

CableFAX Daily™

Friday — January 18, 2008

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 19 / No. 012

Difference of Opinion: Another ACA Member Calls It Quits

ND/SD operator **Midcontinent** is the latest member to leave **ACA**, citing the group's recent **FCC** filing on program bundling and retrans. Midcontinent svp, public policy *Tom Simmons* said the company was "reluctantly" withdrawing because it doesn't agree with the small- to medium-size operator trade group on the issue. "From our perspective, it runs counter to the messages we've consistently carried to elected officials about FCC involvement in our business operations and our need to compete in the best interests of our customers," he said. "We certainly intend to keep communications lines open with the ACA." In recent weeks, **Bresnan** and **Atlantic Broadband** canceled their ACA memberships over the same issue (*Cfax*, 1/8). ACA CEO *Matt Polka* called Midcontinent an "excellent company," adding it's welcome back at any time. Earlier this year, ACA urged the FCC to adopt new rules that would prevent bundling of networks and require programmers and broadcasters to offer channels on a standalone basis. The trade org said it has the support of the bulk of its members and that it believes it will ultimately win relief for independent cable operators. "ACA's filing on the harms of retransmission consent and onerous programming tying was drafted to address the concerns of independent companies and their customers who are discriminated against simply because they are independent," Polka said. Others, including **NCTA**, **Comcast** and **Disney**, argued that the FCC doesn't have the authority enact such rules. Midcontinent is a subsidiary of Midcontinent and Comcast. While Midcontinent and Comcast are 50/50 partners, Simmons said that Comcast had no contact with the company over the issue. Midcontinent, Atlantic and Bresnan represent roughly 700K subs. ACA represents some 1100 independent cable operators serving more than 8mln subs, according to its Website. -- Meanwhile, the FCC has extended the date for reply comments on program tying to Feb 12 from Jan 22.

Bundling Basketball: NBA Using Turner To Attract Cable

Any cable op that has yet to be approached by the **NBA/Turner** double team may expect a comprehensive sales pitch in the near future. The league tapped Turner's expertise in sales and digital rights management to essentially form a single basket of roundball content, with the goal of spurring growth and increasing revenue across all domestic platforms. The pair expects the initiative to greatly benefit out-of-market package **NBA League Pass** and **NBA.com**, both of which **TBS** will now operate, but moribund **NBA TV** may become the prime beneficiary. "Through price, programming and through additional digital offerings we're going to earn distribution the old fashioned way, we're going to earn it," said NBA com-mish *David Stern* of NBA TV, for which he expects "significant distribution growth" over the next 18 months. Currently available in 15mln US homes via satellite and cable sports tiers, the net must renegotiate its entire file of distribution pacts following this season. As a result, the league and Turner "are going out together to talk to the cable industry" about multi-platform agreements that will also include VOD content, said Stern. Turner ceded to the league its 2% stake in the net as part of the partnership, opting instead for a profit-sharing scaffold. The company takes over programming, marketing

NVC IS DEFINING FUTURES

National Vocabulary Championship is, in a word, inspirational. On March 10, 50 student finalists from across the nation will test their vocabulary skills against each other for the chance to win \$40,000 towards college tuition.

www.winwithwords.com



in participation with

Comcast

Charter
Digital TV • Internet • Telephone

TIME WARNER
CABLE

Power to Learn
a service of CABLEVISION

© 2008 GAME SHOW NETWORK, LLC

CABLEFAX DAILY (ISSN 1069-6644) is published daily by Access Intelligence, LLC ● www.cablefax.com ● fax:301/738-8453 ● Editor-in-Chief: Amy Maclean, 301/354-1760, amaclean@accessintel.com ● Exec Editor, Michael Grebb, 301/354-1790, mgrebb@accessintel.com ● Assoc Editor, Chad Heiges, 301/354-1828, cheiges@accessintel.com ● Asst VP, Ed Director, Seth Arenstein, 301/354-1782, sarenstein@accessintel.com ● Publisher: Debbie Vodenos, 240/753-5696, dvodenos@accessintel.com ● Acct Mgr: Erica Gottlieb, 212/621-4612 ● Marketer: Doreen Price, 301/354-1793, dprice@accessintel.com ● Marketing Director: Carol Bray, 301/354-1763, cbray@accessintel.com ● Prod: Joann Fato, cdaily@accessintel.com ● Diane Schwartz/VP and Group Publisher ● Online Publisher, Alison Johns, 212/621.4642 ● Paul Maxwell/Columnist. Subs/Client Services: 301/354-2101, fax 301/309-3847 ● Group Subs : Angela Gardner, 757/531-1369, cfaxgroupsub@accessintel.com

and technical operations of NBA TV, and also spearheads wireless plays. "We can offer ad bundles, but not distribution bundles," said **Turner Sports** pres *David Levy* in explaining Turner's involvement. TNT's rights to NBA games are unaffected and, in fact, will be enhanced through the inclusion of the net's league-related content on NBA TV. As first reported by *Sports Business Journal*, Turner and the league also plan to help NBA teams ink local digital rights deals with RSNs that own the corresponding broadcast rights, such as **FSN** and **ComcastSportsNet**. "We will use NBA TV as a laboratory to test digital rights and how they can increase viewership," said NBA deputy commish/COO *Adam Silver*.

Heavy Traffic: **Time Warner Cable** plans to trial in Beaumont, TX, a HSD pricing structure offering customers service plans based on the amount of data downloaded/month rather than a flat fee. The idea is to charge more of heavy users, which typically represent a small portion of a customer base but can account for a much greater percentage of network capacity use. **Free Press** policy dir Ben Scott said TW's approach is better than disconnecting customers for usage or blocking apps, but the announcement highlights a deeper problem. "Viewed in the context of our long-term national goals for a world-class broadband infrastructure, telling consumers they must choose between blocking and metered pricing is a worrying development... The best answer to any capacity crunch is to build the kind of high-capacity networks available in the world's leading broadband nations." Net neutrality supporter Public Knowledge, however, was more enthusiastic about Time Warner's move, saying it should help consumers understand their Internet usage and allow them to adjust according to rates. "Cable companies could be able to better manage their networks and costs, so they won't have to resort to cutting off customers for exceeding phantom usage levels or throttling some applications," said pres *Gigi Sohn*.

Competition: **DirecTV** confirmed it will raise prices on avg 4% beginning Feb 27. The new rates were first published on SatelliteGuys.us. The DBS provider's Choice package climbs \$3 to \$52.99/mo; its Premier package goes up \$5 to \$104.99/mo. Other hikes include a \$1 rise for HBO (\$14/mo) and a \$3 jump for Plus HD DVR (\$72.99). -- **Verizon's FiOS TV** added **Comcast SportsNet Northwest** in the Portland area. An HD version is expected later this year.

In the States: **FSN Kansas City** will launch in conjunction with the KC Royals baseball season, its lineup filled with Royals games and **Big 12** sports including Kansas, Kansas State and Missouri football. In effect, the net is an area rebrand of existing **FSN Midwest**, and replaces the Royals own RSN that ultimately failed.

On the Hill: The House Telecom Subcmte will hold a hearing Feb 13 on the status of the DTV transition, with special emphasis on consumer access to DTV converter boxes. "Right now, I am not confident that government agencies, retailers, broadcasters and all other stakeholders are taking all the steps necessary to ensure consumers are adequately informed and ready for this transition," said House Commerce chmn *John Dingell* (D-MI) said. Witnesses TBA.

VH1 Shuffle: With **VH1** evp, original programming *Michael Hirschorn* and svp, celebrity talent dev *Stella Stolper* leaving to launch **Ish Ent**, which has a 3-series, 1st-look deal with **MTV**, **VH1**, **CMT** and **Logo**, the net upped *Jeff Olde* to evp, original programming/production at **VH1** and *Ben Zurier* to evp, program strategy for **VH1**, **VH1 Classic** and **MHD**.

In the Courts: 2 housing groups have filed a lawsuit against the **FCC** for its order banning exclusive deals between cable ops and MDUs. The **Natl Multi Housing Council** and **Natl Apartment Assoc** said apartment owners have used exclusive contracts to negotiate lower rates and enhance services for residents.

Holy Fireball: Check out **Consumerist.com** for some blazing photos of what it claims are those **AT&T U-Verse** street-

35
Breaking

56
Bad

Series Premiere Jan 20 Sundays 10pm/9c
On Demand the next day

amc
amctv.com

BUSINESS & FINANCE

side boxes that have exploded or burst into flames, apparently due to battery problems. About 17K of the cabinets will have batteries replaced.

Carriage: Sky Angel will carry NFL Net as part of its new IPTV lineup. -- **Anime Net** will launch on **Mediacom** this month as an SVOD service.

Programming: ION Media Nets partnered with **Star Media** and **OMG Ent & Sports** to bring African-American and urban programming to **ION TV Net**. -- **Style** renewed "Split Ends" for a 3rd season. -- **VH1** greenlit 3 new projects: an untitled series about *P. Diddy's* search for an assistant (Summer), "egotrip's Miss Rap Supreme," a rap competition between 10 females (Apr); and "Celebracadabra," stars vie for the title of best celeb magician. -- **NY1** political reporter *Sandra Endo* joins **CNN Newsource's** DC bureau.

On the Circuit: SCTE had more than 800 attendees at its **Emerging Tech** conference this week in L.A. Next up is **SCTE Cable-Tec Expo**, June 24-27, Philly. -- **Walter Kaitz Foundation** grant funding for '08 is up 25% over last year to \$1.5mln. The grants will fund diversity program and activities at **NAMIC, WICT** and **Emma Bowen**.

People: **Oxygen Media** named *Jason Klarman* GM. -- *Elli Hakami* becomes **Discovery Channel's** vp, program dev. -- **Lifetime Nets** upped *David Hillman* to vp, reality programming. -- **Viacom** promoted *David Sutphen* to svp, govt relations.

CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	01/17 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	01/17 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS					
BRITISH SKY:	40.81	(0.41)	APPLE:	160.89	1.25
DIRECTV:	19.64	(0.51)	ARRIS GROUP:	7.65	(0.79)
DISNEY:	28.77	(1.06)	AVID TECH:	24.51	0.38
ECHOSTAR:	28.15	(0.49)	BIGBAND:	4.21	0.08
GE:	33.21	(1.35)	BLNDER TONGUE:	1.64	(0.04)
HEARST-ARGYLE:	19.90	(0.08)	BROADCOM:	23.10	0.32
ION MEDIA:	1.35	(0.02)	CISCO:	24.33	(0.82)
NEWS CORP:	19.45	(0.68)	COMMSCOPE:	39.83	(2.42)
MSOS					
CABLEVISION:	23.48	(0.5)	CONCURRENT:	0.74	(0.01)
CHARTER:	1.13	0.01	CONVERGYS:	14.66	(0.38)
COMCAST:	17.41	(0.77)	CSG SYSTEMS:	12.84	(0.2)
COMCAST SPCL:	17.35	(0.67)	ECHOSTAR HOLDING:	28.96	(0.54)
GCI:	7.77	(0.3)	GEMSTAR TVG:	4.64	(0.11)
KNOLGY:	9.91	(0.68)	GOOGLE:	600.79	(15.16)
LIBERTY CAPITAL:	102.06	(4.71)	HARMONIC:	8.81	(0.24)
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	39.69	(1.19)	JDSU:	10.92	(0.21)
LIBERTY INTERACTIVE:	14.38	(0.82)	LEVEL 3:	3.06	0.05
MEDIACOM:	4.70	(0.15)	MICROSOFT:	33.11	(0.12)
NTL:	28.22	0.00	MOTOROLA:	13.41	(0.6)
ROGERS COMM:	42.97	0.00	NDS:	51.63	(0.11)
SHAW COMM:	19.28	(0.32)	NORTEL:	12.58	(0.44)
TIME WARNER CABLE:	25.57	0.00	OPENTV:	1.20	(0.07)
WASH POST:	796.75	(11.25)	PHILIPS:	36.88	(1.11)
PROGRAMMING					
CBS:	23.30	(0.15)	RENTRAK:	12.16	(0.48)
CROWN:	5.87	(0.09)	SEACHANGE:	6.51	(0.02)
DISCOVERY:	24.52	(0.49)	SONY:	51.12	(1.43)
EW SCRIPPS:	40.36	(1.19)	SPRINT NEXTEL:	11.57	(0.26)
GRUPO TELEVISA:	21.07	(0.59)	THOMAS & BETTS:	41.04	(1.96)
INTERACTIVE CORP:	24.57	(0.14)	TIVO:	7.15	(0.06)
LODGENET:	14.06	(0.28)	TOLLGRADE:	7.16	(0.3)
NEW FRONTIER:	4.82	(0.15)	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	22.57	(1.82)
OUTDOOR:	6.33	(0.29)	VONAGE:	1.96	(0.02)
PLAYBOY:	8.14	0.02	VYYO:	2.66	(0.01)
TIME WARNER:	15.49	(0.47)	WEBB SYS:	0.06	0.00
UNIVISION:	36.23	0.00	YAHOO:	21.22	(0.73)
VALUEVISION:	5.61	0.15	TELCOS		
VIACOM:	38.86	(1.02)	AT&T:	37.30	(0.57)
WWE:	14.44	(0.23)	QWEST:	5.56	(0.11)
TECHNOLOGY					
3COM:	4.05	(0.12)	VERIZON:	40.91	(1.41)
ADC:	13.92	0.40	MARKET INDICES		
ADDVANTAGE:	4.95	(0.34)	DOW:	12159.21	(306.95)
ALCATEL LUCENT:	6.76	0.03	NASDAQ:	2346.90	(47.69)
AMDOCS:	31.59	(0.51)			
AMPHENOL:	36.72	(3)			



Business | Programming | Technology | Competition | Events

Daily round-up of top stories,
breaking news and market intelligence.

www.CABLE360.net



PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

Chinese Tip Off

Both **Turner** and **ESPN** are sitting pretty when it comes to their digital and broadcast rights deals with the **NBA**. But with a foot already inserted in the league's international slipper, the latter will likely become the belle of the ball. To be sure, Turner's new deal with the league that involves the digital operations and sales of such properties as **NBA.com** and **NBA TV** is quite a boon to the Atlanta media company. And when adding this to the broadcast agreement it signed last summer that includes more than 50 playoff games annually and NBA All-Star content, what results is a virtual slam dunk where increased revenues are concerned. Unfortunately, Turner isn't involved with any of the NBA's opportunities in foreign lands, where arguably greater long-term growth is available. China, for example, represents a wellspring of opportunity. That's where ESPN has joined 4 other entities in purchasing an 11% stake in **NBA China**, which handles all league-related ventures in the burgeoning market. The Beijing Olympics will pay immediate dividends in terms of additional exposure to NBA players, and the Games should further open the Chinese economy to free trade, an additional benefit. And don't forget that the country has produced 1 bona fide NBA star (*Yao Ming*), while another countryman (*Yi Jianlian*) is on his way to joining the elite ranks. The pair's success, of course, has served to increase Chinese interest in the NBA, which is better prepared for international expansion than any other American pro sport. There exists a raft of roundball leagues around the world, many more than those staging hockey or baseball. And soccer is working the opposite pipeline, attempting to burgeon in the US after dominating the world stage for years. Turner will no doubt reap rewards from NBA plays inside the US. They just won't be as fecund as ESPN's initiatives outside. *CH*

Highlights: "Life After People," Mon, 9pm, **History**. We wonder aloud how hit "Ice Road Truckers" fits History's brand, although we genuflect in *Nancy Dubuc's* direction for this excellent, non-history special that belongs on **Discovery, Nat Geo, Science Channel** or even **Sci Fi**. The premise: What happens to Earth after humans, by some circumstance, are gone? There'd be a massive "die off" of family dogs. This is not theory. For proof, we visit Pripyat, near Chernobyl, abandoned for 20 years. But there's hope. While Pripyat's a ghost town, certain animals, wild boar, for example, thrive. Nature seems unstoppable. – "Breaking Bad," Sun, 10pm, **AMC**. A middle-age suburbanite joins the drug trade. No, it's not "Weeds," it's even more offbeat. *Bryan Cranston* ("Malcolm in the Middle") is brilliant as a chem teacher with nothing to lose. *SA*

Worth a Look: "Start-Up Junkies," Thurs, 10pm, **MoJo**. "Junkies" is joined by doc series "Wall St Warriors" (9pm) and "Bobby G: Adventure Capitalist" (9:30pm) for a Money Night block. "Junkies" is a fast-paced look at entrepreneurial headaches. – "Head Case," season II premiere, Wed, 10pm, **Starz**. More insanity from Hollywood's most inept shrink, played perfectly by *Alexandra Wentworth*. *Ione Skye* and *Jeff Goldblum* receive "treatment" tonight, despite unprofessional interruptions from the hilariously dyspeptic *Steve Landesberg*. *SA*

Basic Cable Rankings (1/07/08-1/13/08) Mon-Sun Prime			
1	USA	2.3	2185
2	DSNY	2	1948
3	FOXN	1.7	1584
4	TNT	1.6	1583
5	TBSC	1.5	1422
6	NAN	1.3	1291
6	LIFE	1.3	1208
6	HALL	1.3	1109
9	A&E	1.2	1130
10	SPK	1.1	1053
10	TRU	1.1	1017
12	FX	1	992
12	CNN	1	972
12	TOON	1	970
12	HGTV	1	947
12	HIST	1	924
17	SCIF	0.9	834
17	FAM	0.9	824
17	CMDY	0.9	810
20	DISC	0.8	823
20	ESPN	0.8	810
20	TVLD	0.8	786
20	AMC	0.8	775
20	MTV	0.8	735
20	LMN	0.8	475
26	TLC	0.7	701
26	FOOD	0.7	678
26	BRAV	0.7	642
26	VH1	0.7	630
30	MSNB	0.6	561
30	THEN	0.6	221
32	EN	0.5	475
32	BET	0.5	426
32	NGC	0.5	335
32	SOAP	0.5	310
36	HLN	0.4	429
36	ESP2	0.4	387
36	APL	0.4	383
36	TTC	0.4	380
40	CMT	0.3	296
40	TWC	0.3	255
40	OXYG	0.3	242
40	GSN	0.3	209
40	TVGN	0.3	208
40	GOLF	0.3	201
40	WGNC	0.3	183

*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

Call For Entries Entry Deadline:
February 20, 2008

The CableFAXIES awards

The Benchmark of PR & Marketing Excellence

PRESENTED BY:

CableFAX Daily™ **CableFAX MAGAZINE** **CABLE 360 NET**

The CableFAXIES Awards salute the year's most outstanding communications initiatives and programs in the highly competitive and dynamic Cable arena.

Your hard work is done — now it's time to get recognized for it! Visit www.CableFaxiesAwards.com for more information.

Sponsorship Opportunities: please contact Debbie Vodenos at (240) 753-5696, or email dvodenos@accessintel.com
Entry Questions: Please contact awards coordinator Lana Zektser at, (301) 354-1851 or lzeztser@accessintel.com.