

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Charter's Pledge: No Data Caps or Tier Pricing Post Merger

Charter is promising to go beyond the FCC's net neutrality rules as it works to gain regulatory approval on its **Time Warner Cable/Bright House** transaction. In the company's merger application filed with the FCC Thurs, which includes a public interest statement, the MSO promised not to impose data caps or engage in usage-based billing, in addition to committing to no blocking or paid prioritization and other open Internet rules. Companies and individuals including **TV One** and Ambassador *Andrew Young*, a co-founder of **Bounce TV**, quickly came out to back the merger. "Charter has long been a strong supporter of minority-owned networks like Bounce TV and we believe that these transactions are in the public interest and will be beneficial to Bounce TV viewers, African Americans and all ethnicities," Young said in a statement. The proposed transaction would be good for independent programmers like TV One, chmn/CEO *Alfred Liggins III* said. Charter announced the \$55bln deal to buy TWC on May 26. As part of the transaction, it will merge with Bright House in a deal valued at \$10.4bln. The filing came 2 days after the agency opened up a docket (docket No. 15-149) to review the merger. Charter totes the benefits of the merger, including faster speeds, more affordable price, transparent billing and job creation. It also made a slew of consumer-focused legally enforceable commitments. Currently, Charter's broadband speed tier starts at 60 Mbps. The MSO said it will offer this minimum speed to TWC and Bright House customers post-merger and expand their 300 Mbps service. The 60 Mbps entry level tier will be priced using Charter's currently model, which the company claimed is less expensive than TWC's and Bright House's comparable offerings. In terms of customer care, a bigger Charter will "return TWC call center jobs to the United States and will hire thousands of new employees for its customer service call centers and field technician operations," the filing said. Charter, which has largely completed its digital rollout, said it plans to make TWC and Bright House systems 100% digital, freeing up spectrum to allow services such as more HD channels, better broadband and On-Demand offerings. Charter has been working to deploy a new cloud-based program guide to all set-tops across its footprint (**Cisco** is a partner). The interactive guide, which works on new and legacy set-tops, will be rolled out to new Charter subs post-merger. Charter also pledged to continue to engage in reasonable and non-discriminatory interconnection, and any interconnection disputes will be submitted to the FCC for resolutions on a case-by-case basis. Signifi-

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cant expansion in WiFi and networks in rural and underserved areas is also part of the plan post-merger. Charter said it will deploy more than 300K out-of-home WiFi access points and invest in at least \$2.5bln in the build-out of networks into commercial areas within its footprint and beyond. “As always, the question isn’t just what did they promise, or more importantly, will they follow through on it. The real question is whether these shiny promises and supposed benefits really depend on the merger,” said **Free Press** policy dir *Matt Wood*.

JSA Bill: Senate Commerce passed Joint Sales Agreement (JSA) legislation that will limit a March 2014 **FCC** decision that JSAs be attributable under local TV ownership rules when a broadcaster sells more than 15% of ad time for another broadcaster. The Senate bill will exempt JSAs struck before the March 2014 decision from the rules.

Senate Commerce Clears DOTCOM Act: The DOTCOM Act, which provides for Congressional oversight of a US government handoff of oversight of the Internet domain naming function without delaying that transition, sailed through **Senate Commerce** Thurs. The bill, which was passed by the House earlier this week, now moves to the Senate floor. “We commend the Senate Commerce Committee for their bipartisan work on passage of the DOTCOM Act. This legislation helps further the growth of the Internet with the protection and Congressional oversight needed to guide the transition from **ICANA** oversight to the multi-stakeholder model. We look forward to the full Senate acting on this legislation,” **NCTA** said in a statement.

Energy Initiative: **NCTA** is tackling set-top energy efficiency again, following its 2013 voluntary agreement. The group teamed with **CEA** to release a new voluntary agreement to improve the energy efficiency of Internet modems, routers and other broadband equipment. The agreement sets rigorous requirements aimed to improve the energy efficiency of small network equipment (SNE) by 10 to 20% compared to typical, recently-deployed devices and cover more than 90% of US broadband households (roughly 80mln homes). ISPs and vendors that have signed the agreement include **AT&T, Bright House Networks, Cablevision, CenturyLink, Charter, Comcast, Cox Communications, DirecTV, Time Warner Cable, Verizon, Actiontec, ARRIS, Cisco, D-Link, EchoStar Technologies, NETGEAR, Pace** and **Ubee Interactive**. Modeled on the 2013 agreement, the initiative runs through 2017 and requires ISPs and vendors to publicly report SNE energy use including annual progress reports by an independent 3rd party. In addition, the agreement mandates annual verification audits to ensure SNE devices are performing at the efficiency levels specified in the agreement, and regular consultation and engagement with regulatory authorities and other stakeholders. **CableLabs**, which helped create the technical specification in the agreement, will assist with the implementation of the initiative.

AMC Studios: AMC Nets announced new management structure and expanded the scope for **AMC Studios**, launched in late 2014. Current AMC head of business affairs *Rick Olshansky* and AMC Nets svp of finances and studio operations *Stefan Reinhardt* will become co-heads of the in-house studio, which will now oversee production and business affairs functions across AMC and **SundanceTV**. Both execs will report to *Charlie Collier*, pres of AMC, SundanceTV and AMC Studios. As part of the new studio alignment, vp of business affairs *Scott Stein* will be promoted to svp and oversee the negotiation of development and production agreements for AMC Studios’ original productions. He will continue to report to Olshansky. The moves are expected to increase the company’s scripted content and expand its international footprint.

Discovery’s 30: It was an evening of looking back for **Discovery Communications** as it celebrated its 30 years in business at the **Paley Center for Media** in NYC Wed. Pres/CEO *David Zaslav* thanked numerous attendees in the audience for the company’s success over the years, including former **Discovery Channel** pres & gm *John Ford*; network heads *Henry Schleiff, Marjorie Kaplan* and *Rich Ross*; and chief development & digital media officer and general counsel *Bruce Campbell*, to name a few. But to truly represent the Discovery’s 30 years, a panel of game changers in television were summoned to the stage. “We brought 3 people that I think represent a significant shift in television in America,” Zaslav said. “First, and he’s not with us unfortunately, but he was the biggest star, the brightest star that Discovery ever had. And that’s *Steve Irwin*.” Irwin’s family—his wife Terri, daughter Bindi and son Bob—represented the late croc hunter and spoke of his unending passion for animal conservation—and how Steve’s dream of passing on that mission to his children was fully realized. Zaslav recalled his “authentic character” and “magnetic personality.” “You didn’t have the voice of God telling you what the crocodile does. He jumped in the water, opened up the mouth, and with the great-

BUSINESS & FINANCE

est joy told you why he loved this animal—and what it meant to nature, and what place it had in nature,” he said. Zas then introduced Captain *Sig Hansen* of “The Deadliest Catch.” “Deadliest Catch was probably the first nonfiction show that was about courage and real life, and got a massive rating,” Zaslav said. “This was nonfiction reality, but it was real... We all watched in awe, and from that came a whole series of shows that really changed the way people watched television.” Lastly, Zaslav tipped his hat to **TLC’s** *Stacy London*, “who with “What Not To Wear” created this whole genre of television for women in America. And we built a network around it called TLC. And there are many networks built around it,” he said. The panelists spoke of their careers and thanked Discovery for the opportunity, but most touching was the announcement that on the Irwin family’s next crocodile research expedition they plan to name a croc David Zaslav. Of course, the croc will go by the nickname Steve had for the CEO: Dave-O.

Programing: **AMC** booked a straight-to-series order for the drama “Broke” (wt). A co-production between **AMC Studios** and **Lionsgate**, the 10 1-hour ep series will premiere in 2016. -- As **ABC Family** works to double its original programming over the next 4 years, it OKed pilot production on a new 1-hour drama series “Guilt.”

Cablefax Daily Stockwatch

Company	06/25 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	06/25 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS					
DIRECTV:	93.76	0.60	CONCURRENT:	6.33	0.02
DISH:	69.66	0.32	CONVERGYS:	26.18	0.13
ENTRAVISION:	8.24	(0.05)	CSG SYSTEMS:	32.06	0.25
GRAY TELEVISION:	15.46	0.17	ECHOSTAR:	49.81	(0.01)
MEDIA GENERAL:	16.96	(0.1)	GOOGLE:	535.23	(2.61)
NEXSTAR:	57.73	0.51	HARMONIC:	7.13	0.04
SINCLAIR:	28.44	0.09	INTEL:	31.99	0.08
MSOS					
CABLEVISION:	24.23	0.38	INTERACTIVE CORP:	81.19	3.93
CHARTER:	167.84	(0.64)	JDSU:	12.40	(0.15)
COMCAST:	60.88	0.52	LEVEL 3:	54.32	(0.13)
COMCAST SPCL:	60.53	0.43	MICROSOFT:	45.65	0.02
GCI:	16.89	0.16	NETFLIX:	664.24	(14.37)
GRAHAM HOLDING:	1082.25	8.52	NIELSEN:	45.57	(0.04)
LIBERTY BROADBAND:	50.17	(0.45)	RENTRAK:	72.42	0.78
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	56.21	(0.3)	SEACHANGE:	7.39	(0.1)
SHAW COMM:	22.57	0.23	SONY:	31.15	0.64
SHENTEL:	34.31	0.44	SPRINT NEXTEL:	4.62	UNCH
SHENTEL:	34.31	0.44	TIVO:	10.74	0.06
TIME WARNER CABLE:	177.17	0.82	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	50.26	(0.67)
PROGRAMMING					
21ST CENTURY FOX:	32.96	(0.02)	VONAGE:	5.01	0.04
AMC NETWORKS:	82.01	1.48	YAHOO:	41.07	0.13
CBS:	57.13	0.36	TELCOS		
CROWN:	4.61	0.01	AT&T:	36.18	0.40
DISCOVERY:	33.60	(0.15)	CENTURYLINK:	29.92	(1.96)
DISNEY:	114.45	0.68	TDS:	30.15	0.17
GRUPO TELEVISA:	39.71	0.24	VERIZON:	47.44	0.15
HSN:	69.95	(0.06)	MARKET INDICES		
LIONSGATE:	37.85	0.28	DOW:	17890.36	(75.71)
MSG:	84.66	0.41	NASDAQ:	5112.19	(10.22)
SCRIPPS INT:	66.65	(0.01)	S&P 500:	2102.31	(6.27)
STARZ:	43.80	0.99			
TIME WARNER:	88.20	1.10			
VIACOM:	66.97	(0.13)			
WWE:	17.53	0.21			
TECHNOLOGY					
ADVANTAGE:	2.38	UNCH			
AMDOCS:	56.02	0.12			
AMPHENOL:	56.18	(0.61)			
APPLE:	127.50	(0.61)			
ARRIS GROUP:	31.99	(0.41)			
AVID TECH:	14.28	UNCH			
BLNDER TONGUE:	0.83	0.03			
BROADCOM:	52.91	(0.23)			
CISCO:	28.40	(0.11)			
COMMSCOPE:	26.40	0.20			

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PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

Clipped-tomania...

Nothing like a sitcom set in Boston and starring *George Wendt*. Oh, not that one. We're talking about **TBS'** "Clipped," which comes to us from *David Kohan* and *Max Mutchnick*, the Emmy-winning duo behind mega-hit of the 1990s "Will & Grace." In their latest creation, which premiered June 16, the showrunners give us a similar collection of absurdly disfunctional characters. But here the comedy largely takes place in a barber shop—perhaps even one that could have been down the street from Sam Malone and the gang (Millennial readers: I know you're oblivious, and I don't care). The setting, not unlike that of a Boston bar, throws our characters into silly situations that force them work together to solve problems, usually of their own making. The twist is that they went to high school together—all except for Wendt's character "Buzzy," who used to own to the place but now just occupies a chair surrounded by 20-somethings who often act like they never left the high-school cafeteria. "He's kind of like the papa bear to all of us kids running around," says star *Ashley Tisdale* of **Disney Channel's** "High School Musical" fame after years as a tween star. "I literally was meant to do this because I spent the last 10 years in hair salons." As for Wendt (again, look it up, kids), he told us during TBS' recent set visit that the show "will only get better" as the actors gel. And while the series doesn't yet reach Norm-esque proportions of comedic genius—that's perhaps to be expected in the early days of any sitcom. Still, "Boston felt comfortable," he says, even if being the show's elder statesmen was decidedly not. "It's weird. I remember *Nicholas Colasanto* as being just ancient," he recalls, referencing Coach on that Other Show of Which We Will Not Speak. "But it's just so much more fun to sit back and listen to these kids and how they riff." Time will tell whether audiences find "Clipped" the way they swarmed to Will & Grace and... that other show. Until then, cheers. - *Michael Grebb*

Reviews: "The Last Alaskans," Sunday, 8pm, **Animal Planet**. Can't stand summer's heat? Tune in to this hidden gem, which follows people existing in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, where a warm day in winter is 6 below. In 1980 the government banned new occupation there, hence the series' title. The Refuge is desolate, yet beautiful and is filmed gorgeously. This week's scenery isn't as varied as the opening eps, which occurred in late summer. It's winter now, and there's barely any light. Since danger is ubiquitous—hypothermia, bears, starvation—Animal Planet dispenses with silly plotlines. The primal challenge of man and animal vs nature, and these last Alaskans, provide highly compelling television. -- "Nurse Jackie," series finale, Sunday, 10pm, **Showtime**. Wouldn't you know it, just as this series is ending its 7-year run, it's never been better. We want more but will have to settle for Sunday's finale. At least Jackie (the wonderful *Edie Falco*) has been reinstated as a nurse, her calling. Unfortunately she's still popping pills like the addict she is. Can it end well? Adieu, Jackie. -- "The Brink," Sunday, 10:30pm, **HBO**. It's another comedic whack at government, done so well by "Veep," yet this series has a totally different feel, think a contemporary "Dr. Strangelove." *Tim Robbins* is hilarious as a sex-starved Secretary of State. - *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable Rankings (6/15/15-6/21/15)			
Mon-Sun Prime			
1	DSNY	0.7	1735
1	TNT	0.7	1727
3	HGTV	0.6	1556
3	FOXN	0.6	1541
3	USA	0.6	1498
3	DISC	0.6	1351
7	TBSC	0.5	1332
7	HIST	0.5	1260
9	FOOD	0.4	1069
9	ADSM	0.4	995
9	FX	0.4	962
9	ESPN	0.4	942
9	SYFY	0.4	933
9	A&E	0.4	879
9	ID	0.4	851
9	DSE	0.4	97
17	LIFE	0.3	814
17	TLC	0.3	757
17	NAN	0.3	744
17	SPK	0.3	699
17	HALL	0.3	697
17	AMC	0.3	696
17	TVLD	0.3	660
17	APL	0.3	620
17	DSJR	0.3	609
17	FS1	0.3	566
17	HMM	0.3	436
17	BEIN	0.3	166
29	CNN	0.2	598
29	MSNB	0.2	566
29	FAM	0.2	565
29	BRAV	0.2	559
29	VH1	0.2	548
29	NGC	0.2	523
29	WETV	0.2	516
29	GSN	0.2	478
29	CMDY	0.2	420
29	LMN	0.2	411
29	MTV	0.2	407
29	NKJR	0.2	398
29	BET	0.2	395
29	FXX	0.2	365
29	EN	0.2	363
29	TRU	0.2	353
29	TRAV	0.2	351
29	INSP	0.2	350

*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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