access), Ethernet, Verizon Wireless and other ancillary services;
- *Legacy services*, which include primarily local voice, Integrated Services Digital Network ("ISDN") (which uses regular telephone lines to support voice, video and data applications), switched access and traditional wide area network ("WAN") services (which allow a local communications network to link to networks in remote locations); and
- *Affiliates and other services*, which consist primarily of CAF support, USF support, USF surcharges and services we provide to our affiliates. We receive federal support from both CAF Phase 1 and CAF Phase 2 programs, and support from both federal and state USF programs, which are government subsidies designed to reimburse us for various costs related to certain telecommunications services, including the costs of voice and high-speed internet capable infrastructure and the costs of network deployment, maintenance and operations in high-cost rural areas where we are not able to recover our costs from our customers. USF surcharges are the amounts we collect based on specific items we list on our customers' invoices to fund the FCC's universal service programs. We provide to our affiliates, telecommunication services that we also provide to external customers. In addition, we provide to our affiliates, computer system development and support services, network support and technical services.

Our operating revenues for our products and services consisted of the following categories:

	Three Months Ended September 30,		Nine Months Ended September 30,	
	2015	2014	2015	2014
(Dollars in millions)				
Strategic services	\$ 852	858	2,569	2,574
Legacy services	689	740	2,096	2,264
Affiliates and other services	746	600	2,061	1,777
Total operating revenues	\$ 2,287	2,198	6,726	6,615

We do not have any single external customer that provides more than 10% of our total consolidated operating revenues. Substantially all of our consolidated revenues come from customers located in the United States.

We recognize revenues in our consolidated statements of operations for certain USF surcharges and transaction taxes that we bill to our customers. Our consolidated statements of operations also reflect the related expense for the amounts we remit to the government agencies. The total amount of such surcharges that we included in revenues aggregated approximately \$37 million for both the three months ended September 30, 2015 and 2014 , and approximately \$111 million and \$114 million for the nine months ended September 30, 2015 and 2014 , respectively. Those USF surcharges, where we record revenue, are included in "other" operating revenues and transaction tax surcharges are included in "legacy services" revenues. We also act as a collection agent for certain other USF and transaction taxes that we are required by government agencies to include in our bills to customers, for which we do not record any revenue or expense because we only act as a pass-through agent.

Our operations are integrated into and reported as part of the consolidated segment data of CenturyLink. CenturyLink's chief operating decision maker ("CODM") is our CODM, but reviews our financial information on an aggregate basis only in connection with our quarterly and annual reports that we file with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Consequently, we do not provide our discrete financial information to the CODM on a regular basis. As such, we believe we have one reportable segment.

(5) Commitments and Contingencies

From time to time, we are involved in other proceedings incidental to our business, including patent infringement allegations, administrative hearings of state public utility commissions relating primarily to our rates or services, actions relating to employee claims, various tax issues, environmental law issues, grievance hearings before labor regulatory agencies and miscellaneous third party tort actions. The outcome of these other proceedings is not predictable. However, based on current circumstances, we do not believe that the ultimate resolution of these other proceedings, after considering available defenses and any insurance coverage or indemnification rights, will have a material adverse effect on our financial position, results of operations or cash flows.

We are currently defending several patent infringement lawsuits asserted against us by non-practicing entities. These cases have progressed to various stages and one or more may go to trial in the coming 24 months if they are not otherwise resolved. Where applicable, we are seeking full or partial indemnification from our vendors and suppliers. As with all litigation, we are vigorously defending these actions and, as a matter of course, are prepared to litigate the matters to judgment, as well as to evaluate and consider all reasonable settlement opportunities.

We are among hundreds of defendants nationwide in dozens of lawsuits filed over the past year by Sprint Communications Company and affiliates of Verizon Communications Inc. The plaintiffs in these suits have challenged the right of local exchange carriers to bill interexchange carriers for switched access charges for certain calls between mobile and wireline devices that are routed through an interexchange carrier. In the lawsuits, the plaintiffs are seeking refunds of access charges previously paid and relief from future access charges. In addition, these and some other interexchange carriers have ceased paying switched access charges on these calls. These lawsuits involving us and many other carriers have been consolidated for pretrial purposes in the United States District Court for the District of Northern Texas. Some of the defendants, including us, have petitioned the Federal Communications Commission to address these issues on an industry-wide basis.

The outcome of these disputes and suits, as well as any related regulatory proceedings that could ensue, are currently not predictable. If we are required to stop assessing these charges or to pay refunds of any such charges, our financial results could be negatively affected.

CenturyLink and its affiliates are involved in several legal proceedings to which we are not a party that, if resolved against them, could have a material adverse effect on their business and financial condition. As an indirect wholly-owned subsidiary of CenturyLink, our business and financial condition could be similarly affected. You can find descriptions of these legal proceedings in CenturyLink's quarterly and annual reports filed with the SEC. Because we are not a party to any of the matters, we have not accrued any liabilities for the matters.

(6) Dividends

During the nine months ended September 30, 2015 , we declared and paid dividends of \$950 million to our direct parent company, Qwest Services Corporation ("QSC"). Dividends paid are reflected on our consolidated statements of cash flows as financing activities.

(7) Other Financial Information

Other Current Assets

The following table presents details of other current assets in our consolidated balance sheets:

	As of September 30, 2015	As of December 31, 2014
	(Dollars in millions)	
Prepaid expenses	\$ 57	45
Other	72	80
Total other current assets	<u>\$ 129</u>	<u>125</u>

Selected Current Liabilities

The following table presents selected current liabilities reflected in our consolidated balance sheets, which include accounts payable:

	As of September 30, 2015	As of December 31, 2014
	(Dollars in millions)	
Accounts payable	<u>\$ 491</u>	<u>464</u>

Included in accounts payable at September 30, 2015 and December 31, 2014 , were \$38 million and \$44 million , respectively, associated with capital expenditures.

ITEM 2. MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL CONDITION AND RESULTS OF OPERATIONS

Unless the context requires otherwise, references in this report to "QC" refer to Qwest Corporation, and references to "Qwest," "we," "us" and "our" refer to Qwest Corporation and its consolidated subsidiaries.

All references to "Notes" in this Item 2 of Part I refer to the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements included in Item 1 of Part I of this report.

Certain statements in this report constitute forward-looking statements. See the last paragraph of this Item 2 of Part I and "Risk Factors" in Item 1A of Part II of this report for a discussion of certain factors that could cause our actual results to differ from our anticipated results or otherwise impact our business, financial condition, results of operations, liquidity or prospects.

Overview

Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations ("MD&A") included herein should be read in conjunction with MD&A and the other information included in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014, and with the consolidated financial statements and related notes in Item 1 of Part I of this report. The results of operations for the first nine months of the year are not necessarily indicative of the results of operations that might be expected for the entire year.

We are an integrated communications company engaged primarily in providing an array of communications services to our residential and business customers. Our communications services include local, high-speed Internet, private line (including special access), network access, Ethernet, information technology, wireless, video and other ancillary services. In certain local and regional markets, we also provide local access and fiber transport services to competitive local exchange carriers. We strive to maintain our customer relationships by, among other things, bundling our service offerings to provide our customers with a complete offering of integrated communications services.

We generate the majority of our revenues from services provided in the 14 -state region of Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington and Wyoming. We refer to this region as our local service area.

Our ultimate parent company, CenturyLink, Inc. ("CenturyLink"), has cash management arrangements between certain of its subsidiaries that include lines of credit, affiliate obligations, capital contributions and dividends. As part of these cash management arrangements, affiliates provide lines of credit to certain other affiliates. Amounts outstanding under these lines of credit and intercompany obligations vary from time to time. Under these arrangements, the majority of our cash balance is advanced on a daily basis to CenturyLink. From time to time we may declare and pay dividends to Qwest Services Corporation ("QSC"), our direct parent, using cash owed to us under these advances, which has the net effect of reducing the amount of these advances. We report the balance of these transfers on our consolidated balance sheet as advances to affiliates.

For the reasons noted in Note 4—Products and Services Revenues to our consolidated financial statements in Item 1 of Part I of this report, we believe we have one reportable segment. We currently categorize our products, services and revenues among the following three categories:

- *Strategic services*, which include primarily high-speed Internet, private line (including special access), Ethernet, Verizon Wireless and other ancillary services;
- *Legacy services*, which include primarily local voice, Integrated Services Digital Network ("ISDN") (which uses regular telephone lines to support voice, video and data applications), switched access and traditional wide area network ("WAN") services (which allow a local communications network to link to networks in remote locations); and
- *Affiliates and other services*, which consist primarily of Connect America Fund ("CAF") support, Universal Service Fund ("USF") support, USF surcharges and services we provide to our affiliates. We receive federal support from both CAF Phase 1 and CAF Phase 2 programs, and support from both federal and state USF programs, which are government subsidies designed to reimburse us for the portion of the cost of providing certain telecommunications services, such as in high-cost rural areas that we are not able to recover from our customers. USF surcharges are the amounts we collect based on specific items we list on our customers' invoices to fund the Federal Communications Commission's ("FCC") universal service programs. We provide to our affiliates, telecommunication services that we also provide to external customers. In addition, we provide to our affiliates, computer system development and support services, network support and technical services.

At September 30, 2015, we operated approximately 7.1 million access lines and served approximately 3.5 million high-speed Internet subscribers. Our methodology for counting access lines and high-speed Internet subscribers, which is described further in the operational metrics table below under "Results of Operations", may not be comparable to those of other companies.

The following analysis is organized to provide the information we believe will be useful for understanding material trends affecting our business.

Business Trends

Our financial results were impacted by several significant trends, which are described below. We expect that these trends will continue to affect our results of operations, cash flows or financial position.

- *Strategic services.* We continue to see shifts in the makeup of our total revenues as customers move to lower margin strategic services, such as high-speed Internet and video services, from higher margin legacy services. Revenues from our strategic services represented 37% and 39% of our total revenues for the three months ended September 30, 2015 and 2014, respectively, and 38% and 39% of our total revenues for the nine months ended September 30, 2015 and 2014, respectively. Thus far during 2015, we are experiencing price compression due to competition, which has negatively impacted the growth of our strategic revenues. We continue to focus on increasing subscribers of our high-speed Internet services, particularly among consumer and small business customers. We believe that continually increasing the scope and connection speeds of our high-speed Internet services is important to remaining competitive in our industry. As a result, we continue to invest in our broadband network, which allows for the delivery of higher speed broadband services to a greater number of customers. We compete in a maturing broadband market in which most customers already have broadband services and growth rates in new subscribers have slowed. Moreover, as described further in "Risk Factors" in Item 1A of Part II of this report, demand for our high-speed Internet services could be adversely affected by competitors continuing to provide services at higher broadband speeds than ours or expanding their advanced wireless data service offerings. Another trend impacting our strategic services is the deployment of fiber-based special access services provided to wireline and wireless carriers, which in many cases replaces existing copper-based special access services. We believe the growth in fiber-based special access services provided to wireline and wireless carriers for backhaul will partially offset the decline in copper-based special access services provided to wireline and wireless carriers as they migrate to Ethernet services, although the timing and magnitude of this technological migration remains uncertain;
- *Legacy services.* Revenues from our legacy services represented 30% and 34% of our total revenues for the three months ended September 30, 2015 and 2014, respectively, and 31% and 34% of our total revenues for the nine months ended September 30, 2015 and 2014, respectively. We expect these percentages to continue to decline. Our legacy services revenues have been and we expect they will continue to be adversely affected by access line losses. Intense competition and product substitution continue to drive our access line losses. For example, many consumers are replacing traditional voice telecommunications service with substitute services, including (i) cable and wireless voice services and (ii) electronic mail, texting and social networking services. We expect that these factors will continue to negatively impact our business. As a result of the expected loss of revenue associated with access lines, we continue to offer our customers service bundling and other product promotions to help mitigate this trend, as described below;
- *Service bundling and product promotions.* We offer our customers the ability to bundle multiple products and services. These customers can bundle local services with other services such as high-speed Internet, video and wireless. While we believe our bundled service offerings can help retain customers, they also tend to lower our profit margins;
- *Operating efficiencies.* We continue to evaluate our operating structure and focus. This involves balancing our workforce in response to our workload requirements, productivity improvements and changes in industry, competitive, technological and regulatory conditions.

While these trends are important to understanding and evaluating our financial results, the other transactions, events, uncertainties and trends discussed in "Risk Factors" in Item 1A of Part II of this report may also materially impact our business operations and financial results.

Results of Operations

The following table summarizes the results of our consolidated operations:

	Three Months Ended September 30,		Nine Months Ended September 30,	
	2015	2014	2015	2014
(Dollars in millions)				
Operating revenues	\$ 2,287	2,198	6,726	6,615
Operating expenses	1,715	1,670	5,088	4,999
Operating income	572	528	1,638	1,616
Other expense, net	(133)	(127)	(395)	(384)
Income tax expense	171	156	490	478
Net income	\$ 268	245	753	754

The following table summarizes our high-speed Internet subscribers, access lines and number of employees:

	As of September 30,		Increase/ (Decrease)	% Change
	2015	2014		
	(in thousands)			
Operational metrics:				
Total high-speed Internet subscribers ⁽¹⁾	3,550	3,503	47	1 %
Total access lines ⁽¹⁾	7,089	7,402	(313)	(4)%
Total employees	22.2	22.2	—	— %

⁽¹⁾ High-speed Internet subscribers are customers that purchase high-speed Internet connection service through their existing telephone lines, stand-alone telephone lines, or fiber-optic cables, and access lines are lines reaching from the customers' premises to a connection with the public network. Our methodology for counting our high-speed Internet subscribers and access lines includes only those lines that we use to provide services to external customers and excludes lines used solely by us and our affiliates. It also excludes unbundled loops and includes stand-alone high-speed Internet subscribers. We count lines when we install the service.

Operating Revenues

The following tables summarize our consolidated operating revenues recorded under our three revenue categories:

	Three Months Ended September 30,		Increase/ (Decrease)	% Change
	2015	2014		
	(Dollars in millions)			
Strategic services	\$ 852	858	(6)	(1)%
Legacy services	689	740	(51)	(7)%
Affiliates and other services	746	600	146	24 %
Total operating revenues	\$ 2,287	2,198	89	4 %
	Nine Months Ended September 30,		Increase/ (Decrease)	% Change
	2015	2014		
	(Dollars in millions)			
Strategic services	\$ 2,569	2,574	(5)	— %
Legacy services	2,096	2,264	(168)	(7)%
Affiliates and other services	2,061	1,777	284	16 %
Total operating revenues	\$ 6,726	6,615	111	2 %

Strategic Services

Strategic services revenues decreased by \$ 6 million , or 1% , for the three months ended September 30, 2015 as compared to the three months ended September 30, 2014 and decreased by \$ 5 million , or less than 1%, for the nine months ended September 30, 2015 as compared to the nine months ended September 30, 2014 . The decline in our strategic services revenues for both periods was primarily the result of volume decreases in our private line services revenues, which was substantially offset by increases in the number of high-speed Internet subscribers, volume increases in our Ethernet services and price increases for various services.

Legacy Services

Legacy services revenues decreased by \$51 million , or 7% , for the three months ended September 30, 2015 as compared to the three months ended September 30, 2014 and decreased by \$168 million , or 7% , for the nine months ended September 30, 2015 as compared to the nine months ended September 30, 2014 . The decline in legacy services revenues for both periods was the result of lower local voice services revenues due to access line loss and reduced access services usage related to customer migration, competitive pressures and product substitution.

Affiliates and Other Services

Affiliates and other services revenues increased by \$146 million , or 24% , for the three months ended September 30, 2015 as compared to the three months ended September 30, 2014 and increased by \$284 million , or 16% , for the nine months ended September 30, 2015 as compared to the nine months ended September 30, 2014 . The increase in affiliates and other services revenues for both periods was primarily due to the additional revenue recorded under the FCC's CAF Phase 2 high-cost support ("CAF Phase 2 Support") program and increases in volume and in the rates we charge for our support services we provided to affiliates.

Recently, CenturyLink agreed to accept funding from the CAF Phase 2 Support program, which will substantially supplant funding we previously received from the legacy USF high-cost support program that we previously utilized to provide support for voice services in high cost rural markets (collectively, the "Legacy USF Support"). In September of 2015, we began receiving payments from the FCC under the new CAF Phase 2 Support program, which included (i) monthly payments at a higher rate than the Legacy USF Support and (ii) a one-time cumulative catch-up payment representing the incrementally higher funding under the CAF Phase 2 Support program over the Legacy USF Support program for the first seven months of 2015. During the third quarter of 2015, we recorded \$64 million more revenue than we would have otherwise recorded during the quarter under the Legacy USF Support program, most of which was attributable to the one-time cumulative catch-up payment. During the fourth quarter of 2015, we expect to record revenue from the FCC, under the CAF Phase 2 Support program, approximately \$23 million higher than amounts we would have otherwise recorded during the quarter under the Legacy USF Support program. For additional information about the impact of the CAF Phase 2 program, see the discussion below in "Liquidity and Capital Resources—Connect America Fund."

Operating Expenses

The following tables summarize our consolidated operating expenses:

	Three Months Ended September 30,		Increase/ (Decrease)	% Change
	2015	2014		
(Dollars in millions)				
Cost of services and products (exclusive of depreciation and amortization)	\$ 734	701	33	5 %
Selling, general and administrative	266	271	(5)	(2)%
Operating expenses - affiliates	249	197	52	26 %
Depreciation and amortization	466	501	(35)	(7)%
Total operating expenses	\$ 1,715	1,670	45	3 %

	Nine Months Ended September 30,		Increase/ (Decrease)	% Change
	2015	2014		
(Dollars in millions)				
Cost of services and products (exclusive of depreciation and amortization)	\$ 2,169	2,097	72	3 %
Selling, general and administrative	792	830	(38)	(5)%
Operating expenses - affiliates	735	573	162	28 %
Depreciation and amortization	1,392	1,499	(107)	(7)%
Total operating expenses	\$ 5,088	4,999	89	2 %

Cost of Services and Products (exclusive of depreciation and amortization)

Cost of services and products (exclusive of depreciation and amortization) are expenses incurred in providing products and services to our customers. These expenses include: employee-related expenses directly attributable to operating and maintaining our network (such as salaries, wages, benefits and professional fees); facilities expenses (which include third-party telecommunications expenses we incur for using other carriers' networks to provide services to our customers); rents and utilities expenses; equipment sales expenses (such as modem expenses); payments of universal service funds (which are federal and state funds that are established to promote the availability of telecommunications services to all consumers at reasonable and affordable rates, among other things, and to which we are often required to contribute); litigation expenses associated with our operations; and other expenses directly related to our operations.

Cost of services and products (exclusive of depreciation and amortization) increased by \$33 million , or 5% , for the three months ended September 30, 2015 as compared to the three months ended September 30, 2014 and increased by \$72 million , or 3% , for the nine months ended September 30, 2015 as compared to the nine months ended September 30, 2014 . The increase in cost of services and products (exclusive of depreciation and amortization) for both periods was primarily due to increases in benefits expense and allocated corporate costs from affiliates, which were partially offset by decreases in salaries and wages, professional fees and contract labor costs.

Selling, General and Administrative

Selling, general and administrative expenses are expenses incurred in selling products and services to our customers, corporate overhead and other operating expenses. These expenses include: employee-related expenses (such as salaries, wages, internal commissions, benefits and professional fees) directly attributable to selling products or services and employee-related expenses for administrative functions; marketing and advertising; property and other operating taxes and fees; external commissions; litigation expenses associated with general matters; bad debt expense; and other selling, general and administrative expenses.

Selling, general and administrative expenses decreased by \$5 million , or 2% , for the three months ended September 30, 2015 as compared to the three months ended September 30, 2014 . The decrease in selling, general and administrative expenses was primarily due to decreases in marketing and advertising, insurance costs, property and other taxes and asset impairment charges. These decreases were partially offset by increases in severance expenses and contract labor. Selling, general and administrative expenses decreased by \$38 million , or 5% , for the nine months ended September 30, 2015 as compared to the nine months ended September 30, 2014 . The decrease in selling, general and administrative expenses was primarily due to decreases in salaries, wages and benefits expense, marketing and advertising, insurance costs, property and other taxes and asset impairment charges. These decreases were partially offset by increases in bad debt expense and regulatory fines of \$15 million associated with a 911 system outage.

Operating Expenses - Affiliates

Since CenturyLink's acquisition of us, we have incurred affiliates expenses related to our use of telecommunication services, marketing and employee related support services provided by CenturyLink and its subsidiaries.

Operating expenses - affiliates increased by \$52 million , or 26% , for the three months ended September 30, 2015 as compared to the three months ended September 30, 2014 and increased by \$162 million , or 28% , for the nine months ended September 30, 2015 as compared to the nine months ended September 30, 2014 . The increase in operating expense - affiliates for both periods was primarily due to an increase in the rates we are charged for support services and higher levels of services provided to us by affiliates as a result of the continuing integration with CenturyLink.

Depreciation and Amortization

The following tables provide detail of our depreciation and amortization expense:

	Three Months Ended September 30,		Increase/ (Decrease)	% Change
	2015	2014		
	(Dollars in millions)			
Depreciation	\$ 249	264	(15)	(6)%
Amortization	217	237	(20)	(8)%
Total depreciation and amortization	\$ 466	501	(35)	(7)%

	Nine Months Ended September 30,		Increase/ (Decrease)	% Change
	2015	2014		
	(Dollars in millions)			
Depreciation	\$ 734	778	(44)	(6)%
Amortization	658	721	(63)	(9)%
Total depreciation and amortization	\$ 1,392	1,499	(107)	(7)%

Depreciation expense decreased by \$15 million , or 6% , and decreased by \$44 million , or 6% , for the three and nine months ended September 30, 2015 , respectively, as compared to the three and nine months ended September 30, 2014 . Annual depreciation expense is impacted by several factors, including changes in our depreciable cost basis, changes in our estimates of the remaining economic life of certain network assets and the addition of new plant. The depreciation expense related to our plant for the nine months ended September 30, 2015 was lower than the depreciation expense for the nine months ended September 30, 2014 due to full depreciation and retirement of certain plant placed in service prior to 2015. This decrease was partially offset by an increase in depreciation expense attributable to new plant placed in service during the nine months ended September 30, 2015 .

Amortization expense decreased by \$20 million , or 8% , and decreased by \$63 million , or 9% , for the three and nine months ended September 30, 2015 , respectively, as compared to the three and nine months ended September 30, 2014 . The decrease in amortization expense was primarily due to the use of accelerated amortization methods for a portion of the customer relationship assets. In addition, amortization of capitalized software was lower due to our software investments becoming fully amortized faster than new software was internally developed or purchased.

Other Consolidated Results

The following tables summarize our total other expense, net and income tax expense:

	Three Months Ended September 30,		Increase/ (Decrease)	% Change
	2015	2014		
	(Dollars in millions)			
Interest expense	\$ (119)	(115)	4	3%
Interest expense - affiliate	(13)	(13)	—	—%
Other income	(1)	1	(2)	nm
Total other expense, net	\$ (133)	(127)	6	5%
Income tax expense	\$ 171	156	15	10%

	Nine Months Ended September 30,		Increase/ (Decrease)	% Change
	2015	2014		
	(Dollars in millions)			
Interest expense	\$ (356)	(347)	9	3 %
Interest expense - affiliate	(39)	(38)	1	3 %
Other income	—	1	(1)	(100)%
Total other expense, net	\$ (395)	(384)	11	3 %
Income tax expense	\$ 490	478	12	3 %

nm-Percentages greater than 200% and comparisons between positive and negative values or to/from zero values are considered not meaningful.

Interest Expense

Interest expense increased by \$4 million , or 3% , for the three months ended September 30, 2015 as compared to the three months ended September 30, 2014 and increased by \$9 million , or 3% , for the nine months ended September 30, 2015 as compared to the nine months ended September 30, 2014 . The increase in interest expense for both periods was primarily due to a reduction in the amortization of debt premiums, which was partially offset by lower bond coupon rates. See Note 2—Long-Term Debt and Revolving Promissory Note to our consolidated financial statements in Item 1 of Part I of this report and Liquidity and Capital Resources below for additional information about our debt.

Interest Expense - Affiliates, Net

Affiliate interest expense remained substantially unchanged for the three and nine months ended September 30, 2015 as compared to the three and nine months ended September 30, 2014 .

Income Tax Expense

Income tax expense for the three months ended September 30, 2015 , was \$171 million , or an effective tax rate of 39.0% , compared to \$156 million , or an effective tax rate of 38.9% , for the three months ended September 30, 2014 . Income tax expense for the nine months ended September 30, 2015 , was \$490 million , or an effective tax rate of 39.4% , compared to \$478 million , or an effective tax rate of 38.8% , for the nine months ended September 30, 2014 . The 2015 rates include the effect of regulatory fines associated with a 911 systems outage and state tax rate changes.

Liquidity and Capital Resources

Overview

We are an indirectly wholly-owned subsidiary of CenturyLink. As such, factors relating to, or affecting, CenturyLink's liquidity and capital resources could have material impacts on us, including impacts on our credit ratings, our access to capital markets and changes in the financial market's perception of us.

CenturyLink has cash management arrangements between certain of its subsidiaries that include lines of credit, affiliate advances and obligations, capital contributions and dividends. As part of these cash management arrangements, affiliates provide lines of credit to certain other affiliates. Amounts outstanding under these lines of credit and intercompany obligations vary from time to time. Under these arrangements, the majority of our cash balance is advanced on a daily basis to CenturyLink. From time to time we may declare and pay dividends to our stockholder, QSC, in excess of our earnings to the extent permitted by applicable law, using cash owed to us under these advances, which has the net effect of reducing the amount of these advances. Our debt covenants do not currently limit the amount of dividends we can pay to QSC. Given our cash management arrangement with our ultimate parent, CenturyLink, and the resulting amounts due to us from CenturyLink, a significant component of our liquidity is dependent upon CenturyLink's ability to repay its obligation to us.

At September 30, 2015, we had a working capital deficit of \$0.5 billion, reflecting current liabilities of \$2.9 billion and current assets of \$2.4 billion, compared to a working capital deficit of approximately \$0.5 billion as of December 31, 2014. We have historically operated with a working capital deficit due to our practice of declaring and paying regular cash dividends to QSC. As long as we continue declaring and paying cash dividends to QSC, it is likely that we will continue to operate with a working capital deficit in the future. We anticipate that our future liquidity needs will be met through (i) our cash provided by our operating activities, (ii) amounts due to us from CenturyLink and (iii) capital contributions, advances or loans from CenturyLink or its affiliates if and to the extent they have available funds that they are willing and able to contribute, advance or loan.

Capital Expenditures

We incur capital expenditures on an ongoing basis in order to enhance and modernize our networks, compete effectively in our markets and expand our service offerings. CenturyLink evaluates capital expenditure projects based on a variety of factors, including expected strategic impacts (such as forecasted impact on revenue growth, productivity, expenses, service levels and customer retention) and the expected return on investment. The amount of CenturyLink's consolidated capital investment is influenced by, among other things, demand for CenturyLink's services and products, cash flow generated by operating activities, cash required for other purposes and regulatory considerations. Based on the type and volume of services we provide, approximately 38% to 43% of CenturyLink's annual consolidated capital expenditures have been attributed over the last couple of years to us for use in our operations. For more information on CenturyLink's total capital expenditures, please see its annual and quarterly reports filed with the SEC.

Our capital expenditures continue to be focused largely on our strategic services. For more information on our capital spending, see Items 1 and 1A of Part I of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014.

Debt and Other Financing Arrangements

On October 13, 2015, we redeemed all \$250 million of our 7.200% Notes due 2026, which resulted in an immaterial gain.

On October 13, 2015, we redeemed \$150 million of our 6.875% Notes due 2033, which resulted in an immaterial loss.

Subject to market conditions, and to the extent feasible, we expect to continue to issue debt securities from time to time in the future to refinance a substantial portion of our maturing debt. The availability, interest rate and other terms of any new borrowings will depend on the ratings assigned to us by credit rating agencies, among other factors. We have no debt maturities due during the remainder of 2015.

As of the date of this report, the credit ratings for our senior unsecured debt were as follows:

Agency	Credit Ratings
Standard & Poor's	BBB-
Moody's Investors Service, Inc.	Baa3
Fitch Ratings	BBB-

Our credit ratings are reviewed and adjusted from time to time by the rating agencies, and downgrades could impact CenturyLink's and our access to debt capital or further raise CenturyLink's and our borrowing costs. Any such downgrades of CenturyLink's senior unsecured debt ratings could, under certain circumstances, incrementally increase the cost of CenturyLink's borrowing under its revolving credit facility, which could indirectly impact us. See "Risk Factors—Risks Affecting our Liquidity and Capital Resources" in Item 1A of Part II of this report.

Revolving Promissory Note

We are currently indebted to an affiliate of CenturyLink under a revolving promissory note that provides us with a funding commitment of up to \$1.0 billion aggregate principal amount through June 30, 2022, of which \$827 million was outstanding as of September 30, 2015. The revolving promissory note is due on demand and ranks equally to our outstanding Senior Notes. Interest is accrued on the outstanding balance using a weighted average per annum interest rate of CenturyLink's outstanding borrowings for the interest period. As of September 30, 2015, the weighted average interest rate was 6.658%. As of September 30, 2015 and December 31, 2014, this revolving promissory note is reflected on our consolidated balance sheets as a current liability under note payable - affiliate. As of September 30, 2015, \$18 million of accrued interest is reflected in other current liabilities on our consolidated balance sheet.

Dividends

We periodically pay dividends to our direct parent company. See Note 6—Dividends and the discussion above under the heading "Overview".

Pension and Post-retirement Benefit Obligations

CenturyLink and Qwest Communications International Inc. ("QCII") are subject to material obligations under their existing defined benefit pension and post-retirement benefit plans. As of December 31, 2014, the accounting unfunded status of CenturyLink's qualified and non-qualified defined benefit pension plans and post-retirement benefit plans were \$2.5 billion and \$3.5 billion, respectively. At December 31, 2014, the accounting unfunded status of QCII's non-qualified defined benefit pension plan was \$21 million, which is included in the CenturyLink defined benefit pension plans' balance noted above. For additional information about CenturyLink's pension and post-retirement benefit arrangements, see "Critical Accounting Policies and Estimates—Pensions and Post-Retirement Benefits" in Item 7 of CenturyLink's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014, and see Note 8—Employee Benefits to the consolidated financial statements in Item 8 of Part II of the same report.

A substantial portion of our active and retired employees participate in the CenturyLink Combined Pension Plan, a qualified defined pension plan and the CenturyLink post-retirement benefit plans. On December 31, 2014, the QCII pension plan and a pension plan of an affiliate were merged into the CenturyLink Retirement Plan, which was renamed the CenturyLink Combined Pension Plan. Our contributions are not segregated or restricted to pay amounts due to our employees and may be used to provide benefits to other employees of our affiliates.

Benefits paid by CenturyLink's qualified pension plan are paid through a trust. Based on current laws and circumstances, CenturyLink does not expect any contributions to be required for their qualified pension plan during the remainder of 2015 or in 2016. The amount of required contributions to CenturyLink's qualified pension plan in 2017 and beyond will depend on a variety of factors, most of which are beyond their control, including earnings on plan investments, prevailing interest rates, demographic experience, changes in plan benefits and changes in funding laws and regulations. Centurylink occasionally makes voluntary contributions in addition to required contributions, and Centurylink made such a voluntary contribution of \$100 million during September 2015.

Certain of CenturyLink's post-retirement health care and life insurance benefits plans are unfunded. Several trusts hold assets that are used to partially cover the health care costs of certain retirees. As of December 31, 2014, the fair value of these trust assets was approximately \$353 million; however, a portion of these assets is comprised of investments with restricted liquidity. CenturyLink estimates that the more liquid assets in these trusts will be adequate to provide continuing reimbursements for covered post-retirement health care costs for approximately two years. Thereafter, covered benefits will be paid either directly by CenturyLink or from these trusts as the remaining assets become liquid. This projected two year period could be shorter or longer depending on changes in projected healthcare costs, returns on plan assets, the timing of maturities of illiquid plan assets and future changes in benefits.

CenturyLink's estimated annual long-term rate of return is 7.5% for both the pension plan trust assets and post-retirement plans trust assets, based on the assets currently held. However, actual returns could be substantially different.

For additional information, see "Risk Factors—Risks Affecting Our Liquidity and Capital Resources—Adverse changes in the value of assets or obligations associated with CenturyLink's qualified pension plan could negatively impact CenturyLink's liquidity, which may in turn affect our business and liquidity" in Item 1A of Part II of this report.

Connect America Fund

As we have previously disclosed, on August 27, 2015, CenturyLink agreed to accept the CAF funding from the FCC of approximately \$500 million per year for six years to fund the deployment of voice and high-speed Internet capable infrastructure for approximately 1.2 million rural households and businesses in 33 states under the CAF Phase 2 Support program. Of these amounts, approximately \$150 million is attributable to our service area, to provide service to approximately 0.3 million rural households and businesses in 13 states. The funding from the CAF Phase 2 Support program will substantially supplant the funding we previously received from the Legacy USF Support program that we previously utilized to provide support for voice services in high cost rural markets in these 13 states. In September of 2015, we began receiving payments from the FCC under the new CAF Phase 2 Support program, which included (i) monthly payments at a higher rate than the Legacy USF Support and (ii) a one-time cumulative catch-up payment representing the higher funding under the CAF Phase 2 Support program over the Legacy USF Support program for the first seven months of 2015. During the third quarter of 2015, we recorded \$64 million more revenue than we would have otherwise recorded during the third quarter under the Legacy USF Support program, most of which was attributable to the one-time cumulative catch-up payment. During the fourth quarter of 2015, we expect to record revenue from the FCC, under the CAF Phase 2 Support program, approximately \$23 million higher than amounts we would have otherwise recorded during the fourth quarter under the Legacy USF Support program.

We declined annual funding of approximately \$8 million in one state, and we expect the funding from the CAF Phase 2 Support program for this one state will be auctioned by the FCC, perhaps as early as 2016. In this one state, the Legacy USF Support we have historically received is expected to continue until the CAF Phase 2 auctions are completed.

As a result of accepting CAF Phase 2 support in 13 states, we will be obligated to make substantial capital expenditures to build infrastructure. See "Capital Expenditures" above.

For additional information on the FCC's CAF order and the USF program, see "Business—Regulation" in Item 1 of Part I of our Annual Report Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014. See "Risk Factors—Risks Affecting our Liquidity and Capital Resources" in Item 1A of Part II of this report.

In 2013, under the second round of the first phase of the CAF program, CenturyLink received \$40 million in funding, \$15 million attributed to our service areas, for deployment of broadband services in rural areas. The CAF Phase 2 Support program overlaps certain eligible areas of the second round of CAF 1 funding, and CenturyLink is continuing to evaluate how much of the \$40 million in funding they will utilize or return to the FCC. This \$15 million of CAF 1 Round 2 funding is included in other noncurrent liabilities on our consolidated balance sheet as of September 30, 2015.

Future Contractual Obligations

For information regarding our estimated future contractual obligations, see the MD&A discussion included in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014.

Historical Information

The following table summarizes our consolidated cash flow activities:

	Nine Months Ended September 30,		Increase / (Decrease)
	2015	2014	
	(Dollars in millions)		
Cash Flows Provided By (Used In)			
Net cash provided by operating activities	\$ 2,040	2,008	32
Net cash used in investing activities	(1,470)	(1,366)	104
Net cash used in financing activities	(567)	(650)	(83)

Net cash provided by operating activities increased by \$32 million for the nine months ended September 30, 2015 as compared to the nine months ended September 30, 2014 primarily due to positive variances in the changes in accounts payable, accounts receivable and affiliate obligations, net, which were partially offset by the decrease in net income adjusted for non-cash items. Our net cash provided by operating activities was also positively impacted by the cash received from the CAF Phase 2 Support program, which was \$62 million greater than the cash we would have otherwise received under the Legacy USF Support program if we had not accepted the CAF Phase 2 offers. For additional information about our operating results, see "Results of Operations" above.

Net cash used in investing activities increased by \$104 million for the nine months ended September 30, 2015 as compared to the nine months ended September 30, 2014 primarily due an increase in payments for purchases of property, plant and equipment.

Net cash used in financing activities decreased by \$83 million for the nine months ended September 30, 2015 as compared to the nine months ended September 30, 2014 primarily due to a reduction in the amount of dividends paid to our direct parent company. For additional information regarding our financing activities, see Note 2—Long-Term Debt and Revolving Promissory Note to our consolidated financial statements in Item 1 of this report.

On September 21, 2015, we issued \$400 million aggregate principal amount of 6.625% Notes due 2055, in exchange for net proceeds, after deducting underwriting discounts and other expenses, of approximately \$386 million. The underwriting agreement included an over-allotment option granting the underwriters for the offering an opportunity to purchase additional 6.625% Notes due 2055. On September 30, 2015, we issued an additional \$10 million aggregate principal amount of the 6.625% Notes under this over-allotment option. All of the 6.625% Notes are unsecured obligations and may be redeemed by us, in whole or in part, on or after September 15, 2020, at a redemption price equal to 100% of the principal amount redeemed plus accrued and unpaid interest to the redemption date.

On June 15, 2015, we paid at maturity the \$92 million principal amount of our 7.625% Notes.

On February 20, 2015, we entered into a term loan in the amount of \$100 million with CoBank, ACB. The outstanding unpaid principal amount of this term loan plus any accrued and unpaid interest is due on February 20, 2025. Interest is paid monthly based upon either the London Interbank Offered Rate (“LIBOR”) or the base rate (as defined in the credit agreement) plus an applicable margin between 1.50% to 2.50% per annum for LIBOR loans and 0.50% to 1.50% per annum for base rate loans depending on our then current senior unsecured long-term debt rating. As of September 30, 2015, the outstanding principal balance on this term loan was \$100 million.

Certain Matters Related to CenturyLink's Indirect Acquisition of Us

In accounting for CenturyLink's indirect acquisition of us, we recorded our debt securities at their estimated fair values, which totaled \$8.498 billion as of April 1, 2011. Our acquisition date fair value estimates were based primarily on quoted market prices in active markets and other observable inputs where quoted market prices were not available. The fair value of our debt securities exceeded their stated principal balances on the acquisition date by \$530 million, which we recorded as a premium.

The table below summarizes the portions of this premium recognized as a reduction to interest expense or extinguished during the periods indicated:

	Nine Months Ended September 30, 2015	From April 1, 2011 through December 31, 2014	Total Since Acquisition
	(Dollars in millions)		
Amortized	\$ 16	296	312
Extinguished ⁽¹⁾	—	187	187
Total	\$ 16	483	499

⁽¹⁾ Extinguished in connection with the payment of Qwest debt securities prior to maturity.

The remaining premium of \$31 million as of September 30, 2015, will reduce interest expense in future periods, unless otherwise extinguished.

Other Matters

In late February 2015, the FCC adopted new regulations that regulate internet services as a public utility under Title II of the Communications Act. Although it is premature for us to determine the ultimate impact of the new regulations on our operations, we currently expect that they will negatively impact our current operations. For additional information, see “Risk Factors—Risks Relating to Legal and Regulatory Matters” in Item 1A of Part II of this report.

CenturyLink and its affiliates are involved in several legal proceedings to which we are not a party that, if resolved against them, could have a material adverse effect on their business and financial condition. As a wholly-owned subsidiary of CenturyLink, our business and financial condition could be similarly affected. You can find descriptions of these legal proceedings in CenturyLink's quarterly and annual reports filed with the SEC. Because we are not a party to any of the matters, we have not accrued any liabilities for these matters as of September 30, 2015.

Market Risk

We are exposed to market risk from changes in interest rates on our variable rate long-term debt obligations and revolving promissory note. We seek to maintain a favorable mix of fixed and variable rate debt in an effort to limit interest costs and cash flow volatility resulting from changes in rates.

Management periodically reviews our exposure to interest rate fluctuations and periodically implements strategies to manage the exposure. From time to time, we have used derivative instruments to (i) lock-in or swap our exposure to changing or variable interest rates for fixed interest rates or (ii) to swap obligations to pay fixed interest rates for variable interest rates. As of September 30, 2015, we had no such instruments outstanding. We have established policies and procedures for risk assessment and the approval, reporting and monitoring of derivative instrument activities. We do not hold or issue derivative financial instruments for trading or speculative purposes.

Certain shortcomings are inherent in the method of analysis presented in the computation of exposures to market risks. Actual values may differ materially from those disclosed by us from time to time if market conditions vary from the assumptions used in the analyses performed. These analyses only incorporate the risk exposures that existed at September 30, 2015.

We do not believe that there were any material changes to market risks arising from changes in interest rates for the nine months ended September 30, 2015 , when compared to the disclosures provided in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014 .

Off-Balance Sheet Arrangements

We have no special purpose or limited purpose entities that provide off-balance sheet financing, liquidity, or market or credit risk support and we do not engage in leasing, hedging or other similar activities that expose us to any significant liabilities that are not (i) reflected on the face of the consolidated financial statements, (ii) disclosed in Note 15—Commitments and Contingencies to our consolidated financial statements in Item 8 of Part II of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014 or (iii) discussed under the heading "Market Risk" above.

Other Information

CenturyLink's and our website is www.centurylink.com . We routinely post important investor information in the "Investor Relations" section of our website at ir.centurylink.com . The information contained on, or that may be accessed through, our website is not part of this quarterly report. You may obtain free electronic copies of our annual reports on Form 10-K, quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, current reports on Form 8-K and all amendments to those reports in the "Investor Relations" section of our website (ir.centurylink.com) under the heading "SEC Filings." These reports are available on our website as soon as reasonably practicable after we electronically file them with the SEC.

Certain of the industry and market data (such as the size of certain markets and our position within these markets) used throughout this report are based on independent industry publications, government publications, reports by market research firms or other published independent sources. Some market data and statistical information are also based on our good faith estimates, which are derived from our review of internal surveys, as well as the independent sources listed above. This information may prove to be inaccurate because of the method by which we obtain some of the data for our estimates or because this information cannot always be verified with certainty due to the limits on the availability and reliability of raw data, the voluntary nature of the data gathering process and other limitations and uncertainties. As a result, although we believe these sources are reliable, we have not independently verified the information and cannot guarantee its accuracy and completeness.

In addition to historical information, this MD&A includes certain forward-looking statements that are based upon our judgment and assumptions as of the date of this report concerning future developments and events, many of which are beyond our control. These forward-looking statements, and the assumptions upon which they are based, are inherently speculative and are subject to a number of risks and uncertainties. Actual events and results may differ materially from those anticipated, estimated, projected or implied by us in those statements if one or more of these risks or uncertainties materialize, or if underlying assumptions prove incorrect. Factors that could affect actual results include but are not limited to: the timing, success and overall effects of competition from a wide variety of competitive providers; the risks inherent in rapid technological change, including product displacement; the effects of ongoing changes in the regulation of the communications industry (including the outcome of regulatory or judicial proceedings relating to intercarrier compensation, access charges, universal service, broadband deployment, data protection and net neutrality); our ability to effectively adjust to changes in the communications industry and changes in the composition of our markets and product mix; CenturyLink's ability to effectively manage its expansion opportunities, including retaining and hiring key personnel; possible changes in the demand for, or pricing of, our products and services, including our ability to effectively respond to increased demand for high-speed broadband services; our ability to successfully introduce new product or service offerings on a timely and cost-effective basis; the adverse impact on our business and network from possible equipment failures, security breaches or similar attacks on our network; our ability to successfully negotiate collective bargaining agreements on reasonable terms without work stoppages; our continued access to credit markets on favorable terms; our ability to collect our receivables from financially troubled companies; our ability to maintain favorable relations with our key business partners, suppliers, vendors, landlords and financial institutions; any adverse developments in legal or regulatory proceedings involving us or our affiliates; changes in our operating plans, corporate strategies or capital allocation plans, including those caused by changes in our cash requirements, capital expenditure needs, debt obligations, pension funding requirements, cash flows, or financial position, or other similar changes; the effects of adverse weather; other risks referenced in this report (including in "Risk Factors" in Item 1A of Part II of this report) or from time to time in other of our filings with the SEC; and the effects of more general factors such as changes in interest rates, in tax rates, in accounting policies or practices, in operating, medical, pension or administrative costs, in general market, labor or economic conditions, or in legislation, regulation or public policy. These and other uncertainties related to our business are described in greater detail in Item 1A of Part I of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014, as updated and supplemented by our subsequent SEC reports, including this report. You should be aware that new factors may emerge from time to time and it is not possible for us to identify all such factors nor can we predict the impact of each such factor on the business or the extent to which any one or more factors may cause actual results to differ from those reflected in any forward-looking statements. Given these uncertainties, we caution investors not to unduly rely on our forward-looking statements. We undertake no obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements for any reason, whether as a result of new information, future events or developments, changed circumstances, or otherwise. Furthermore, any information about our intentions contained in any of our forward-looking statements reflects our intentions as of the date of this report, and is based upon, among other things, the existing regulatory and technological environment, industry and competitive conditions, and economic and market conditions, and our assumptions as of such date. We may change our intentions, strategies or plans at any time and without notice, based upon any changes in such factors, in our assumptions or otherwise.

ITEM 3. QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DISCLOSURES ABOUT MARKET RISK

We have omitted this information pursuant to General Instruction H(2).

ITEM 4. CONTROLS AND PROCEDURES

Conclusion Regarding the Effectiveness of Disclosure Controls and Procedures

The effectiveness of our or any system of disclosure controls and procedures is subject to certain limitations, including the exercise of judgment in designing, implementing and evaluating the controls and procedures, the assumptions used in identifying the likelihood of future events and the inability to eliminate misconduct completely. As a result, there can be no assurance that our disclosure controls and procedures will detect all errors or fraud. By their nature, our, or any system of disclosure controls and procedures can provide only reasonable assurance regarding management's control objectives.

Our Chief Executive Officer, Glen F. Post, III, and our Chief Financial Officer, R. Stewart Ewing, Jr., have evaluated the design and operation of our disclosure controls and procedures (as defined in Rules 13a-15(e) and 15d-15(e) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, or the "Exchange Act") at September 30, 2015. Based on the evaluation, Messrs. Post and Ewing concluded that our disclosure controls and procedures are designed, and are effective, to provide reasonable assurance that the information required to be disclosed by us in the reports that we file under the Exchange Act is timely recorded, processed, summarized and reported and to ensure that information required to be disclosed in the reports that we file or submit under the Exchange Act is accumulated and communicated to our management, including Messrs. Post and Ewing, in a manner that allows timely decisions regarding required disclosure.

There were no changes in our internal control over financial reporting during the third quarter of 2015 that materially affected, or that we believe are reasonably likely to materially affect, our internal control over financial reporting.

PART II—OTHER INFORMATION

ITEM 1. LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

The information contained in Note 5—Commitments and Contingencies included in Item 1 of Part I of this report is incorporated herein by reference.

ITEM 1A. RISK FACTORS

The following discussion of “risk factors” identifies the most significant risks or uncertainties that could (i) materially and adversely affect our business, financial condition, results of operations, liquidity or prospects or (ii) cause our actual results to differ materially from our anticipated results or other expectations. The following information should be read in conjunction with “Management’s Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations” and our consolidated financial statements and related notes included elsewhere in this report. Please note that the following discussion is not intended to comprehensively list all risks or uncertainties faced by us. Our operations or actual results could also be similarly impacted by additional risks and uncertainties that are not currently known to us, that we currently deem to be immaterial or that are not specific to us, such as general economic conditions.

Risks Affecting Our Business

We may not be able to compete successfully against current or future competitors.

Various developments have caused us to continue to lose access lines, and for each of our product and service offerings to experience increased competitive pressures. We expect these trends will continue. In addition to competition from larger national telecommunications providers, we are facing increasing competition from a variety of other sources, including cable and satellite companies, wireless providers, technology companies, broadband providers, device providers, resellers, sales agents and facilities-based providers using their own networks as well as those leasing parts of our network.

Some of our current and potential competitors (i) offer products or services that are substitutes for our traditional voice services, including wireless voice and non-voice communication services, (ii) offer a more comprehensive range of communications products and services, (iii) offer products or services with features that we cannot readily match in some or all of our markets, including faster average broadband transmission speeds and greater content, (iv) have market presence, engineering and technical capabilities, and financial and other resources greater than ours, (v) have larger operations than us, including larger or more diverse networks with greater transmission capacity or other advantages, (vi) conduct operations or raise capital at a lower cost than us, (vii) are subject to less regulation, (viii) offer services nationally or internationally to a larger geographic area or larger base of customers, or (ix) have substantially stronger brand names. Consequently, these competitors may be better equipped to provide more attractive offerings, to charge lower prices for their products and services, to develop and expand their communications and network infrastructures more quickly, to adapt more swiftly to new or emerging technologies and changes in customer requirements, to devote greater resources to the marketing and sale of their products and services, or to provide more comprehensive customer service. In the past, several of our competitors and their operations have grown through acquisitions and aggressive product development. The continued growth of our competitors could further enhance their competitive positions.

Competition could adversely impact us in several ways, including (i) the loss of customers and market share, (ii) the possibility of customers reducing their usage of our services or shifting to less profitable services, (iii) reduced traffic on our networks, (iv) our need to expend substantial time or money on new capital improvement projects, (v) our need to lower prices or increase marketing expenses to remain competitive and (vi) our inability to diversify by successfully offering new products or services.

We are continually taking steps to respond to these competitive pressures, but these efforts may not be successful. Our operating results and financial condition would be adversely affected if these initiatives are unsuccessful or insufficient and if we otherwise are unable to sufficiently stem our continuing access line losses and our legacy revenue declines. If this occurred, our ability to pay our debt and other obligations and to re-invest in the business would also be adversely affected.

Rapid technological changes could require substantial expenditure of financial and other resources in excess of contemplated levels, and any inability to respond to those changes could reduce our market share and adversely affect our operating results and financial condition.

The communications industry has been and continues to be impacted by significant technological changes, which in general are enhancing non-voice communications and enabling a broader array of companies to offer services competitive with ours. Many of those technological changes are (i) displacing or reducing demand for our traditional voice services, (ii) enabling the development of competitive products or services, or (iii) enabling our current customers to reduce or bypass use of our networks. Rapid changes in technology are increasing the competitiveness of the information technology services industry. In addition, demand for our broadband services has been constrained by certain technologies permitting cable companies and other competitors to deliver faster average broadband transmission speeds than ours. Demand for our broadband services could be further reduced by advanced wireless data transmission technologies being deployed by wireless providers, including "long-term evolution" or "LTE" technologies, especially if these wireless providers continue to increase the service's broadband speed and decrease its cost. To enhance the competitiveness of our broadband services, we may be required to expend additional capital to augment the capabilities of our copper-based services or to install more fiber optic cable.

We may not be able to accurately predict technological trends or the success of newly-offered services. Further technological change could require us to (i) expend capital or other resources in excess of currently contemplated levels, (ii) forego the development or provision of products or services that others can provide more efficiently, or (iii) make other changes to our operating plans, corporate strategies or capital allocation plans, any of which could be contrary to the expectations of our security holders or could adversely impact our operations. If we are not able to develop new products and services to keep pace with technological advances, or if those products and services are not widely accepted by customers, our ability to compete could be adversely affected and our market share could decline. Any inability to effectively respond to technological changes could also adversely affect our operating results and financial condition, as well as our ability to service debt and fund other commitments or initiatives.

In addition to introducing new technologies and offerings, we may need, from time to time, to phase out outdated and unprofitable technologies and services. If we are unable to do so, on a cost-effective basis, we could experience reduced profits.

For additional information on the risks of increased expenditures, see "Risk Factors—Risks Affecting our Liquidity and Capital Resources—Our business requires us to incur substantial capital and operating expenses, which reduces our available free cash flow."

Our legacy services and private line services continue to experience declining revenues, and our efforts to offset these declines may not be successful.

Primarily as a result of the competitive and technological changes discussed above, we have in recent years experienced a decline in access lines, long distance revenues and network access revenues, which continue to place downward pressure on our revenues generated from legacy services and our consolidated cash flows. We have also experienced a decline in our private line services from our wholesale customers due to our customers' optimization of their networks, industry consolidation and technological migration to higher-speed services. The loss of private line services has also placed downward pressure on strategic revenues and our consolidated cash flows.

We have taken a variety of steps to counter these declines, including:

- an increased focus on selling a broader range of higher-growth strategic services, which are described in detail elsewhere in this report;
- an increased focus on serving a broader range of business, governmental and wholesale customers; and
- greater use of service bundles.

However, for the reasons described elsewhere in this report, most of these strategic services generate lower profit margins than our legacy services, and some can be expected to experience slowing growth as increasing numbers of our existing or potential customers subscribe to these newer products. Moreover, we cannot assure you that the revenues generated from our new offerings will offset revenue losses associated from reduced sales of our legacy products. In addition, our reliance on third parties to provide certain of these strategic services could constrain our flexibility, as described further below.

Our ability to successfully introduce new product or service offerings on a timely and cost-effective basis could be constrained by a range of factors, including network limitations, limited capital, an inability to attract key personnel with the necessary skills, intellectual property constraints, testing delays, or an inability to act as quickly as smaller, more nimble start-up competitors. Similarly, our ability to grow through acquisitions could be limited by several factors, including our leverage, risk tolerances, and inability to identify attractively-priced target companies. For these reasons, we cannot assure you that our new product or service offerings will be as successful as anticipated, or that we will be able to continue to grow through acquisitions.

We could be harmed by security breaches, damages or other significant disruptions or failures of our networks, information technology infrastructure or related systems, or of those we operate for certain of our customers.

To be successful, we will need to continue providing our customers with high-capacity, reliable and secure networks. We face the risk, as does any company, of a security breach or significant disruption of our information technology infrastructure and related systems (including our billing systems). As a communications company that transmits large amounts of sensitive and proprietary information over communications networks, we face an added risk that a security breach or other significant disruption of our public networks or information technology infrastructure and related systems that we develop, install, operate and maintain for certain of our business and governmental customers could lead to material interruptions or curtailments of service. Moreover, in connection with processing and storing confidential customer data, we face a heightened risk that a security breach or disruption could result in unauthorized access to our customers' proprietary or classified information on our public networks or internal systems or the systems that we operate and maintain for certain of our customers.

We make significant efforts to maintain the security and integrity of these types of information and systems and maintain contingency plans in the event of security breaches or other system disruptions. Nonetheless, we cannot assure you that our security efforts and measures will prevent unauthorized access to our systems, loss or destruction of data (including confidential customer information), account takeovers, unavailability of service, computer viruses, malware, distributed denial-of-service attacks, or other forms of cyber-attacks or similar events. These threats may derive from human error, hardware or software vulnerabilities, fraud, malice or sabotage on the part of employees, third parties or other nations, or could result from aging equipment or other accidental technological failure. These threats may also arise from failure or breaches of systems owned, operated or controlled by other unaffiliated operators to the extent we rely on such other operations to deliver services to our customers.

Similar to other large telecommunications companies, we are a target of cyber-attacks of varying degrees on a regular basis. Although some of these attacks have resulted in security breaches, to date none of these breaches have resulted in a material adverse effect on our operating results or financial condition. You should be aware, however, that defenses against cyber-attacks currently available to U.S. companies are unlikely to prevent intrusions by a highly-determined, highly-sophisticated hacker. Consequently, you should assume that we will be unable to implement security barriers or other preventative measures that repel all future cyber-attacks. Any such future security breaches or disruptions could materially adversely affect our business, especially in light of the growing frequency, scope and well-documented sophistication of cyber-attacks and intrusions.

Although CenturyLink maintains insurance coverage that may, subject to policy terms and conditions (including self-insured deductibles, coverage restrictions and monetary coverage caps) cover certain aspects of our cyber risks, such insurance coverage may be unavailable or insufficient to cover our losses.

Additional risks to our network, infrastructure and related systems include:

- power losses or physical damage, whether caused by fire, adverse weather conditions, terrorism or otherwise;
- capacity or system configuration limitations;
- software or hardware obsolescence, defects or malfunctions;
- programming, processing and other human error; and
- other disruptions that are beyond our control.

Network disruptions, security breaches and other significant failures of the above-described systems could:

- disrupt the proper functioning of these networks and systems and therefore our operations or those of certain of our customers;

- result in the unauthorized access to, and destruction, loss, theft, misappropriation or release of proprietary, confidential, sensitive or otherwise valuable information of ours, our customers or our customers' end users, including trade secrets, which others could use for competitive, disruptive, destructive or otherwise harmful purposes and outcomes;
- require significant management attention or financial resources to remedy the damages that result or to change our systems, including expenses to repair systems, add new personnel or develop additional protective systems;
- require us to notify customers, regulatory agencies or the public of data breaches;
- require us to offer expensive incentives to retain existing customers or subject us to claims for contract breach, damages, credits, fines, penalties, termination or other remedies, particularly with respect to service standards set by state regulatory commissions; or
- result in a loss of business, damage our reputation among our customers and the public generally, subject us to additional regulatory scrutiny or expose us to litigation and fines.

Likewise, our ability to expand and update our systems and information technology infrastructure in response to our growth and changing needs is important to the continued implementation of our new service offering initiatives. As discussed further under “Business—Network Architecture” in Item 1 of Part I of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014, we are currently undertaking several complex, costly and time-consuming projects to simplify and modernize our network, which combines our legacy network and CenturyLink's networks. Our failure to modernize and upgrade our technology infrastructure could have adverse consequences, which could include the delayed implementation of new service offerings, decreased competitiveness of existing service offerings, increased acquisition integration costs, service or billing interruptions, and the diversion of development resources.

Any or all of the foregoing developments could have a negative impact on our results of operations, financial condition and cash flows.

Our future results will suffer if we do not effectively adjust to changes in our business.

The above-described changes in our industry have placed a higher premium on technological, engineering, product development, marketing and provisioning skills. Our future success depends, in part, on our ability to retrain our staff to acquire or strengthen skills necessary to address these changes, and, where necessary, to attract and retain new personnel that possess these skills. Given the current competitive market for personnel with these skills, we cannot assure you that these recruitment efforts will be successful.

Increases in broadband usage may cause network capacity limitations, resulting in service disruptions, reduced capacity or slower transmission speeds for our customers.

Video streaming services and peer-to-peer file sharing applications use significantly more bandwidth than traditional Internet activity such as web browsing and email. As use of these newer services continues to grow, our high-speed Internet customers will likely use much more bandwidth than in the past. If this occurs, we could be required to make significant capital expenditures to increase network capacity in order to avoid service disruptions, service degradation or slower transmission speeds for our customers. Alternatively, we could choose to implement network management practices to reduce the network capacity available to bandwidth-intensive activities during certain times in market areas experiencing congestion, which could negatively affect our ability to retain and attract customers in affected markets. While we believe demand for these services may drive high-speed Internet customers to pay for faster broadband speeds, competitive or regulatory constraints may preclude us from recovering the costs of the necessary network investments. This could result in an adverse impact to our operating margins, results of operations, financial condition and cash flows.

We have been accused of infringing the intellectual property rights of others and will likely face similar accusations in the future, which could subject us to costly and time-consuming litigation or require us to seek third-party licenses.

From time to time, we receive notices from third parties or are named in lawsuits filed by third parties claiming we have infringed or are infringing upon their intellectual property rights. We are currently responding to several of these notices and claims. Like other communications companies, we have received an increasing number of these notices and claims in the past several years, and expect this industry-wide trend will continue. Responding to these claims may require us to expend significant time and money defending our use of the applicable technology, and divert management's time and resources away from other business. In certain instances, we may be required to enter into licensing agreements requiring royalty payments or, in the case of litigation, to pay damages. If we are required to take one or more of these actions, our profit margins may decline. In addition, in responding to these claims, we may be required to stop selling or redesign one or more of our products or services, which could significantly and adversely affect our business practices, results of operations, and financial condition.

Similarly, from time to time, we may need to obtain the right to use certain patents or other intellectual property from third parties to be able to offer new products and services. If we cannot license or otherwise obtain rights to use any required technology from a third party on reasonable terms, our ability to offer new products and services may be prohibited, restricted, made more costly or delayed.

Our operations, financial performance and liquidity are materially reliant on various third parties.

Reliance on other communications providers. To offer voice or data services in certain of our markets, we must either lease network capacity from, or interconnect our network with the infrastructure of, other communications companies who typically compete against us in those markets. Our reliance on these lease or interconnection arrangements limits our control over the quality of our services and exposes us to the risk that our ability to market our services could be adversely impacted by changes in the plans or properties of the carriers upon which we are reliant. In addition, we are exposed to the risk that the other carriers may be unwilling to continue or renew these arrangements in the future on terms favorable to us, or at all.

Conversely, certain of our operations carry a significant amount of voice or data traffic for other communications providers. Their reliance on our services exposes us to the risk that they may transfer all or a portion of this traffic from our network to networks built, owned or leased by them, thereby reducing our revenues. For additional information, see "Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations—Business Trends" included in Item 2 of Part I of this report.

We also rely on reseller and sales agency arrangements with our affiliates and other communications companies to provide some of the services that we sell to our customers, including video services and wireless products and services. As a reseller or sales agent, we do not control the availability, retail price, design, function, quality, reliability, customer service or branding of these products and services, nor do we directly control all of the marketing and promotion of these products and services. Similar to the risks described above regarding our reliance upon other carriers, we could be adversely affected if these communication companies fail to maintain competitive products or services, or fail to continue to make them available to us on attractive terms, or at all.

Our operations and financial performance could be adversely affected if our relationships with any of these other communications companies are disrupted or terminated for any other reason, including if such other companies:

- become bankrupt or experience substantial financial difficulties;
- suffer work stoppages or other labor strife;
- challenge our right to receive payments or services under applicable regulations or the terms of our existing contract arrangements; or
- are otherwise unable or unwilling to make payments or provide services to us.

Reliance on other key suppliers and vendors. We depend on a limited number of suppliers and vendors for equipment and services relating to our network infrastructure. Our local exchange carrier networks consist of central office and remote sites, all with advanced digital switches. If any of these suppliers experience interruptions or other problems delivering or servicing these network components on a timely basis, our operations could suffer significantly. To the extent that proprietary technology of a supplier is an integral component of our network, we may have limited flexibility to purchase key network components from alternative suppliers and may be adversely affected if third parties assert patent infringement claims against our suppliers or us. We also rely on a limited number of software vendors to support our business management systems. In the event it becomes necessary to seek alternative suppliers and vendors, we may be unable to obtain satisfactory replacement supplies, services, space or utilities on economically attractive terms, on a timely basis, or at all, which could increase costs or cause disruptions in our services.

Reliance on governmental payments . We receive a material amount of revenue or government subsidies under various government programs, which are further described under the heading "Risk Factors—Risks Relating to Legal and Regulatory Matters." We also provide products or services to various federal, state and local agencies. Governmental agencies frequently reserve the right to terminate their contracts for convenience, or to suspend or debar companies from receiving future subsidies or contracts under certain circumstances. If our governmental contracts are terminated for any reason, or if we are suspended or debarred from governmental programs or contracts, our results of operations and financial condition could be materially adversely affected.

If we fail to extend or renegotiate our collective bargaining agreements with our labor unions as they expire from time to time, or if our unionized employees were to engage in a strike or other work stoppage, our business and operating results could be materially harmed.

As of September 30, 2015, approximately 50% of our employees were members of various bargaining units represented by the Communications Workers of America or the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. From time to time, our labor agreements with unions expire and we typically negotiate the terms of new bargaining agreements. We may be unable to reach new agreements, and union employees may engage in strikes, work slowdowns or other labor actions, which could materially disrupt our ability to provide services and result in increased cost to us. In addition, new labor agreements may impose significant new costs on us, which could impair our financial condition or results of operations in the future. To the extent they contain benefit provisions, these agreements may also limit our flexibility to change benefits in response to industry or competitive changes. In particular, the post-employment benefits provided under these agreements could cause us to incur costs not faced by many of our competitors, which could ultimately hinder our competitive position.

Portions of our property, plant and equipment are located on property owned by third parties.

Over the past few years, certain utilities, cooperatives and municipalities in certain of the states in which we operate have requested significant rate increases for attaching our plant to their facilities. To the extent that these entities are successful in increasing the amount we pay for these attachments, our future operating costs will increase.

In addition, we rely on rights-of-way, colocation agreements and other authorizations granted by governmental bodies and other third parties to locate our cable, conduit and other network equipment on or under their respective properties. Our operations could be adversely affected if any of these authorizations terminate or lapse, or if the landowner requests price increases.

We depend on key members of our senior management team.

Our success depends largely on the skills, experience and performance of a limited number of senior officers. Competition for senior management in our industry is intense and we may have difficulty retaining our current senior officers or attracting new ones in the event of terminations or resignations. For a discussion of similar retention concerns relating to our recent acquisition, please see the risks described below under the heading "Risk Factors—Risks Relating to our Recent Acquisition."

Unfavorable general economic conditions could negatively impact our operating results and financial condition.

Unfavorable general economic conditions, including unstable economic and credit markets, could negatively affect our business. Worldwide economic growth has been sluggish since 2008, and many experts believe that a confluence of global factors may result in a prolonged period of economic stagnation, slow growth or economic uncertainty. While it is difficult to predict the ultimate impact of these general economic conditions, they could adversely affect demand for some of our products and services and could cause customers to shift to lower priced products and services or to delay or forego purchases of our products and services. These conditions impact, in particular, our ability to sell discretionary products or services to business customers that are under pressure to reduce costs or to governmental customers that have recently suffered substantial budget cuts with the prospect of additional future budget cuts. Any one or more of these circumstances could continue to depress our revenues. Also, our customers may encounter financial hardships or may not be able to obtain adequate access to credit, which could negatively impact their ability to make timely payments to us. In addition, as discussed further below, unstable economic and credit markets may preclude us from refinancing maturing debt at terms that are as favorable as those from which we previously benefited, at terms that are acceptable to us, or at all. For these reasons, among others, if current economic conditions persist or decline, our operating results, financial condition, and liquidity could be adversely affected.

For additional information about our business and operations, see Item 1 of Part I of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014

Risks Relating to Legal and Regulatory Matters

We operate in a highly regulated industry and are therefore exposed to restrictions on our operations and a variety of claims relating to such regulation.

General . We are subject to significant regulation by, among others, (i) the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC"), which regulates interstate communications, (ii) state utility commissions, which regulate intrastate communications, and (iii) various foreign governments and international bodies, which regulate our international operations. Generally, we must obtain and maintain certificates of authority or licenses from these bodies in most territories where we offer regulated services. We cannot assure you that we will be successful in obtaining or retaining all licenses necessary to carry out our business plan, and, even if we are, the prescribed service standards and conditions imposed on us in connection with obtaining or acquiring control of these licenses may impose on us substantial costs and limitations. We are also subject to numerous requirements and interpretations under various international, federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations, which are often quite detailed and occasionally in conflict with each other. Accordingly, we cannot ensure that we are always considered to be in compliance with all these requirements at any single point in time. The agencies responsible for the enforcement of these laws, rules and regulations may initiate inquiries or actions based on customer complaints or on their own initiative. Even if we are ultimately found to have complied with applicable regulations, such actions or inquiries could create adverse publicity that negatively impacts our business.

Regulation of the telecommunications industry continues to change rapidly, and the regulatory environment varies substantially from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Notwithstanding a recent movement towards alternative regulation, a substantial portion of our local voice services revenue remains subject to FCC and state utility commission pricing regulation, which periodically exposes us to pricing or earnings disputes and could expose us to unanticipated price declines. Interexchange carriers have filed complaints in various forums requesting reductions in our access rates. In addition, several long-distance providers are disputing or refusing to pay amounts owed to us for carrying Voice over Internet Protocol ("VoIP") traffic, or traffic they claim to be VoIP traffic. Similarly, some carriers are refusing to pay access charges for certain calls between mobile and wireline devices routed through an interexchange carrier. There can be no assurance that future regulatory, judicial or legislative activities will not have a material adverse effect on our operations, or that regulators or third parties will not raise material issues with regard to our compliance or noncompliance with applicable regulations.

Risks associated with recent changes in federal regulation. In October 2011, the FCC adopted the Connect America and Intercarrier Compensation Reform order ("the 2011 order") intended to reform the existing regulatory regime to focus support on networks capable of providing new technologies, including VoIP and other high-speed Internet services, and re-direct federal universal service funding to foster nationwide broadband infrastructure. This initial ruling provides for a multi-year transition as intercarrier compensation charges are reduced, federal universal service funding is explicitly targeted to broadband deployment, and subscriber line charges paid by end-user customers are gradually increased. These changes have substantially increased the pace of reductions in the amount of switched access revenues we receive from our wholesale customers. Moreover, we expect our participation in the FCC's CAF Phase 2 Support program will significantly impact our financial results and capital expenditures in the coming years. For more information, see "Business—Regulation" in Item 1 of Part I of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014 and "Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations" in Item 2 of Part I of this report.

Several judicial challenges to the 2011 order are pending and additional future challenges are possible, any of which could alter or delay the FCC's proposed changes. In addition, based on the outcome of the FCC proceedings, various state commissions may consider changes to their universal service funds or intrastate access rates. Moreover, FCC proceedings relating to implementation of the order remain pending. For these and other reasons, we cannot predict the ultimate impact of these proceedings at this time.

In addition, during the last few years Congress or the FCC has initiated various other changes, including (i) broadband stimulus projects, support funds and similar plans and (ii) various broadband and internet regulation initiatives including "network neutrality" regulations, as discussed further below. The FCC is also, among other things, investigating the special access tariffs of several carriers, including us, and considering changes in the regulation of special access services. Any of these recent or pending initiatives could adversely affect our operations or financial results. Moreover, many of the FCC's regulations adopted in recent years remain subject to judicial review and additional rulemakings, thus increasing the difficulty of determining the ultimate impact of these changes on us and our competitors.

Risks of higher costs. Regulations continue to create significant costs for us. Challenges to our tariffs by regulators or third parties or delays in obtaining certifications and regulatory approvals could cause us to incur substantial legal and administrative expenses, and, if successful, such challenges could adversely affect the rates that we are able to charge our customers.

Our business also may be impacted by legislation and regulation imposing new or greater obligations related to regulations or laws related to regulating broadband deployment, handling of broadband traffic, bolstering homeland security or cyber security, increasing disaster recovery requirements, minimizing environmental impacts, enhancing privacy, restricting data collection or storage, protecting intellectual property rights of third parties, or addressing other issues that impact our business, including the Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act (which requires communications carriers to ensure that their equipment, facilities, and services are able to facilitate authorized electronic surveillance), and laws governing local number portability and customer proprietary network information requirements. We expect our compliance costs to increase if future laws or regulations continue to increase our obligations. In addition, increased regulation of our suppliers could increase our costs.

Risks of reduced flexibility . As a diversified full service incumbent local exchange carrier in most of our key markets, we have traditionally been subject to significant regulation that does not apply to many of our competitors. This regulation in many instances restricts our ability to change rates, to compete and to respond rapidly to changing industry conditions. As our business becomes increasingly competitive, regulatory disparities between us and our competitors could impede our ability to compete.

Risks posed by other regulations. All of our operations are also subject to a variety of environmental, safety, health and other governmental regulations. We monitor our compliance with federal, state and local regulations governing the management, discharge and disposal of hazardous and environmentally sensitive materials. Although we believe that we are in compliance with these regulations, our management, discharge or disposal of hazardous and environmentally sensitive materials might expose us to claims or actions that could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and operating results.

"Open Internet" regulation could limit our ability to operate our high-speed data business profitably and to manage our broadband facilities efficiently.

In order to continue to provide quality high-speed data service at attractive prices, we believe we need the continued flexibility to respond to changing consumer demands, to manage bandwidth usage efficiently for the benefit of all customers and to invest in our networks. In late February 2015, the FCC adopted new regulations that regulate internet services as a public utility under Title II of the Communications Act. Several companies, including us, have initiated judicial actions challenging the new regulations, which remain pending. The ultimate impact of the new regulations will depend on several factors, including the results of pending litigation and the manner in which the new regulations are implemented and enforced. Although it is premature for us to determine the ultimate impact of the new regulations upon our operations, we currently anticipate that the proposed rules could hamper our ability to operate our data networks efficiently, restrict our ability to implement network management practices necessary to ensure quality service, increase the cost of network extensions and upgrades, and otherwise negatively impact our current operations. It is possible that Congress, the FCC or the courts could take further action in the future to modify regulations affecting the provision of broadband internet services.

We may be liable for the material that content providers distribute over our network.

Although we believe our liability for third party information stored on or transmitted through our networks is limited, the liability of private network operators is impacted both by changing technology and evolving legal principles. As a private network provider, we could be exposed to legal claims relating to third party content stored or transmitted on our networks. Such claims could involve, among others, allegations of defamation, invasion of privacy, copyright infringement, or aiding and abetting restricted activities such as online gambling or pornography. If we decide to implement additional measures to reduce our exposure to these risks, or if we are required to defend ourselves against these kinds of claims, our operations and financial results could be negatively affected.

Any adverse outcome in any material litigation of CenturyLink or QCII could have a material adverse impact on our financial condition and operating results, on the trading price of our debt securities and on our ability to access the capital markets.

There are several material proceedings pending against CenturyLink and its affiliates, as described in Note 8—Commitments and Contingencies in Item 1 of Part I of CenturyLink's Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended September 30, 2015 . Depending on their outcome, any of these matters could have a material adverse effect on our financial position or operating results. We can give you no assurances as to the impact of these matters on our operating results or financial condition.

We are subject to franchising requirements that could impede our expansion opportunities.

We may be required to obtain from municipal authorities operating franchises to install or expand facilities. Some of these franchises may require us to pay franchise fees. These franchising requirements generally apply to our fiber transport and competitive local exchange carrier operations, and to our facilities-based video services. These requirements could delay us in expanding our operations or increase the costs of providing these services.

We are exposed to risks arising out of recent legislation affecting U.S. public companies.

Changing laws, regulations and standards relating to corporate governance and public disclosure, including the Sarbanes-Oxley Act and the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, and related regulations implemented thereunder, are increasing legal and financial compliance costs and making some activities more time consuming. Any failure to successfully or timely complete annual assessments of our internal controls required by Section 404 of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act could subject us to sanctions or investigation by regulatory authorities. Any such action could adversely affect our financial results or our reputation with investors, lenders or others.

Changes in any of the above-described laws or regulations may limit our ability to plan, and could subject us to further costs or constraints.

From time to time, the laws or regulations governing us or our customers, or the government's policy of enforcing those laws or regulations, have changed frequently and materially. The variability of these laws could hamper the ability of us and our customers to plan for the future or establish long-term strategies. Moreover, future changes in these laws or regulations could further increase our operating or compliance costs, or further restrict our operational flexibility, any of which could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, competitive position, financial condition or prospects.

For a more thorough discussion of the regulatory issues that may affect our business, see "Regulation" in Item 1 of Part I of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014 .

Risks Affecting Our Liquidity and Capital Resources

CenturyLink's and our high debt levels pose risks to our viability and may make us more vulnerable to adverse economic and competitive conditions, as well as other adverse developments.

Our ultimate parent, CenturyLink, and we continue to carry significant debt. As of September 30, 2015 , our consolidated long-term debt was approximately \$7.8 billion (excluding our note payable - affiliate of \$827 million), which was included in CenturyLink's consolidated long-term debt of approximately \$20.4 billion as of that date. Approximately \$2.9 billion of CenturyLink's consolidated debt securities (excluding capital lease and other obligations), which includes approximately \$735 million of our debt securities, matures over the next 36 months ending September 30, 2018. This amount excludes the \$400 million of debt we redeemed on October 13, 2015. While we currently believe that CenturyLink and we will have the financial resources to meet or refinance our obligations when they come due, we cannot fully anticipate our future financial condition or the condition of CenturyLink, the credit markets or the economy. We may incur unexpected expenses or liabilities, and we may have limited access to financing.

Our significant levels of debt can adversely affect us in several other respects, including:

- limiting our ability to access the capital markets;
- exposing us to the risk of credit rating downgrades, which would raise our borrowing costs and could further limit our access to capital;
- hindering our flexibility to plan for or react to changing market, industry or economic conditions;
- limiting the amount of cash flow available for future operations, capital expenditures, acquisitions, strategic initiatives, dividends, or other uses;
- increasing our future borrowing costs;
- increasing the risk that third parties will be unwilling or unable to engage in hedging or other financial or commercial arrangements with us;
- making us more vulnerable to economic or industry downturns, including interest rate increases;
- placing us at a competitive disadvantage compared to less leveraged competitors;

- increasing the risk that we will need to sell assets, possibly on unfavorable terms, or take other unfavorable actions to meet payment obligations; or
- increasing the risk that we may not meet the financial covenants contained in our debt agreements or timely make all required debt payments.

The effects of each of these factors could be intensified if we increase our borrowings.

We expect to periodically require financing to meet our debt obligations as they come due. Due to the unstable economy and credit markets, we may not be able to refinance maturing debt at terms that are as favorable as those from which we previously benefited, at terms that are acceptable to us or at all. See below “Risk Factors—Risks Affecting our Liquidity and Capital Resources—CenturyLink and we plan to access the public debt markets, and we cannot assure you that these markets will remain free of disruptions.”

We may also need to obtain additional financing or capital, or to investigate other methods to generate cash (such as further cost reductions or the sale of assets) under a variety of other circumstances, including if revenues and cash provided by operations decline, if economic conditions weaken, if competitive pressures increase, if regulatory requirements change, if CenturyLink is required to contribute a material amount of cash to its pension plans, if CenturyLink is required to begin to pay other post-retirement benefits significantly earlier than is anticipated, or if CenturyLink becomes subject to significant judgments or settlements in one or more of the matters discussed in Note 15—Commitments and Contingencies to our consolidated financial statements in Item 8 of Part II of our Annual Report and Note 14—Commitments and Contingencies to the consolidated financial statements in Item 8 of Part II of CenturyLink's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014. For all the reasons mentioned above, we can give no assurance that additional financing for any of these purposes will be available on terms that are acceptable to us or at all.

Certain of CenturyLink's and our debt instruments have cross payment default or cross acceleration provisions. When present, these provisions could have a wider impact on liquidity than might otherwise arise from a default or acceleration of a single debt instrument. Any such event could adversely affect our ability to conduct business or access the capital markets and could adversely impact our credit ratings. See "Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations—Liquidity and Capital Resources" in CenturyLink's quarterly and annual reports filed with the SEC for additional information about CenturyLink's indebtedness.

In addition, our ability to borrow funds in the future will depend in part on the satisfaction of the covenants in our term loan and other debt instruments. If we are unable to satisfy the financial covenants contained in those instruments, or are unable to generate cash sufficient to make required debt payments, the parties to whom we are indebted could accelerate the maturity of some or all of our outstanding indebtedness.

If we are unable to make required debt payments or refinance our debt, we would likely have to consider other options, such as selling assets, issuing additional securities, cutting costs or otherwise reducing our cash requirements, or negotiating with our lenders to restructure our applicable debt. The indentures governing our senior notes may restrict, or market or business conditions may limit, our ability to do some of these things on favorable terms or at all.

Our debt agreements and the debt agreements of CenturyLink and its other subsidiaries allow us to incur significantly more debt, which could exacerbate the other risks described in this report.

The terms of our debt instruments and the debt instruments of CenturyLink and its other subsidiaries permit additional indebtedness. Additional debt may be necessary for many reasons, including those discussed above. Incremental borrowings that impose additional financial risks could exacerbate the other risks described in this report.

Any downgrade in our credit ratings could limit our ability to obtain future financing, increase our borrowing costs and adversely affect the market price of our existing debt securities or otherwise impair our business, financial condition and results of operations.

As noted above in Item 2 of Part I of this Quarterly Report, our long-term debt is currently rated BBB- by Standard and Poor's Ratings Services; Baa3 by Moody's Investors Services; and BBB- by Fitch Ratings, all three of which are the lowest investment-grade ratings issued by each of these agencies. Credit rating agencies continually review their ratings for the companies that they follow, including us. Credit rating agencies also evaluate the industries in which we operate as a whole and may change their credit rating for us based on their overall view of such industries. There can be no assurance that any rating assigned to any of our debt securities will remain in effect for any given period of time or that any such rating will not be lowered, suspended or withdrawn entirely by a rating agency if, in that rating agency's judgment, circumstances so warrant. A downgrade of our credit ratings could adversely affect the market price of some or all of our outstanding debt securities, limit our access to the capital markets or otherwise adversely affect the availability of other new financing on favorable terms, if at all, trigger the application of restrictive covenants or result in more restrictive covenants in agreements governing the terms of any future indebtedness that we may incur, increase our cost of borrowing, and impair our business, financial condition and results of operations.

Our business requires us to incur substantial capital and operating expenses, which reduce our available free cash flow.

Our business is capital intensive, and we anticipate that our capital requirements will continue to be significant in the coming years. As discussed further under "Risk Factors—Risks Affecting Our Business—Increases in broadband usage may cause network capacity limitations, resulting in service disruptions, reduced capacity or slower transmission speeds for our customers," increased bandwidth consumption by consumers and businesses have placed increased demands on the transmission capacity of our networks. If we determine that our networks must be expanded to handle these increased demands or to the extent the FCC requires higher minimum transmission speeds to qualify as "broadband service", we may determine that substantial additional capital expenditures are required, even though there is no assurance that the return on our investment will be satisfactory. In addition, many of our growth and modernization initiatives are capital intensive and changes in technology could require further spending. In addition to investing in expanded networks, new products or new technologies, we must from time to time invest capital to (i) replace some of our aging equipment that supports many of our legacy services that are experiencing revenue declines or (ii) convert older systems to simplify and modernize our network. While we believe that our planned level of capital expenditures will meet both our maintenance and core growth requirements, this may not be the case if demands on our network continue to accelerate or other circumstances underlying our expectations change. Increased spending could, among other things, adversely affect our operating margins, cash flows, results of operations and financial position.

Similarly, we continue to anticipate incurring substantial operating expenses to support our incumbent services and growth initiatives. Although we have successfully reduced certain of our operating expenses over the past few years, we may be unable to further reduce these costs, even if revenues in some of our lines of business are decreasing. If so, our operating margins will be adversely impacted.

We could incur reduced support payments or a substantial penalty if we fail to meet the requirements under the FCC's Connect American Fund ("CAF") Phase 2 Support program, which could adversely affect our results of operations and financial condition.

As a result of accepting CAF Phase 2 Support in 13 states, if the timing of our buildout fails to attain the FCC's milestones, the FCC could withhold future CAF support until these shortcomings are rectified.

If we are not in compliance with FCC measures at the end of the six-year CAF Phase 2 period, we will have twelve months to attain full compliance. If we are not in full compliance after the additional twelve months, we would incur a penalty equal to 1.89 times the average amount of support per location received in the state over the six-year term, plus 10% of the total CAF Phase 2 Support over the six-year term for the state. The amount of these penalties could be material.

Adverse changes in the value of assets or obligations associated with CenturyLink's qualified pension plan could negatively impact CenturyLink's liquidity, which may in turn affect our business and liquidity.

A substantial amount of our employees participate in a qualified pension plan sponsored by CenturyLink (formerly QCII). On December 31, 2014, the QCII pension plan and a pension plan of an affiliate were merged into the CenturyLink Combined Pension Plan.

The funded status of CenturyLink's qualified pension plan is the difference between the value of the plan's assets and the benefit obligation. The accounting unfunded status of CenturyLink's qualified pension plan was \$2.4 billion as of December 31, 2014 . Adverse changes in interest rates or market conditions, among other assumptions and factors, could cause a significant increase in CenturyLink's benefit obligation or a significant decrease in the value of the plan's assets. These adverse changes could require CenturyLink to contribute a material amount of cash to its pension plan or could accelerate the timing of required cash payments. The amounts contributed by us through CenturyLink are not segregated or restricted and may be used to provide benefits to employees of CenturyLink's other subsidiaries. Based on current laws and circumstances, CenturyLink does not expect it will be required to make a contribution to its plan in 2015. The actual amount of required contributions to its plan in 2016 and beyond will depend on earnings on plan investments, prevailing interest and discount rates, demographic experience, changes in plan benefits and changes in funding laws and regulations. Any future material cash contributions could have a negative impact on CenturyLink's liquidity by reducing their cash flows, which in turn could affect our liquidity.

CenturyLink and we plan to access the public debt markets, and we cannot assure you that these markets will remain free of disruptions.

CenturyLink and we have a significant amount of indebtedness that it intends to refinance over the next several years, principally it expects through the issuance of debt securities of CenturyLink, us or both. CenturyLink's and our ability to arrange additional financing will depend on, among other factors, the financial position, performance, and credit ratings of CenturyLink and QC, as well as prevailing market conditions and other factors beyond its or our control. Prevailing market conditions could be adversely affected by the ongoing disruptions in domestic or overseas sovereign or corporate debt markets, contractions or limited growth in the economy or other similar adverse economic developments in the U.S. or abroad. Instability in the global financial markets has from time to time resulted in periodic volatility in the capital markets. This volatility could limit CenturyLink's and our access to the credit markets, leading to higher borrowing costs or, in some cases, the inability to obtain financing on terms that are acceptable to it, or at all. Any such failure to obtain additional financing could jeopardize its and our ability to repay, refinance or reduce its or our debt obligations.

Other Risks

We regularly transfer our cash to CenturyLink, which exposes us to certain risks.

Under our cash management arrangement with CenturyLink, we regularly transfer our cash to CenturyLink, which we recognize on our consolidated balance sheets as advances to affiliates. Although CenturyLink periodically repays these advances to fund our cash requirements throughout the year, at any given point in time CenturyLink may owe us a substantial sum under this arrangement. Accordingly, developments that adversely impact CenturyLink could adversely impact our ability to collect these advances.

If conditions or assumptions differ from the judgments, assumptions or estimates used in our critical accounting policies, our consolidated financial statements and related disclosures could be materially affected.

The preparation of financial statements and related disclosures in conformity with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make judgments, assumptions and estimates that affect the amounts reported in our consolidated financial statements and accompanying notes. Our critical accounting policies, which are described in "Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations—Critical Accounting Policies and Estimates" in Item 7 of Part II of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014 , describe those significant accounting policies and methods used in the preparation of our consolidated financial statements that are considered "critical" because they require judgments, assumptions and estimates that materially impact our consolidated financial statements and related disclosures. As a result, if future events or assumptions differ significantly from the judgments, assumptions and estimates in our critical accounting policies, these events or assumptions could have a material impact on our consolidated financial statements and related disclosures.

We have a significant amount of goodwill, customer relationships and other intangible assets on our consolidated balance sheet. If our goodwill or other intangible assets become impaired, we may be required to record a significant charge to earnings and reduce our stockholders' equity.

As of September 30, 2015 , approximately 56% of our total consolidated assets reflected on the consolidated balance sheet included in this report consisted of goodwill, customer relationships and other intangible assets. Under generally accepted accounting principles, most of these intangible assets must be tested for impairment on an annual basis or more frequently whenever events or circumstances indicate that their carrying value may not be recoverable. From time to time, our affiliates or predecessors have recorded large non-cash charges to earnings in connection with required reductions of the value of their intangible assets. If our intangible assets are determined to be impaired in the future, we may similarly be required to record significant, non-cash charges to earnings during the period in which the impairment is determined to have occurred.

Tax audits or changes in tax laws could adversely affect us.

For periods after the April 1, 2011 closing of CenturyLink's acquisition of QCII, we are included in the consolidated federal income tax return of CenturyLink. As such, we could be severally liable for tax examinations and adjustments attributable to other members of the QCII or CenturyLink affiliated groups, as applicable. Significant taxpayers (such as QCII for periods prior to the CenturyLink acquisition and CenturyLink for periods after the CenturyLink acquisition) are subject to frequent and regular audits by the Internal Revenue Service as well as state and local tax authorities. These audits could subject us to tax liabilities if adverse positions are taken by these tax authorities.

Tax sharing agreements have been executed between QCII and previous affiliates, and QCII believes the liabilities, if any, arising from adjustments to previously filed returns would be borne by the affiliated group member determined to have a deficiency under the terms and conditions of such agreements and applicable tax law. We have not generally provided reserves for liabilities attributable to former affiliated companies or for claims they have asserted or may assert against us.

We believe that we have adequately provided for tax contingencies. However, CenturyLink's or QCII's tax audits and examinations may result in tax liabilities that differ materially from those that we have recognized in our consolidated financial statements. Because the ultimate outcomes of all of these matters are uncertain, we can give no assurance as to whether an adverse result from one or more of them will have a material effect on our financial results.

Legislators and regulators at all levels of government may from time to time change existing tax laws or regulations or enact new laws or regulations that could negatively impact our operating results or financial condition.

ITEM 6. EXHIBITS

Exhibits identified in parentheses below are on file with the SEC and are incorporated herein by reference. All other exhibits are provided as part of this electronic submission. ⁽¹⁾

Exhibit Number	Description
3.1	Restated Articles of Incorporation of Qwest Corporation (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 3(a) of Qwest Corporation's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 1997 (File No. 001-03040) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on March 25, 1998).
3.2	Articles of Amendment to the Articles of Incorporation of Qwest Corporation (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 3.1 of Qwest Corporation's Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the period ended June 30, 2000 (File No. 001-03040) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on August 11, 2000).
3.3	Amended and Restated Bylaws of Qwest Corporation (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 3.3 of Qwest Corporation's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2002 (File No. 001-03040) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on January 13, 2004).
4.1	Indenture, dated as of April 15, 1990, by and between The Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company (currently named Qwest Corporation) and The First National Bank of Chicago (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.2 of Qwest Corporation's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2002 (File No. 001-03040) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on January 13, 2004).
a.	First Supplemental Indenture, dated as of April 16, 1991, by and between U S WEST Communications, Inc. (currently named Qwest Corporation) and The First National Bank of Chicago (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.3 of Qwest Corporation's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2002 (File No. 001-03040) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on January 13, 2004).
4.2	Indenture, dated as of April 15, 1990, by and between Northwestern Bell Telephone Company (predecessor to Qwest Corporation) and The First National Bank of Chicago (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.5(b) of CenturyLink, Inc.'s Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the period ended March 31, 2012 (File No. 001-07784) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on May 10, 2012).
a.	First Supplemental Indenture, dated as of April 16, 1991, by and between U S WEST Communications, Inc. (currently named Qwest Corporation) and The First National Bank of Chicago (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.3 of Qwest Corporation's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2002 (File No. 001-03040) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on January 13, 2004).
4.3	Indenture, dated as of October 15, 1999, by and between U S West Communications, Inc. (currently named Qwest Corporation) and Bank One Trust Company, N.A., as trustee (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4(b) of Qwest Corporation's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 1999 (File No. 001-03040) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on March 3, 2000).
a.	First Supplemental Indenture, dated as of August 19, 2004, by and between Qwest Corporation and U.S. Bank National Association (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.22 of Qwest Communications International Inc.'s Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the period ended September 30, 2004 (File No. 001-15577) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on November 5, 2004).
b.	Third Supplemental Indenture, dated as of June 17, 2005, by and between Qwest Corporation and U.S. Bank National Association (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.2 of Qwest Corporation's Current Report on Form 8-K (File No. 001-03040) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on June 23, 2005).
c.	Fourth Supplemental Indenture, dated as of August 8, 2006, by and between Qwest Corporation and U.S. Bank National Association (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.1 of Qwest Corporation's Current Report on Form 8-K (File No. 001-03040) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on August 8, 2006).
d.	Fifth Supplemental Indenture, dated as of May 16, 2007, by and between Qwest Corporation and U.S. Bank National Association (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.1 of Qwest Corporation's Current Report on Form 8-K (File No. 001-03040) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on May 18, 2007).
e.	Sixth Supplemental Indenture, dated as of April 13, 2009, by and between Qwest Corporation and U.S. Bank National Association (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.1 of Qwest Corporation's Current Report on Form 8-K (File No. 001-03040) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on April 13, 2009).
f.	Seventh Supplemental Indenture, dated as of June 8, 2011, by and between Qwest Corporation and U.S. Bank National Association (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.8 of Qwest Corporation's Form 8-A (File No. 001-03040) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on June 7, 2011).
g.	Eighth Supplemental Indenture, dated as of September 21, 2011, by and between Qwest Corporation and U.S. Bank National Association (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.9 of Qwest Corporation's Form 8-A (File No. 001-03040) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on September 20, 2011).
h.	Ninth Supplemental Indenture, dated as of October 4, 2011, by and between Qwest Corporation and U.S. Bank National Association (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.1 of Qwest Corporation's Current Report on Form 8-K (File No. 001-03040) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on October 4, 2011).
i.	Tenth Supplemental Indenture, dated as of April 2, 2012, by and between Qwest Corporation and U.S. Bank National Association (incorporated by reference to Qwest Corporation's Form 8-A (File No. 001-03040) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on March 30, 2012).
j.	Eleventh Supplemental Indenture, dated as of June 25, 2012, by and between Qwest Corporation and U.S. Bank National Association (incorporated by reference to Qwest Corporation's Form 8-A (File No. 001-03040) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on June 22, 2012).

⁽¹⁾ Certain of the items in Sections 4.1 through 4.3 (i) omit supplemental indentures or other instruments governing debt that has been retired, or (ii) refer to trustees who may have been replaced, acquired or affected by similar changes. In accordance with Item 601(b) (4) (iii) (A) of Regulation S-K, copies of certain instruments defining the rights of holders of certain of our long-term debt are not filed herewith. Pursuant to this registration, we hereby agree to furnish a copy of any such instrument to the SEC upon request.

Exhibit Number	Description
	k. Twelfth Supplemental Indenture, dated as of May 23, 2013, by and between Qwest Corporation and U.S. Bank National Association (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.13 of Qwest Corporation's Form 8-A (File No. 001-03040) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on May 22, 2013).
	l. Thirteenth Supplemental Indenture, dated as of September 29, 2014, by and between Qwest Corporation and U.S. Bank National Association (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.14 of Qwest Corporation's Form 8-A (File No. 001-03040) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on September 26, 2014).
	m. Fourteenth Supplemental Indenture, dated as of September 21, 2015, by and between Qwest Corporation and U.S. Bank National Association (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.15 of Qwest Corporation's Form 8-A (File No. 001-03040) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on September 21, 2015).
4.4	Revolving Promissory Note, dated as of April 18, 2012, pursuant to which Qwest Corporation may borrow from an affiliate of CenturyLink, Inc. up to \$1.0 billion on a revolving basis (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.7(b) of CenturyLink, Inc.'s Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the period ended June 30, 2012 (File No 001-07784) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on August 9, 2012).
4.5	Credit Agreement, dated as of February 20, 2015, by and among Qwest Corporation, the several lenders from time to time parties thereto, and CoBank, ACB, as administrative agent (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.5 of Qwest Corporation's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2014 (File No. 001-03040) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on February 27, 2015).
12*	Calculation of Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges.
31.1*	Certification of the Chief Executive Officer of CenturyLink, Inc. pursuant to Section 302 of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002.
31.2*	Certification of the Chief Financial Officer of CenturyLink, Inc. pursuant to Section 302 of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002.
32*	Certification of the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer of CenturyLink, Inc. pursuant to Section 906 of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002.
101*	Financial statements from the Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q of Qwest Corporation for the period ended September 30, 2015, formatted in XBRL: (i) the Consolidated Statements of Operations, (ii) the Consolidated Balance Sheets, (iii) the Consolidated Statements of Cash Flows, (iv) the Consolidated Statements of Stockholder's Equity and (v) the Notes to the Consolidated Financial Statements.

* Exhibit filed herewith.

SIGNATURE

Pursuant to the requirements of Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the registrant has duly caused this report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized on November 12, 2015 .

QWEST CORPORATION

/s/ DAVID D. COLE

By:

David D. Cole
Executive Vice President, Controller and Operations Support
(Chief Accounting Officer)

QWEST CORPORATION

CALCULATION OF RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES

(UNAUDITED)

	Successor					Predecessor	
	Nine Months Ended September 30,	Years Ended December 31,			Nine Months Ended December 31,	Three Months Ended March 31,	Year Ended December 31,
	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2011	2010
Income before income tax expense	\$ 1,243	1,609	1,566	1,391	892	490	1,873
Add: estimated fixed charges	427	546	557	513	342	171	689
Add: estimated amortization of capitalized interest	6	8	8	9	7	2	10
Less: interest capitalized	(14)	(17)	(17)	(18)	(5)	(3)	(12)
Total earnings available for fixed charges	\$ 1,662	2,146	2,114	1,896	1,236	660	2,560
Estimate of interest factor on rentals	\$ 18	25	26	28	38	18	62
Interest expense, including amortization of premiums, discounts and debt issuance costs	395	504	514	467	299	150	615
Interest capitalized	14	17	17	18	5	3	12
Total fixed charges	\$ 427	546	557	513	342	171	689
Ratio of earnings to fixed charges	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.9	3.7

CERTIFICATION OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

I, Glen F. Post, III, Chief Executive Officer and President, certify that:

1. I have reviewed this quarterly report on Form 10-Q of Qwest Corporation;
2. Based on my knowledge, this report does not contain any untrue statement of a material fact or omit to state a material fact necessary to make the statements made, in light of the circumstances under which such statements were made, not misleading with respect to the period covered by this report;
3. Based on my knowledge, the financial statements, and other financial information included in this report, fairly present in all material respects the financial condition, results of operations and cash flows of the registrant as of, and for, the periods presented in this report;
4. The registrant's other certifying officer and I are responsible for establishing and maintaining disclosure controls and procedures (as defined in Exchange Act Rules 13a-15(e) and 15d-15(e)) and internal control over financial reporting (as defined in Exchange Act Rules 13a-15(f) and 15d-15(f)) for the registrant and have:
 - a) designed such disclosure controls and procedures, or caused such disclosure controls and procedures to be designed under our supervision, to ensure that material information relating to the registrant, including its consolidated subsidiaries, is made known to us by others within those entities, particularly during the period in which this report is being prepared;
 - b) designed such internal control over financial reporting, or caused such internal control over financial reporting to be designed under our supervision, to provide reasonable assurance regarding the reliability of financial reporting and the preparation of financial statements for external purposes in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles;
 - c) evaluated the effectiveness of the registrant's disclosure controls and procedures and presented in this report our conclusions about the effectiveness of the disclosure controls and procedures, as of the end of the period covered by this report based on such evaluation; and
 - d) disclosed in this report any change in the registrant's internal control over financial reporting that occurred during the registrant's most recent fiscal quarter (the registrant's fourth fiscal quarter in the case of an annual report) that has materially affected, or is reasonably likely to materially affect, the registrant's internal control over financial reporting; and
5. The registrant's other certifying officer and I have disclosed, based on our most recent evaluation of internal control over financial reporting, to the registrant's auditors and the audit committee of the registrant's Board of Directors:
 - a) all significant deficiencies and material weaknesses in the design or operation of internal control over financial reporting which are reasonably likely to adversely affect the registrant's ability to record, process, summarize and report financial information; and
 - b) any fraud, whether or not material, that involves management or other employees who have a significant role in the registrant's internal control over financial reporting.

Date: November 12, 2015

/s/ GLEN F. POST, III

Glen F. Post, III
Chief Executive Officer and President

CERTIFICATION OF CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

I, R. Stewart Ewing, Jr., Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, certify that:

1. I have reviewed this quarterly report on Form 10-Q of Qwest Corporation;
2. Based on my knowledge, this report does not contain any untrue statement of a material fact or omit to state a material fact necessary to make the statements made, in light of the circumstances under which such statements were made, not misleading with respect to the period covered by this report;
3. Based on my knowledge, the financial statements, and other financial information included in this report, fairly present in all material respects the financial condition, results of operations and cash flows of the registrant as of, and for, the periods presented in this report;
4. The registrant's other certifying officer and I are responsible for establishing and maintaining disclosure controls and procedures (as defined in Exchange Act Rules 13a-15(e) and 15d-15(e)) and internal control over financial reporting (as defined in Exchange Act Rules 13a-15(f) and 15d-15(f)) for the registrant and have:
 - a) designed such disclosure controls and procedures, or caused such disclosure controls and procedures to be designed under our supervision, to ensure that material information relating to the registrant, including its consolidated subsidiaries, is made known to us by others within those entities, particularly during the period in which this report is being prepared;
 - b) designed such internal control over financial reporting, or caused such internal control over financial reporting to be designed under our supervision, to provide reasonable assurance regarding the reliability of financial reporting and the preparation of financial statements for external purposes in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles;
 - c) evaluated the effectiveness of the registrant's disclosure controls and procedures and presented in this report our conclusions about the effectiveness of the disclosure controls and procedures, as of the end of the period covered by this report based on such evaluation; and
 - d) disclosed in this report any change in the registrant's internal control over financial reporting that occurred during the registrant's most recent fiscal quarter (the registrant's fourth fiscal quarter in the case of an annual report) that has materially affected, or is reasonably likely to materially affect, the registrant's internal control over financial reporting; and
5. The registrant's other certifying officer and I have disclosed, based on our most recent evaluation of internal control over financial reporting, to the registrant's auditors and the audit committee of the registrant's Board of Directors:
 - a) all significant deficiencies and material weaknesses in the design or operation of internal control over financial reporting which are reasonably likely to adversely affect the registrant's ability to record, process, summarize and report financial information; and
 - b) any fraud, whether or not material, that involves management or other employees who have a significant role in the registrant's internal control over financial reporting.

Date: November 12, 2015

/s/ R. STEWART EWING, JR.

R. Stewart Ewing, Jr.
Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

A signed original of this statement has been provided to Qwest and will be retained by Qwest and furnished to the Securities and Exchange Commission or its staff upon request.

Glen F. Post, III
Chief Executive Officer and President

R. Stewart Ewing, Jr.
Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer