

# Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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## Sunshine Daydream: Comcast Partners with Solar Energy Outfit Sunrun

Residential solar electricity provider **Sunrun** is looking to the nation's largest cable operator to help expedite the adoption of its environmentally friendly power service. After working with **Comcast** on a year-long pilot program, the **NASDAQ**-traded energy company is beefing up has agreed to take the relationship to the next level. Under a new 40-month deal, Comcast will serve as a strategic partner for Sunrun in select markets by marketing its energy solutions to its customers. In return, Comcast will earn fees for each of its customers that signs up for Sunrun service, the value of which will vary by market. Specific figures were not disclosed. In addition, Comcast has the opportunity to earn a warrant to purchase up to 9.99% of outstanding common stock for \$.01 per share. The operator is entitled to the full equity stake if it originates 60K new customers, or a pro-rated portion of it once it signs up at least 30K. Sunrun estimates the fees it will pay Comcast are considerably lower than its current customer acquisition costs, making it an efficient marketing tactic. In addition, Comcast's sheer reach could provide the solar outfit a huge boost. The company said the 60K customers it hopes to acquire via Comcast would represent 420 MWs of solar capacity, a huge amount given the company had a total of 1,027 MW deployed (across a total of 134K customers) as of last quarter. Sunrun CMO *Michael Grasso* told **Cablefax** on Thursday that the alliance with Comcast is the company's largest strategic partnership; it also has deals with **Costco** and **Home Depot** to maintain a presence in retail establishments. Sunrun and Comcast are also exploring ways to begin offering Comcast products, specifically home automation and security service, to Sunrun customers, as well. In addition, he pointed to the potential product synergies that exist given the cable sector's push into the home automation business. He specifically suggested that future integration with Comcast's smart home technology could allow Sunrun customers to ensure ultimate energy efficiency and savings. "You have the smart energy technology coming from Sunrun, you've got smart home technology coming from Comcast," he said. "I see an opportunity in the future where these two are really speaking to each other and further optimizing that customer experience so that they're getting the benefit of the great home environment, but incremental energy savings, and the consumer is in control." He also noted the California-based company, which currently operates in 22 states plus DC, has approximately a two-thirds footprint overlap with Comcast and plans to favor Comcast markets in future expansion. On the Comcast

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side, the move is another sign that the company recognizes the vast revenue opportunity in home automation and IoT services. While Comcast has fared better than many other operators in legacy segments like pay-TV—thanks in part to its **X1** interface—growth potential there is limited, at best. The partnership with an energy provider puts Comcast on the forefront of smart home technology and, potentially, a new frontier of integration with the green economy.

**Knights' Tale:** Las Vegas has its first top-tier pro sports franchise, but there's a chance many in the region won't be able to watch its games. The Vegas Golden Knights, an **NHL** expansion franchise, signed its first local TV deal earlier this year with **ROOT Sports Rocky Mountain**, which has since rebranded as **AT&T SportsNet**. The team chose the RSN despite its lack of carriage on **Cox** and **CenturyLink** in the region. In a statement this week, Cox said it has begun discussions with the net, but carriage must come "at a reasonable cost." "We know that many Las Vegas viewers are enthusiastic about the Golden Knights debut, but sports programming comes at an extremely high price," the operator said. "As we continually adjust our channel line-up, we must consider the needs of all our customers, not just sports/Golden Knights fans, and protect the value of the products and services we provide." AT&T SportsNet and the Golden Knights could not be reached for comment by press time. The Knights first televised regular season game is Oct 6 against the Dallas Stars.

**FCC on Video Competition:** The **FCC** Media Bureau on Thursday released a notice seeking comment on the status of competition in the delivery of video programming, with comments due Oct 10 and replies due Nov 9. This annual report to Congress, the 19th from the Commission, specifically looks at 2016, asking about differences and similarities between MVPDs, online video distributors (OVDs) and broadcast stations. The many questions posed by the Bureau include whether skinny bundles help attract and retain subs, whether large MVPDs have a competitive advantage to smaller distributors and what actions are OVDs taking with ISPs to facilitate the viewing of video online. The report wants to delve into competition between all the players, asking questions such as how does the introduction of set-tops that access both MVPD and OVD content impact competition and how does the offering of linear video by OVDs impact the market. The Bureau also is looking for info on affiliation of video distributors and consumer equipment, pointing to **Amazon** owning Amazon Prime Video and also making Fire TV. It also noted **Comcast** leases its X1 set-top to subscribers [it also licenses it to other MVPDs].

**Retrans Warning:** **Raycom** has started warning **AT&T's DirecTV** customers that they could lose local broadcast stations if a new retrans pact isn't reached. It's worth keeping an eye on given that 27 Raycom stations went dark on **AT&T U-verse** in March for 11 days. The deadline for a deal is the end of day on Aug 31, meaning a blackout could hit as college football kicks off. "We are currently working hard to make sure DirecTV customers continue to have access to **WTOG** without interruption. But there is a chance they will not agree to a fair deal, and decide to drop this station from their system," read one notice from a station GM. Raycom stations include **WBTV** in Charlotte (**CBS**), **WAVE** in Louisville (**NBC**) and Tucson's **KOLD** (**CBS**). "Raycom is currently threatening to block its stations from reaching our DirecTV customers' homes unless Raycom receives a significant increase in fees even though the same people can still watch its shows for free over-the-air and, often, online at each network's website or using those same networks' apps," DirecTV said. "Raycom has blocked its stations from reaching customers of other providers like **DISH Network** and **Cox Cable** before, while also threatening to disconnect others. We'd like to resolve this matter quickly and reasonably, and appreciate our customers' patience while we attempt just that." -- Meanwhile, **DISH** and **Citadel** again extended their agreement for the satellite provider to carry Citadel-owned **WLNE-TV**, an **ABC** affiliate in Providence, RI. The second extension in the past week allows the two sides to continue retrans discussions without DISH customers in the area losing the station. The agreement was initially slated to lapse last Friday, and DISH has been providing thousands of customers in the area with OTA antennas.

**VidAngel Fight:** The 9th Circuit on Thursday affirmed an injunction to shut down movie filtering service **VidAngel**, following a challenge by **Disney**, **Warner Bros** and other studios. But VidAngel, which "cleans up" content by removing expletives and objectionable content, said it would keep fighting. It launched a new service in June that works with streaming offerings. "Today's decision has absolutely no impact on VidAngel's current service, we remain open for business," CEO *Neal Harmon* said. "While all of the legal back-and-forth plays out, we know our customers are grateful to still have a way to protect their kids and filter harmful content. On the legal front, we are just getting started. We will fight for a family's right to filter on modern technology all the way."

# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

## True Love

Tommy and Codie Oliver, now a married pair of filmmakers, had just started dating in 2013 when Codie told Tommy about her idea for a documentary featuring black couples' love stories. By the next year they had started filming interviews with more than 80 couples about every facet of their relationships. "It was less than romantic," Codie said, noting she was only sort of joking. "There were times where it was wonderful and exciting and sweet and romantic, but there were many times where we're talking about some really deep stuff, and Tommy and I aren't always on the same side of it." The product of all those interviews—which include both celebrity and everyday couples—is "Black Love," a four-episode docuseries set to premiere at 10pm ET Tuesday on **OWN**. Its aim, according to Codie, is to show that black people can find and foster happy, healthy relationships. She first had the idea in 2007, when the narrative of a national "black marriage crisis," backed by high divorce rates, was the subject of headlines. Despite its intent to provide hope, "Black Love" doesn't sugarcoat the rigors of marriage. It features couples opening up about real issues, from the impact of children on their relationship to financial strife. For OWN, which first saw the material when the Olivers brought it in—already filmed and edited—its authenticity made it too powerful to pass up. "We focus on African-American women as of this year, and we've been looking for projects in the love space forever," said OWN svp, programming and development *Jill Dickerson*. "We've had a couple of docuseries, we've had a couple of different things that we've tried, but this just felt like it hit the nail on the head." She added, "Once we took a look at it, we felt like we had never seen something quite so honest or compelling about marriage and what that's like: the ups and downs and the challenges of it." — *Alex Silverman*

**Reviews:** "Chandra Levy: An American Murder Mystery," Sunday, **ID GO**. It's 2001 in Washington, DC. A young congressional intern from California fails to contact her parents for a few days, then a few more and finally two weeks have passed without word. Her parents play detective, searching her phone records. They discover she's made multiple calls to congressman *Gary Condit* (D-CA), 54 and married. They inform police, who find the young woman's apartment untouched, complete with her wallet and driver's license. Only her keys are missing. Initially Condit admits he's met Levy, but that's all. Then police find he's left her 2 phone messages. Thus begins one of the most bizarre and widely followed cases in DC history. This 3-hour special is meticulous and unearths new material. Mixing re-enactments with interviews, it's a sobering, watchable review. It premieres on ID's ID GO platform Sunday and run at 8pm, September 4, on TLC and ID. -- "Diana and the Paparazzi," "Diana: The Day We Said Goodbye," 8, 9pm, respectively, Sunday, **Smithsonian**. Approaching the 20th anniversary of Princess Diana's passing, these films draw their share of tears. "The Day We Said Goodbye" is a more emotional and effective vehicle. Its excellent footage and interviews capture a sad moment with great intimacy. "Paparazzi" skims Diana's love-hate relations with photographers. — *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable Rankings (8/14/17-8/20/17)			
Mon-Sun Prime			
1	FOXN	0.9	2058
1	MSNB	0.9	1978
3	USA	0.6	1490
3	HGTV	0.6	1416
3	TBSC	0.6	1311
3	CNN	0.6	1307
7	ESPN	0.5	1094
7	A&E	0.5	1053
7	ID	0.5	984
10	HIST	0.4	1034
10	DISC	0.4	947
10	DSNY	0.4	923
10	HALL	0.4	818
10	NFLN	0.4	803
10	HMM	0.4	654
16	FX	0.3	805
16	TNT	0.3	779
16	FOOD	0.3	778
16	ADSM	0.3	775
16	TVLD	0.3	758
16	TLC	0.3	732
16	NAN	0.3	699
16	FRFM	0.3	646
16	VH1	0.3	617
16	BRAV	0.3	596
16	OWN	0.3	592
16	APL	0.3	590
16	NKJR	0.3	558
16	DSJR	0.3	488
16	DSE	0.3	68
31	LIFE	0.2	569
31	SYFY	0.2	541
31	AMC	0.2	523
31	SPK	0.2	481
31	INSP	0.2	475
31	NGC	0.2	463
31	TRAV	0.2	461
31	LMN	0.2	450
31	MTV	0.2	443
31	WETV	0.2	390
31	EN	0.2	371
31	GSN	0.2	365
31	TRU	0.2	351
31	CMDY	0.2	346

\*Nielsen data, supplied by ABC/Disney, is based on coverage area of individual networks



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