

CableFAX Daily™

Friday — February 6, 2009

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 20 / No. 023

Now What? Govt, Industries Work on What New DTV Date Means

With Congress moving the DTV analog cut-off deadline to June 12, where does that leave everyone? The **FCC** tried to address some of the endless questions at its en banc hearing Thurs afternoon. Just before the meeting began, the Commission released guidelines for broadcast stations that plan to terminate analog on Feb 17—the original DTV hard date. The FCC said those stations will have to notify the Commission, public and viewers by 11:59pm Mon of their intent to shut off the signal. Stations that have already notified the FCC of plans to terminate on Feb 17 must do so again. Acting FCC chmn *Michael Capps* said the FCC doesn't have a rule, but it would like for stations that are transferring on Feb 17 to keep their required countdown clocks up and for those not transitioning early to remove their countdowns. He suggested that stations not put up a clock until they are within 100 days of when they will transition. Capps said that **ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC** and **Telemundo** have already agreed not to transition until June 12. Broadcast station owners **Gannett** and **Hearst** have said the vast majority of their stations will maintain their analog signals until June 12, he said. "These broadcasters deserve our gratitude," the Democrat said. **Time Warner Cable** evp *Sam Howe* was at the meeting to provide an update on cable's role in spearheading nationwide transition call centers. Howe, who is managing the ad hoc of customer care execs from cable and broadcast, said everyone's work would culminate about a week from now with a system in place that can answer consumer questions from a single toll-free number. Commissioners said they expect a spike in calls on Feb 17. Cable and the FCC are providing live operators, while broadcasters are providing the interactive voice response system. All of the efforts will be through the FCC's existing DTV hotline, 1-800-CALL-FCC. "We are working to ensure that the consumer experience in calling this hotline is seamless by providing to live agents—whether they sit on the 'industry' or 'government' side of the partnership—common training, scripting, and language," Howe said. **NAB** will hold a Webcast Fri to discuss the June 12 date with members.

Retrans: A retrans spat has led to 4 **Newport Broadcasting** stations in 2 states going dark on **Cable One** this week. The stations are **ABC** affil **WPTY** and **CW** affil **WLMT** in Memphis, and **Fox** affils **KOKI** and **KMYT** in the Tulsa, OK, area. Messages at all 4 stations sites tell viewers that negotiations for carriage have been unsuccessful. -- **Belo** reported Thurs a hefty 41% jump in '08 retrans rev to \$33mln, including 30% growth in 4Q.

Competition: After the **Philadelphia City Council** approved Thurs a citywide video franchise for **FiOS TV**, **Verizon** has just 1 last hurdle remaining before it can begin offering the service in **Comcast's** backyard. Mayor *Michael Nutter* owns final say on the legislation, which calls for the telco to make FiOS available throughout the city over 7 years. -- **Encore HD**, **Chiller** and **CBS College Sports** are among the 14 new channels **FiOS TV** has added in Tampa. -- Is *Charlie Ergen* looking to control satellite radio player **Sirius**? That's the scuttle after the *WSJ* reported that EchoStar has been buying up portions of Sirius debt. According to the report, EchoStar participated in a debt-for-equity

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deal or similar arrangement that cut Sirius' \$300mln outstanding debt load to about \$175mln.

Cable Heroes: This is one of those stories that warms our cold, journalist hearts. On Tues, two of **Comcast's** Cape Cod techs, *James MacConnell* and *Tom Masciulli*, were working on a phone install when a man ran up telling them that his nearby house was on fire and his wife was inside. The techs ran in the house and rescued an 88-year-old woman. This was a horrible fire that destroyed the home and injured 2 firefighters. MacConnell and Masciulli are fine, as well as the woman they saved—*Marguerite Smith*. Asked to respond to the fact that people are now calling them heroes, the 2 techs said they did what anybody else might do in the same situation. In addition to some internal recognition, we hear a local state rep wants to award the two with a legislative citation for the act of bravery. Check out the story from **NBC** affil **WHDH**: <http://www3.whdh.com/news/articles/local/BO103699/>.

In the States: **Mediacom** will launch **Branson TV** Mar 14 in its Springfield, MO, system. It also will be made available to **Suddenlink** subs in Branson, Nixa and Ozark, MO. The entertainment net will feature info on where to go, what to see and what to do in Branson. The MSO also plans to distribute a regular 30-min feature program called "Branson TV" through the **Mediacom Connections Channel** across MO, IA and southern IL. -- About 60 MSOs are using HD channels available through the HITS Quantum platform of linear digital video services, **Comcast Media Center** said. CMC also said it has added **FX** (East and West Coast feeds), **FX HD**, **HorseRacing TV**, **Speed** and **Speed HD** to its HITS lineups, which includes more than 285 channels. -- **Time Warner Cable** is partnering with **Maximus** to offer hotels in the MSO's TX service area a suite of services including TWC's video and Internet with Maximus' VOD.

Earnings: **Scripps Nets** notably achieved 3.3% growth in 4Q ad rev, which helped overall rev increase 7% to \$340mln while affil fee rev surged 21% to \$70mln. Profit was flat at \$175mln, and the group's digital interactive businesses achieved 12% rev growth. As for the individual nets, **HGTV** (98mln HHs) saw rev rise 4%, **Food Net** (98mln) 5%, **DIY Net** (49mln) 28%, **Fine Living** (54mln) 16% and **GAC** (55mln) 16%. -- **Cisco** reported an 8% slide in net sales to \$9.1bln for its FY2Q ended Jan 24, and net income of \$1.5bln (-27%). The company expects to realize a rev decline in the current Q of 15-20%, said CEO *John Chambers*, citing global economic headwinds.

In the Courts: **Time Warner Cable** plans to offer **Clear** WiMAX services in at least 1 city this year, and owing to a recent **IL Circuit Court** ruling it's a good bet that city won't be Midwestern. On Wed **iPCS** said the court granted in part its motion for summary judgment against **Sprint**, confirming that Sprint and any company doing business with Sprint may not compete against iPCS Wireless in portions of IL, MI, PA, IN, OH and TN, regardless of the frequently used.

Vanguards: **Bright House Nets** pres *Nomi Bergman* and **Mediacom** CEO *Rocco Commisso* are this year's recipients of **NCTA's** Vanguard Award for Distinguished Leadership. The Vanguards will be presented Apr 3, 3pm during the Cable Show in DC. Other Vanguard winners: **AMC** pres/gm *Charlie Collier* (Young Leadership), **CNN Worldwide** pres *Jim Walton* (Programmers), **Arris** CEO *Robert Stanzione* (Associate and Affiliates), **Cox** svp, tech *Jay Rolls* (Science & Technology), **Insight** pres/COO *Dinesh Jain* (Cable Operations Management), **Time Warner Cable** vp, community relations and public affairs *Bonnie Hathaway* (Govt & Community Relations), **ESPN** evp, sales & marketing *Sean Bratches* (Marketing).

Programming: **HBO** wasted little time signing a replacement for the departed *Bob Costas* (**MLB Net**), an-

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DIGITAL *HOT* LIST

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Albert Cheng, EVP, Digital Media, **Disney/ABC**
Andy Cohen, SVP, Production & Programming and Writer of "Andy's Blog," **Bravo**
Eric Feng, SVP, Audience and CTO, **Hulu**
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CONGRATULATIONS

BUSINESS & FINANCE

nouncing Thurs that **Fox** broadcaster *Joe Buck* will host a show on the net beginning in May. Though still in development, the show will have comedic elements, air 4 times/yr and likely run 90-min, said **HBO Sports** pres *Ross Greenburg*. Buck remains employed by Fox. Separately, the premium net greenlit a 4th season of "Big Love" ('10).

Portal Pundits: How might the technology, business and DC background of *Julius Genachowski*—Pres *Obama's* presumptive pick for **FCC** chmn—affect his tenure? What hot topics will the post-*Kevin Martin* FCC tackle? And is it time to take a new look at the structure of the agency and how it treats cable and other industries? These and other topics took center stage Thurs at **CableFAX's** webinar "The Genachowski Era: What Will It Mean for Cable?," with **Effros Comm** pres *Steve Effros*; *Kenneth Ferree*, pres of the **Progress & Freedom Foundation**; and *Howard Symons*, chmn of the Communications Practice at **Mintz Levin**. Go to <http://cablefax.com/cfp/webinars/> to view the webinar on-demand or obtain a CD-ROM of the event.

Business/Finance: **Pali** knocked **Time Warner Cable** shares down to "sell" Thurs, disturbed by what it perceives as a lack of urgency in the face of rising competition and slowing growth.

CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	02/05 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	02/05 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS					
BRITISH SKY:	28.61	0.26	AMDOCS:	18.04	0.36
DIRECTV:	22.52	(0.46)	AMPHENOL:	28.56	0.05
DISH:	13.56	0.72	APPLE:	96.46	2.91
DISNEY:	18.71	(0.29)	ARRIS GROUP:	6.36	0.15
GE:	10.85	(0.41)	AVID TECH:	11.08	(0.03)
HEARST-ARGYLE:	3.88	0.15	BIGBAND:	5.39	(0.16)
NEWS CORP:	7.45	0.20	BROADCOM:	17.47	0.99
MSOS					
CABLEVISION:	14.69	(0.14)	CISCO:	16.35	0.51
CHARTER:	0.08	0.00	CLEARWIRE:	3.83	(0.15)
COMCAST:	13.83	(0.33)	COMMSCOPE:	14.49	0.31
COMCAST SPCL:	12.73	(0.46)	CONCURRENT:	3.75	0.09
GCI:	6.48	0.22	CONVERGYS:	8.20	0.48
KNOLOGY:	5.13	0.13	CSG SYSTEMS:	15.33	(0.13)
LIBERTY CAPITAL:	5.14	0.03	ECHOSTAR:	15.83	0.43
LIBERTY ENT:	19.29	(0.42)	GOOGLE:	353.72	10.72
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	14.08	(0.3)	HARMONIC:	5.34	0.23
LIBERTY INT:	3.38	0.13	INTEL:	14.25	0.37
MEDIACOM:	5.21	0.03	JDSU:	4.11	0.07
SHAW COMM:	16.56	0.16	LEVEL 3:	0.92	(0.04)
TIME WARNER CABLE:	18.77	(0.2)	MICROSOFT:	19.04	0.41
VIRGIN MEDIA:	4.64	0.09	MOTOROLA:	3.68	(0.07)
WASH POST:	413.32	(1.02)	OPENTV:	1.28	(0.01)
PROGRAMMING					
CBS:	5.99	0.23	PHILIPS:	19.34	0.29
CROWN:	1.68	0.08	RENTRAK:	12.38	(0.1)
DISCOVERY:	13.53	(0.22)	SEACHANGE:	5.66	0.10
EW SCRIPPS:	1.49	(0.08)	SONY:	20.65	0.68
GRUPO TELEVISIA:	14.06	0.49	SPRINT NEXTEL:	2.32	(0.08)
HSN:	5.11	0.02	THOMAS & BETTS:	25.53	1.54
INTERACTIVE CORP:	14.17	0.04	TIVO:	7.47	0.15
LIBERTY:	24.25	0.75	TOLLGRADE:	5.84	0.14
LODGENET:	0.61	0.01	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	11.43	(0.03)
NEW FRONTIER:	1.60	0.04	VONAGE:	0.57	(0.01)
OUTDOOR:	5.89	0.09	YAHOO:	13.51	0.51
PLAYBOY:	1.60	0.02	TELCOS		
RHI:	4.50	(0.13)	AT&T:	25.15	0.49
SCRIPPS INT:	21.43	0.68	QWEST:	3.19	(0.1)
TIME WARNER:	9.55	0.13	VERIZON:	31.19	0.58
VALUEVISION:	0.21	(0.03)	MARKET INDICES		
VIACOM:	17.25	0.23	DOW:	8063.07	106.41
WWE:	9.36	(0.3)	NASDAQ:	1546.24	31.19
TECHNOLOGY					
3COM:	2.46	0.06			
ADC:	3.12	(0.18)			
ADVANTAGE:	1.89	(0.08)			
ALCATEL LUCENT:	1.81	(0.05)			

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PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

Win, Place and a New Show

In many ways, the cable programming business is like a horse race, with nets jockeying for position and purses in viewership, advertising and affil fees. And if it were possible to place a parimutuel wager on the future success of individual cable nets, **Discovery Comm** pres/CEO *David Zaslav* would likely stake a fat bankroll on **Animal Planet** (heck, Disc Comm founder *John Hendricks* "bet" on all the Disc nets in Nov with a nearly \$14mln open-market investment). See, the net has achieved ratings growth in every month since Feb '08, owing largely to a brand refinement/repositioning and the leadership of Animal Planet Media pres/gm *Marjorie Kaplan*. "While people love animals and have pets, it doesn't make them watch TV," said Kaplan of AP's past troubles. Enter edgier shows that "explore the relationships between humans and animals," said Kaplan, and strive to offer an alluring and trenchant story. Also, a premium has been placed on series because of TV viewers' affinity for them, she said. For evidence of this strategy's payoff, look no further than "Whale Wars," which in its recent inaugural season became AP's most-watched series ever among 25-54s (529K) and men 25-54 (309K). Hopes for similar success rests with "Jockeys" (Fri, 9pm ET), which follows a group of real jockeys in CA. The show deserves touting strictly for its elements—competition, danger, money, love—and its realism. Storylines include some of horse racing's top jockeys, 1 of the sport's most venerated tracks, and the world's richest thoroughbred races. As an avid horse player, I should know. Featured rider *Mike Smith* has padded my palms on numerous occasions, as has his best mount, *Zenyatta*. My only gripe is a noticeable lack of focus on the 1,200-lb horses themselves. But, hey, they can't talk and I'm not a programmer. As for Kaplan and AP, don't bet against them. *CH*

Highlights: "Gifted Hands," Sat, 8pm, **TNT**. It's time this story was told on TV, although *Ben Carson's* illiterate mother's railing against TV (in favor of reading) started her son's path to becoming a neurosurgeon. -- "Uneven Fairways," 9pm ET, **Golf Channel**. For Black History Month, **Golf** and **CSN** (below) make like **History**, and thank goodness. First is an illuminating piece about the UGA, where black golfers competed before the PGA dropped its Caucasian clause in '61. UGA courses were rough, purses were worse, forcing golfers to hustle to pay bills. This special's excellent interviews include one with *Joe Louis Barrow*, son of the first black to play in the PGA, yes, that *Joe Louis*. *SA*

Worth A Look: "John Thompson Reflections," Fri, 10:30pm, **Comcast SportsNet**. A 2nd fine history piece from a sports net. **TNT's** *John Thompson* discusses his origins in segregated DC, riots there after *Dr King* was assassinated and attending Senators' games to watch Cleveland's *Larry Doby*, the AL's first African-American player. *SA*

Notable: "BET Honors," Mon, 9pm, **BET**. We attended this special's taping in DC, days before the historic inauguration. While we haven't seen the finished product, the raw material (with performances by *Stevie Wonder*, *Queen Latifah*, *Anita Baker* and others) is first rate. *SA*

Basic Cable Rankings (01/26/08-02/01/08)			
Mon-Sun Prime			
1	USA	2.4	2359
2	FOXN	1.9	1840
3	TNT	1.6	1589
3	DSNY	1.6	1544
5	TBSC	1.3	1290
5	NAN	1.3	1248
7	TOON	1.1	1109
7	A&E	1.1	1044
7	FX	1.1	1032
7	HALL	1.1	983
11	FAM	1	981
11	ESPN	1	961
11	HGTV	1	952
11	AMC	1	919
15	CNN	0.9	925
15	LIFE	0.9	911
15	DISC	0.9	896
15	SPK	0.9	833
15	SCIF	0.9	827
15	TRU	0.9	787
21	TLC	0.8	810
21	HIST	0.8	800
21	FOOD	0.8	774
21	MSNB	0.8	758
21	TVLD	0.8	733
21	CMDY	0.8	731
21	LMN	0.8	523
28	MTV	0.7	690
28	NOGG	0.7	466
30	HLN	0.6	590
30	BRAV	0.6	582
32	VH1	0.5	527
32	ESP2	0.5	501
32	APL	0.5	493
32	EN	0.5	453
32	BET	0.5	450
32	OXYG	0.5	402
32	NGC	0.5	330
39	TRAV	0.4	379
39	SOAP	0.4	282
41	WE	0.3	237
41	GSN	0.3	235
41	WGNA	0.3	233
41	CMT	0.3	229
41	DHLT	0.3	216
41	TDSN	0.3	190

*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney



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