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What the Industry Reads First

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Spectrum Frontiers: Cable Battles Wireless over Unlicensed Use

When it comes to allocating additional spectrum above the 24 GHz band (known as the millimeter wave band) for commercial mobile use, as proposed by the **FCC** in its Spectrum Frontiers proceeding, cable and wireless operators have different plans. The Commission's initiative aims to facilitate 5G wireless services, which could potentially deliver gigabit speeds. In its FNPRM portion of the order, the agency sought comments (due Fri) on the potential use of additional bands for both fixed and wireless uses. Analysts have suggested that 5G networks will operate on both licensed and unlicensed spectrum as operators seek to use all available spectrum resources to serve large numbers of users at faster speeds. That's why it's important to authorize unlicensed use in the 70/80 GHz bands, **NCTA** said in its comments. The group also urged the agency to open the 5.9 GHz band (currently used by the auto industry for short-range communications) for unlicensed use. "No other frequency band presents as attractive a near-term opportunity for easing congestion in today's Wi-Fi bands and connecting more consumers," NCTA said. As for 5G... while a licensed standard for 5G may not be ready until the end of 2019, unlicensed standards have already been developed for use in the millimeter wave bands, the cable group said. It said WiFi devices are designed to share spectrum with other users and with technical rules in place, these devices are positioned to protect incumbent service providers, including satellite operators, from interference. However, the Commission proposed a 3-tier access system approach to authorize mobile use of the band in its order. If that's the case, NCTA asked the FCC to at least extend the upper edge of the current 57-71 GHz licensed band up to 72.5 GHz. Such a change would expand the opportunities for innovative unlicensed services in millimeter wave spectrum, NCTA said. Meanwhile, in licensed bands above 24 GHz, the Commission should adopt a use-or-share requirement to encourage licensed build-out and unlicensed investment, according to NCTA. As for **AT&T**, it identified "encouraging investment" as a foundational principle for allocating 5G spectrum. "Exclusive use licensing is a key way to give investors the confidence to proceed with investing in deployment of 5G networks," it said. It noted in the FCC's order, of the 11.65 GHz spectrum proposed to be allocated, only about 20% was allocated

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for licensed use. "In this proceeding, the Commission should prioritize exclusively licensed spectrum. In particular, the Commission should not assume that higher bands will never work for exclusively licensed services and, in a haste to promote experimentation, rush to designate the bands for unlicensed operation," AT&T said. AT&T also isn't onboard when it comes to spectrum sharing. While the company said it understands that some sharing in the newly allocated bands will be required, the FCC should continue to "engage in all necessary technical and engineering efforts to secure exclusively licensed spectrum." Cable has **Facebook** on its side. The company said the Commission should continue to make additional spectrum bands available to unlicensed users through sharing technologies. **Google** took a position somewhere in the middle: It supports the existing light-licensing approach for the 70/80 band, and it asked the Commission to protect incumbents in the 24 GHz band. Reply comments are due Oct 31.

DeBitetto Disembarking: *Bob DeBitetto* is stepping down as head of **A+E Studios**. He'll be with the company until the end of the year, with a new leader to be announced shortly. "Nearly three years ago, when I took over as CEO I asked Bob to create and lead A+E Studios so we would participate in owning our scripted content. In a few short years, the Studio created our most critically-acclaimed series ever, 'UnReal,' and the Emmy-nominated 'Roots,'" **A+E Nets** pres/CEO *Nancy DuBuc* wrote in memo Mon. "The studio now has over 40 series in active development including History's upcoming series 'Six' and 'Knightfall.' It has become a major force in Hollywood and he has played a key role in its success." DeBitetto previously served as **A+E's** pres, leading the net to 10 consecutive years of growth and introducing such franchises as "Bates Motel" and "The First 48." DuBuc said the studio chief has decided to pursue "the next chapter in his storied career." No word yet on what that may be.

Comcast vs. Washington AG: **Comcast** is asking the King County Superior Court in WA to dismiss the state AG's lawsuit against it. The lawsuit filed in Aug alleged the company engaged in deceptive practices constituting more than 1.8mln individual violations of the state's Consumer Protection Act. At issue was a \$4.99/month service protection plan, which the AG's Office called "near-worthless" as it doesn't cover inside wiring and customer-owned equipment. Comcast's response: "The assertions in this lawsuit are based on mischaracterizations and misstatements of fact, which is why we've filed a motion with the court seeking dismissal. The Comcast Guarantee and Our Service Protection Plan deliver on their promises with over 99% of all repair calls resolved at no charge to the customer. Overall, our Service Protection Plan has covered tens of millions of dollars in service call fees customers otherwise would have had to pay, providing them with great value and peace of mind, and any claims to the contrary are just wrong."

Carriage: **LBI Media**, the Spanish broadcasting company that owns **Estrella TV Network**, scored a deal with **AT&T** for carriage of Estrella TV on **DirecTV**. -- **RIDE TV** inked an agreement with **Grupo TV Cable** to distribute the net in Ecuador. The net is now part of Grupo TV's Basic HD package. -- **Vubiquity** is now offering **TheBlaze**, allowing video distributors to offer the network through the managed service, which no longer requires a traditional receiver. "We are sympathetic to the costs facing small to mid-sized operators and are taking steps to make it easier than ever to add TheBlaze to channel lineups," TheBlaze pres *Stewart Padveen* said in a statement.

4K Box: On Mon, **Xiaomi** launched its \$69 4K Ultra HD Streaming media player, dubbed the "Mi Box," in the US. It's available at Mi.com as well as in **Walmart** stores (and will soon be on Walmart.com). The box is powered by **Google's** Android TV and features thousands of movies and shows from streaming apps such as **Netflix**, **HBO** and **VUDU** as well as games through **Google Play**. Consumers can also use the box to access live cable channels through a **Sling TV** subscription.

Cheaper Hulu: **Hulu** trimmed the price of its ad-supported monthly streaming service to \$5.99/month from \$7.99. At least for a little bit. The new price tag is for the first 12 months. It moves to \$7.99/month thereafter. The ad-free version still costs \$12. All this comes ahead of Hulu's live TV streaming service, which is expected to launch next year.

Programming: **AMC** will air a live, 90-minute special edition of its live after show "Talking Dead," featuring 12 cast

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members of “The Walking Dead” as well as the show’s exec producers on Oct 23, following the new season premiere of the series. -- As the debate over the country’s policing heats up, **A&E** will premiere documentary series “Live PD” on Oct 28. The eight-ep series features the country’s busiest police forces and the communities they patrol. -- Emmy’s uplift? Sept 22 was **Logo’s** highest-rated Thurs in net history. The “RuPaul’s Drag Race All Stars” ep was most the watched ep in “All Stars” history with the biggest audience in 3 years. Season-to-date, the show has reached 8.2mIn viewers across all platforms. -- **Netflix’s** new original animated series for adults “Pacific Heat” will premiere in the US, Canada and Europe on Dec 2. The satire features a unit of undercover police investigators who fight crime on the “Gold Coast” of Australia. It will premiere exclusively on **Foxtel** in Australia before the end of 2016.

People: **RIDE TV** hired *Peter Clifford* as svp of distribution. He was most recently svp of distribution at **RFD-TV**. -- **Luis Rosero** joined **NBCU Telemundo Enterprises** as vp, govt affairs. He’ll work to identify and pursue opportunities that advance the policy objectives of NBCU Telemundo in the US and all of NBCU’s businesses in the Latin American region. He joins from **Toyota Motor North America**.

Cablefax Daily Stockwatch

Company	10/03 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	10/03 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS					
DISH:	55.65	0.87	INTEL:	37.66	(0.09)
ENTRAVISION:	7.57	(0.06)	INTERACTIVE CORP:	62.80	0.33
GRAY TELEVISION:	10.70	0.34	LEVEL 3:	46.01	(0.37)
MEDIA GENERAL:	18.49	0.06	MICROSOFT:	57.42	(0.18)
NEXSTAR:	58.50	0.79	NETFLIX:	102.63	4.08
SINCLAIR:	28.68	(0.2)	NIELSEN:	53.65	0.08
TEGNA:	22.11	0.25	SEACHANGE:	2.94	(0.05)
MSOS					
CABLE ONE:	578.75	(5.25)	SONY:	33.10	(0.11)
CHARTER:	268.16	(1.81)	SPRINT NEXTEL:	6.57	(0.06)
COMCAST:	66.19	(0.15)	SYNACOR:	2.91	UNCH
GCI:	14.13	0.38	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	73.94	(0.52)
LIBERTY BROADBAND:	69.76	(0.4)	VONAGE:	6.64	0.03
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	34.03	(0.15)	YAHOO:	43.13	0.03
SHAW COMM:	20.46	UNCH	TELCOS		
SHENTEL:	26.63	(0.58)	AT&T:	40.77	0.16
PROGRAMMING					
21ST CENTURY FOX:	24.73	0.51	CENTURYLINK:	27.52	0.09
AMC NETWORKS:	52.27	0.41	FRONTIER:	4.14	(0.02)
CBS:	54.93	0.19	TDS:	27.20	0.02
DISCOVERY:	27.39	0.47	VERIZON:	51.88	(0.1)
DISNEY:	92.49	(0.37)	MARKET INDICES		
GRUPO TELEVISA:	26.17	0.48	DOW:	18253.85	(54.3)
HSN:	39.37	(0.43)	NASDAQ:	5300.87	(11.13)
LIONSGATE:	20.29	0.30	S&P 500:	2161.20	(7.07)
MSG NETWORKS:	18.81	0.20			
SCRIPPS INT:	64.12	0.63			
STARZ:	31.47	0.28			
TIME WARNER:	79.32	(0.29)			
VIACOM:	42.50	(0.32)			
WWE:	21.05	(0.25)			
TECHNOLOGY					
ADDVANTAGE:	1.76	0.01			
AMDOCS:	57.84	(0.01)			
AMPHENOL:	64.40	(0.52)			
APPLE:	112.52	(0.53)			
ARRIS GROUP:	27.90	(0.43)			
AVID TECH:	7.67	(0.27)			
BLNDER TONGUE:	0.58	(0.04)			
CISCO:	31.50	(0.22)			
COMMSCOPE:	30.23	0.12			
CONCURRENT:	5.47	(0.03)			
CONVERGYS:	30.09	(0.33)			
CSG SYSTEMS:	41.50	0.17			
ECHOSTAR:	43.60	(0.23)			
GOOGLE:	772.56	(4.73)			
HARMONIC:	5.76	(0.17)			

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TIP 3 : Stand Out!

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CFX TECH

The Whole Picture

Last week, the techier minds in the business convened in Philly for **SCTE/ISBE's** annual engineering show. Yes, it got way out into the weeds at times, but there were some general takeaways for the industry at large. One of the biggies is that better pictures are coming. As one vendor put it, cable is being forced to the party, much like it was with HDTV, by competitors—be it **AT&T/DirectTV** or OTT services. When you hit your local **Best Buy** to look at TVs, you may be inundated with 4K buzz. But the industry is increasingly talking about HDR, short for High Dynamic Range. It uses less bandwidth than 4K, and importantly, it's really about a greater range of brightness and luminosity. While 4K is about increasing the pixels (thus a larger screen is good), HDR can make a difference even on a computer monitor—which is why companies like **Netflix** jumped in early to the space. You don't even need a tablet-sized screen, with **Dolby** CTO *Craig Todd* holding up an iPhone during an Expo panel and proclaiming that it has more than enough horsepower to handle HDR. "HDR is the biggest improvement since HDTV," said *Alan Stein*, vp, tech development and standards for **Technicolor** and Technicolor Fellow. Consider an **NFL** game on the East Coast around 4pm—shadows creep all over the field. With HDR, there's more contrast and depth to avoid those dark spots in the picture, Stein said. Current TV captures a scene and squeezes it into a limited color volume, while HDR uses a much larger color volume. We are starting to see pay TV ops move into the space. This month, Japanese satellite operator **SKY Perfect** is slated to launch the world's first publicly available 4K HDR broadcast. Todd said one of the reasons OTT has moved much faster into the space than traditional video providers is that those online video providers don't care as much about standards being in place. That's being worked on by the **UHD Alliance**. **NAB's** sr director of new media technologies *Skip Pizzi* also is a member of the **Ultra HD Forum** board, a group considered com-

plementary to the Alliance (it's more focused on best practices vs standards). He said a number (more than 5 less than 10) HDR proposals are under consideration. Over the summer, the ATSC conducted an HDR demo at **CBS Studios** in NYC (Pizzi has led the S31 Specialist Group on ATSC 3.0 System Requirements and Program Management, and has served as Vice-Chair of TG3). "It wasn't a test per se. It was a comparative demo so we could see all the components," Pizzi said. His take is that 4K costs the most in bits, but doesn't have the immediate wow factor of HDR. Look for more conversations about HDR vs 4K in the coming months.

Comcast-Harmonic: Speaking of HDR and UHD, one vendor in the space just struck a warrant agreement with **Comcast**. The pact lets Comcast acquire shares of common stock of **Harmonic** based on specific CableOS and other Harmonic product sales and deployment milestones during the term of the warrant. CableOS is a software-based CCAP solution that is aimed at the migration to gigabit capacity while resolving operators' space and power constraints in the headend and hub.

Energy Efficiency: **SCTE/ISBE** and the **NAFA Fleet Management Association** signed a Memorandum of Understanding designed to increase energy efficiency in vehicle fleets of cable system operators and NAFA members. The two organizations will promote professional development and standardization of operational practices in the fleet management field, and they will work together to develop new training and benchmarking material that can help to identify and remedy inefficient practices. More efficient fleet practices is one of the goals of the SCTE/ISBE Energy 2020 program, which is targeting double-digit percentage reductions by the end of the decade in power consumption on a unit basis; energy costs on a unit basis; grid dependency; and optimization of the technical facilities and data centers.



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