

CableFAX Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Cox in DC: Expanding Connect2Compete Through 2016 with \$15m In Support

Comcast might have gotten much of the spotlight for its Internet Essentials program, but when it comes to broadband adoption program Connect2Compete, few companies are more familiar with it than **Cox**, the 1st company to roll it out, piloting the initiative for the **FCC** in San Diego in 2012. In fact, Connect2Compete is modeled after a broadband adoption program in Santa Barbara that Cox has participated in since 2002. Pres *Pat Esser* made a quick trip to DC Tues to announce a 2-year extension of its participation in the program, which offers discounted HSI service to low-income families with children who qualify for the National School Lunch Program. In addition, the MSO pledged \$15m in support of broadband adoption initiatives through 2016. The event at the National Press Club also featured FCC commish *Jessica Rosenworcel* and Connect2Compete CEO *Zach Leverenz*. As an upgrade for the program, the company will make enrollment easier for families by expanding the proof of eligibility to include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Families with K-12 students who participate in these programs or the Federal Free School Lunch Program are eligible for the Cox Connect2Compete discounted service. Cox rolled out the program nationally in April 2013, which has seen more than 15K families enrolled. Partnership is key for expanding the program, Esser said, noting Cox is working with groups including the **Boys & Girls Clubs of America**, the **National Urban League**, and the **League of United Latin American Citizens**. "I came in town for this specific event... It's not just the kids. It's the families. It's changing their lives," Esser told us after the announcement. Is Cox concerned that the increasing MSO consolidation could potentially impact broadband adoption, especially in low-income communities? "I hope not. I am not concerned about that... Penetration of broadband in the country continues to grow. Speeds are doubling in the most popular tiers." That said, "programs like this is really important to give access to families who don't have access today. You have to be committed. You have to be willing to do it. This is not a cheap proposition," he said. Because there's an affordability crisis, "you've got to get it down to a price point. You've got to make the service robust enough that it does change a kid's life." And what happens after 2 years? If sign-ups continue and feedback from communities continues to be positive, "we will talk about continuing it," he said. In the next couple of weeks, Cox and its partners will be hosting local Connect2Compete events in numerous cities across its footprint. By offering discounted broadband service, Cox is "making a big

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difference in the 18 states they are providing service,” Rosenworcel said. The FCC is also working to improve Internet connection at schools through an upgrade of its E-Rate program to include WiFi, which cable generally supports.

Disney and Discovery's Big Week: Last week's ratings were all ears—mouse ears, that is. **Disney Channel** swept primetime and total day in P2+, averaging 2.15mln viewers in prime and 1.6mln in total day. **Discovery** was just a shark tooth behind the net in prime, averaging 2.11mln viewers for a week that featured its 27th Shark Week stunt. Discovery notched its highest-rated Shark Week ever in 25-54s, women 25-54 and women 18-49. It marked the net's highest-rated Sun-Thurs (1.64 P25-54) and Sun-Sat prime (1.42 P25-54). Disney's week was highlighted by the Fri premiere of original movie “How to Build a Better Boy” (4.56mln total viewers) and a near-record showing of “Girls Meets World” (4.08mln). **TNT** had the top 2 cable programs of the week, “Major Crimes” (5.73mln) and “Rizzoli & Isles” (5.68mln), followed by **ESPN's** NASCAR Sprint Cup coverage Sun (5.15mln) and Disney's How to Build a Better Boy. **Brag Book:** The 2nd ep of **Cinemax's** “The Knick” was up 18% compared to the series premiere (419K for its 10pm premiere Fri). **HBO's** “The Leftovers” had its most-watched telecast since the series debuted, with 1.64mln viewers. Ahead of next week's series finale, “True Blood” averaged 3.6mln viewers across its 3 plays. TNT is feeling pretty good about its newest drama “Legends.” Factor in DVR and VOD viewing, and 8mln viewers have watched the premiere ep since its debut last Wed. The premiere audience includes 4.3 million viewers who watched the initial telecast or one of the three encore presentations live on TNT, as well as 3.2 million viewers who watched a recording of the show on their DVR.

Muni Broadband: Rep *Mike Doyle* (D-PA) and Sen *Ed Markey* (D-MA) seem pleased that the **FCC** is reviewing requests from cities to preempt state laws limiting the expansion of their current municipal broadband deployments. The lawmakers sent FCC chmn *Tom Wheeler* a letter in June, urging the Commission to allow communities to build out broadband infrastructure. The chmn responded last week, noting that the agency has recently received requests from Chattanooga, TN, and Wilson, NC, to preempt state laws limiting muni expansion. Wheeler pledged a review and opportunity for comment. “I respect the important role of state governments in our federal system, but I know that state laws that directly conflict with critical federal laws and policy may be subject to preemption in appropriate circumstances,” Wheeler wrote.

MASN's Nats Fight: Score one for **MASN**, with a NY judge Mon granting a preliminary injunction against **MLB** and the **Washington Nationals** in the battle over Nats' TV rights fees. NY Supreme Court judge *Lawrence Marks* extended a temporary restraining order set to expire at midnight and that would have let the Nats terminate MASN's rights to broadcast the games as it seeks more money from **Orioles**-controlled MASN. While the litigation continues, MASN, the Orioles and the Nats are also trying to get their dispute heard by the **American Arbitration Assn** panel, the *Washington Post* reported.

MAC on ESPN: The **Mid-American Conference** extended its exclusive rights agreement with **ESPN** through the '26-'27 season, with ESPN3 set to cover at least 420 events this year (a minimum of 120 men's basketball games) once all 12 member schools launch a production program. ESPN also has rights to distribute MAC content across ESPN, ESPNU and other entities. Unclear is what impact the ESPN deal has on a year-old regional agreement MAC has with **Time Warner Cable SportsChannel**, which has been the exclusive home of MAC sports in OH and western and central NY since last Aug. “We're currently working with the Mid-American Conference to determine how this morning's announcement might affect our agreement,” a TWC spokesperson said.

Programming: FX ordered a 13-ep, sophomore season of “The Strain” from *Guillermo del Toro* and *Carlton Cuse*. Season 1 has averaged 11mln total viewers (including VOD and online viewing) and 4.5mln viewers on a first-run, live+7 basis. -- **Fuse** renewed “Big Freedia: Queen of Bounce” for a 3rd and 4th season. It's the 1st original program to go into production since **NuvoTV** parent **SiTV** acquired the net. The unscripted series explores the New Orleans underground hip hop scene. -- **CBS** comedy “Mom” will get a 4-week run on **TBS** starting Mon. The limited engagement, following eps of “Big Bang Theory,” is meant to build excitement for Season 2 on CBS (Sept 29, 8:30pm). -- **MTV** gave coming-of-age drama “Finding Carter” the OK for a 2nd season. The series is averaging a 2.0 for 12-34s, season-to-date (live+3). -- **SundanceTV** renewed “Rectify” for a 3rd season to debut next year. -- Move over *Wahlburgs*. **A&E** ordered 10 eps of “Lachey's Bar” (wt), which follows *Nick* and *Drew Lachey* as they open a bar in their hometown of Cincinnati. -- **Discovery Education** is taking advantage of its connections, adding 38 exclusive videos from **Discovery Comm's** family of nets to its suite of digital resources. Educators can integrate some eps from “MythBusters,” “Through the Wormhole with *Morgan Freeman*” and other series into their classroom instruction.

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Targeted Advertising: BlackArrow said it's now providing support for audience-based frequency capping across multiple TV screens, enabling control over the number of times an ad is seen by a unique household or device on VOD platforms and TV viewed on devices.

Winds of Change at Windstream: Windstream said COO Brent Whittington is resigning effective Sept 1. The company will eliminate the post and split Whittington's duties principally between evp, ops Mark Farris and evp, engineering and CTO Randy Nicklas. Whittington, who previously served as svp, ops at Alltel, was named COO in Aug 2009.

Cat Fit for a Crown: Hallmark Channel continues to make pets a pet project, adopting Happy the rescue cat to serve as captain and ambassador during its "Kitten Bowl II" stunt in Feb. The feline will also star in several upcoming original movies, series and specials. "Happy will be the first of many on-screen cat and dog rescue animals joining the Crown Media family, as Hallmark Channel develops the talents of many shelter pets to star in upcoming original projects," the net said.

People: Weather Channel added Nora Zimmet, previously of CNN, as svp, live programming. She joins the net in mid-Sept. -- Jeremy Langer, former Fox Sports Media Group vp, collegiate sports and rights acquisitions, has joined Tennis Channel as vp, programming.

CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

| Company | 08/19 Close | 1-Day Ch | Company | 08/19 Close | 1-Day Ch |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------|-----------------------|-------------|----------|
| BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS | | | | | |
| DIRECTV: | 84.66 | 0.47 | CONCURRENT: | 7.23 | UNCH |
| DISH: | 64.55 | (0.49) | CONVERGYS: | 18.60 | (0.18) |
| ENTRAVISION: | 4.78 | 0.23 | CSG SYSTEMS: | 27.94 | 0.02 |
| GRAY TELEVISION: | 10.48 | (0.04) | ECHOSTAR: | 48.95 | (0.03) |
| MEDIA GENERAL: | 17.24 | 0.26 | GOOGLE: | 586.86 | 4.70 |
| NEXSTAR: | 45.38 | 0.38 | HARMONIC: | 6.20 | (0.01) |
| SINCLAIR: | 29.15 | (0.3) | INTEL: | 34.34 | (0.07) |
| MSOS | | | | | |
| CABLEVISION: | 18.47 | 0.19 | INTERACTIVE CORP: | 68.40 | 0.02 |
| CHARTER: | 156.15 | (1.26) | JDSU: | 11.04 | 0.06 |
| COMCAST: | 54.50 | (0.23) | LEVEL 3: | 41.89 | (0.07) |
| COMCAST SPCL: | 54.29 | (0.21) | MICROSOFT: | 45.33 | 0.22 |
| GCI: | 11.20 | (0.08) | NIELSEN: | 48.11 | (0.02) |
| GRAHAM HOLDING: | 717.09 | (2.7) | RENTRAK: | 47.61 | (2.1) |
| LIBERTY GLOBAL: | 43.84 | (0.07) | SEACHANGE: | 7.40 | UNCH |
| LIBERTY INT: | 28.76 | (0.08) | SONY: | 18.86 | 0.34 |
| SHAW COMM: | 24.88 | (0.08) | SPRINT NEXTEL: | 5.39 | (0.23) |
| TIME WARNER CABLE: | 147.92 | (0.51) | TIVO: | 13.71 | UNCH |
| PROGRAMMING | | | | | |
| 21ST CENTURY FOX: | 35.89 | (0.08) | UNIVERSAL ELEC: | 54.90 | 0.33 |
| AMC NETWORKS: | 61.95 | 0.07 | VONAGE: | 3.22 | UNCH |
| CBS: | 60.74 | 0.51 | YAHOO: | 37.83 | 0.45 |
| CROWN: | 3.45 | (0.02) | TELCOS | | |
| DISCOVERY: | 44.43 | 0.04 | AT&T: | 34.48 | (0.17) |
| DISNEY: | 90.09 | 0.12 | CENTURYLINK: | 40.66 | 0.24 |
| GRUPO TELEVISA: | 37.29 | (0.03) | TDS: | 25.42 | (0.08) |
| HSN: | 60.96 | 0.01 | VERIZON: | 48.70 | (0.08) |
| LIONSGATE: | 32.71 | (0.2) | MARKET INDICES | | |
| MADISON SQUARE GARDEN: | 62.84 | 0.12 | DOW: | 16919.59 | 80.85 |
| SCRIPPS INT: | 80.34 | (0.64) | NASDAQ: | 4527.51 | 19.20 |
| STARZ: | 29.51 | 0.27 | S&P 500: | 1981.60 | 9.86 |
| TIME WARNER: | 76.99 | 0.13 | | | |
| VALUEVISION: | 5.01 | 0.05 | | | |
| VIACOM: | 81.25 | (0.91) | | | |
| WWE: | 14.39 | 0.33 | | | |
| TECHNOLOGY | | | | | |
| ADVANTAGE: | 2.34 | (0.02) | | | |
| ALCATEL LUCENT: | 3.27 | 0.06 | | | |
| AMDOCS: | 46.00 | 0.17 | | | |
| AMPHENOL: | 102.19 | 0.40 | | | |
| AOL: | 43.77 | 0.20 | | | |
| APPLE: | 100.53 | 1.37 | | | |
| ARRIS GROUP: | 31.43 | 0.17 | | | |
| AVID TECH: | 7.50 | (0.14) | | | |
| BLNDER TONGUE: | 1.73 | 0.22 | | | |
| BROADCOM: | 38.89 | 0.76 | | | |
| CISCO: | 24.64 | 0.01 | | | |

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