

# Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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## What about Us? NARUC Urges FCC to Add Members to Broadband Committee

The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners wants FCC chmn *Ajit Pai* to expand membership of the Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee (BDAC). Of the group's 30 members, two represent state government, two represent city government and one represents a tribal government, NARUC said. The percentages aren't any better for BDAC's five working groups, with one NARUC and six local government reps among the 58 participants. "A simple review of the current roster suggests the committee is heavily weighted in favor of those seeking attachments to poles. The concept for this committee was a good one, but the usefulness of any recommendations is likely to be undermined by this imbalance," NARUC said in a letter dated Monday. The group isn't the only one to complain about BDAC's composition, with utilities/pole owners having fretted about having only two seats at the table. All of this is further evidence of the importance of pole attachment regulations and decisions. BDAC held its first meeting in April, meeting again in July. Its membership includes representatives from **TDS Telecom, AT&T, Comcast, Nittany Media, MMTTC, Wireless Infrastructure Association** and **Google Fiber**, among many others. It's not unheard of to have more people added to the committee. In June, Pai added Lenexa, KS, City Council member *Andy Huckaba* to the group. But it doesn't sound like there are any plans for further expansion. Asked about the composition of BDAC after this month's FCC Open Meeting, Pai declared he was pleased with the diversity of the committee. "Obviously, we had a limited number of slots available and so we wanted to make sure we cast a wide net so to speak in terms of arraying a number of different perspectives," the chmn said. "I do think we have a fair representation of all perspectives... Everyone brings to the table a unique skillset, and I wish we could accommodate everyone of course, but that's not possible with the limited advisory committee that we've got." NARUC will keep trying. The group passed a resolution in July that urges the FCC to add representation and concludes the committee's work is unlikely to lead to a balanced recommendation.

**Analysts Opine on Disney:** Disney's plan to embrace a direct-to-consumer strategy—both at Disney/Pixar and ESPN—remains a hot topic. The company's stock price has dropped about 4% since CEO *Bob Iger's* announcement of its **BAM Tech** acquisition Aug 8. This week, analysts are sharing more thoughts on the company's direction. **MoffettNathanson's** *Michael Nathanson* in a research note Monday wrote fears around Disney's OTT move are

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“overblown” and reiterated a “buy” rating. Nathanson believes Disney wants to build products that “complement, not supplant, the traditional MVPD bundle.” He predicted the company will initially price its Disney brand OTT service at around \$5/month to “drive broader adoption.” Regarding ESPN, Nathanson wrote a direct-to-consumer offering is unlikely to lead to more cord-cutting, as premier sporting events are still going to be exclusive to linear TV. Nathanson also drew a distinction between the two separate OTT offerings. While he believes Disney is “positioning ESPN to be ready to go full over-the-top,” the Disney brand product is intended to “build asset value rather than take additional licensing dollars.” **BTIG Research’s Richard Greenfield**, on the other hand, has maintained a “sell” rating on Disney (and was recently blocked on **Twitter** by Iger). A vocal critic of the company in recent years, he wrote Monday that building direct-to-consumer distribution is the “correct approach for Disney,” but that the company’s “siloe’d approach is flawed.” Instead, he suggested building a “cross-Disney portfolio bundle of content.”

**Regulatory Hurdle:** CADE, a government agency in Brazil with antitrust oversight, said **AT&T’s** pending acquisition of **Time Warner** poses competitive concerns and recommended it be rejected. The development has the potential to delay approval of the deal. The group said Time Warner and AT&T-owned **Sky Brasil** have “significant market power.” CADE asserted the deal would allow Time Warner to gain access to sensitive information from competitors through Sky and allow AT&T to access conditions negotiated by its rivals through Time Warner.

**Viacom-Suddenlink:** After nearly three years without **MTV**, **BET** and **Comedy Central**, **Viacom** nets began returning to **Suddenlink** systems on Tuesday. Channels will continue to launch on a market-by-market basis through year-end.

**What’s Up, DOC:** **Comcast Business** launched DOCSIS 3.1-based internet service to customers in Greater Boston, Greater Philadelphia, New Jersey, northern Delaware, Baltimore, Charlottesville and DC. Businesses in these areas now have access to two tiers, featuring speeds of up to 1 Gig or 500Mbps service. The company will deploy the service in additional markets throughout its footprint on a rolling basis through the fall. Comcast Business previously rolled out DOCSIS 3.1 in Atlanta, Nashville, Chicago Detroit, Chattanooga, Huntsville and Miami.

**TV Stats to Chew On:** Consumption via Internet-connected devices, including **Roku**, **Apple TV** and **Google’s Chromecast**, rose 43% YOY in July to account for 12.7% of total TV use among A18-49 on a total day basis. These figures are from **Pivotal Research’s** analysis of the latest **Nielsen** data. National TV viewing on a Live + 7 basis among P2+ was down 5.5% YOY, while total day viewing of traditional TV programming among A18-49 fell by 8.1%. “Viewing of unrated programming through internet-connected devices and of premium video on PCs, tablets and mobile phones are undoubtedly accounting for some of these declines, and probably would bring year-over-year trends to flat or possibly positive figures if related data were included in standard measures of viewership. However, it doesn’t seem likely that this data will be included in any comprehensive industry-wide total audience metric any time soon,” the research firm concluded.

**AT&T Fiber:** AT&T deployed its fiber network in two new metro areas—Biloxi-Gulfport (MS) and Savannah (GA)—and expanded availability to more than 60 communities across 20 metro areas where it already has service. AT&T Fiber is now available to more than 5.5mln locations in 57 markets. The company says it is the largest fiber network within its 21-state home internet footprint.

**News in a Snap:** **CNN** launched a daily news program on **Snapchat** called “The Update.” The show, part of the social media service’s Discovery platform, will be run at 6pm ET. There will also be additional breaking news segments. “The Update” will feature CNN on-air talent. The cable news net was an original content partner for Discover back in 2015. Snapchat launched “shows” a year ago as its third content format for the Discover platform, with a number of cable nets contributing.

**Brand Building:** **ESPN** tapped New York-based agency **Droga5** to handle strategic and creative duties for the overarching network brand, as well as for “SportsCenter.” A new campaign is expected to debut in the coming months. **Wieden + Kennedy**, the agency responsible for ESPN’s long-time “This is SportsCenter” effort, parted ways with the net late last year. W+K went on to become **Fox Sports’** agency of record earlier this year.

**Batter’s Box:** **Atlantic Broadband** on Tuesday launched the **MLB.TV** app on its TiVo set-top boxes. As a result, Atlantic customers who subscribe to the out-of-market streaming service can now access games directly from their

TVs. Atlantic also announced plans to launch the linear **MLB Network** on Sept 28. According to **Nielsen**, MLB Network was available in more than 61m US homes as of August.

**Going Green:** **Xbox 360** now supports **Hulu's** live TV service and new user interface. The most up-to-date version of Hulu was already available on the newer **Xbox One**, as well as on **Apple TV, Amazon Fire, iOS, Android** and **Chromecast**.

**April in New York:** **WICT** is borrowing a page from **The Cable Center** and moving its Signature Luncheon to NYC to be held in conjunction with the Cable Hall of Fame celebration on April 4. The lunch, honoring the best PAR (Pay Equity, Advancement, Resources) Companies for women in cable, had previously been scheduled to take place in January at **CES**. Groups have been tinkering with their schedules since **NCTA** decided to nix the industry's annual trade show. Both events previously moved locales yearly as they were held in conjunction with the **INTX** convention. Last year, **WICT** moved its lunch to **CES**, while **The Cable Center** kept its **HOF** celebration in **DC** during the same dates **INTX** would have happened. This marks the first time either event has been held in **NYC**. The **WICT** event will be hosted at the **New York Hilton Midtown**, with the industry convening in the evening at the **Ziegfeld Ballroom** to recognize **Cable HOFers**, who will be announced in early October. **WICT's** **PAR** companies are based on the results of its biennial **PAR** survey.

**Weekly Ratings Notes:** **MSNBC** and **CNN** saw substantial week-over-week viewership gains last week in the wake of the previous weekend's events in Charlottesville. In primetime, **MSNBC** averaged 2.0m viewers last week, up 12.8% from the previous week. **CNN** averaged 1.3m viewers in primetime, up 23% week-over-week. **Fox News** still led both of its cable news rivals in primetime, averaging 2.1m viewers, but saw a 3.7% drop from the week prior. -- **Fox News** and **MSNBC** led the way in primetime viewership, as has been the trend of late, followed by **USA** (1.5m), **HGTV** (1.4m) and **TBS** (1.3m). Last week marked **Fox News'** 12th straight week atop primetime viewership among basic cable nets. The net also notched its 33rd consecutive weekly win for total day viewership with an average of 1.3m viewers. **Nickelodeon** (1.1m), **MSNBC** (1.1m), **CNN** (925K) and **Adult Swim** (833K) rounded out the top five in total day. -- **NBC Sports** has averaged more than 4m viewers for its eight **NASCAR** races so far this season, an 11% improvement from 2016. The five races that aired on **NBCSN** averaged 3.2m.

**Programming:** **ESPN** will debut the latest film in its "30 for 30" series, titled "Year of the Scab," on Sept 12 at 8pm ET. The documentary is about the men who replaced the Redskins during the 1987 **NFL** players strike. -- **Travel Channel** will debut a four-part special called "Expedition Unknown: Hunt for Extraterrestrials" on Oct 4 at 9pm ET/PT. Each weekly, hour-long ep will feature host *Josh Gates* searching the world for evidence of alien life. An after-show called "The Debrief" will air immediately after each ep. -- **MTV** greenlit a second season of rebooted reality series "Fear Factor," bringing 20 more episodes to the net in 2018. -- **Starz** is developing a new action-drama, tentatively called "Black Samurai," with **Jerry Bruckheimer Television**. The series, based on *Marc Olden's* "Black Samurai" novels, follows *Robert Sand* as an American Army Ranger whose life transforms as he begins to train in the art of the samurai.

**People:** Former **Spike TV** evp, original series *Sharon Levy* was tapped as pres, unscripted and scripted TV for **Endemol Shine North America**, the company behind shows such as "Big Brother" and "The Real Housewives of Atlanta." -- **Mediacom** promoted *Barry Paden* to svp, programming. *Louis Gentile* is rising to the position of group vp, internal audit, while *Mary Green* will take on the vp, internal audit position in the department. **Mediacom** also promoted *Joseph Michulski* to vp, finance and *Debra Zullo* to vp, IT. -- **Lionsgate** promoted *Kerry Phelan* to pres of global franchise management, reporting to pres of worldwide marketing *Tim Palen*. *Phelan* joined **Lionsgate** three years ago, building its global brand through location-based consumer experiences around the world based on franchises including "The Hunger Games" and "Twilight."

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