

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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ATSC 3.0: Broadcasters Get Their Ducks in Order

On the night before comments were due at the **FCC** on Next Gen TV, hundreds gathered around televisions in Raleigh to see the broadcast standard in action. The demo presented by **Capitol Broadcasting's WRAL-TV, NBCU** and **NAB** used the Winter Olympic Games to showcase 4K video, the first over-the-air broadcast of the Dolby AC4 format and new interactive applications. The event, attended by local officials, broadcasters and members of the press, also included Advanced Emergency Alerting that can show location-specific, interactive warnings. While some in the cable industry have expressed concern the transition to the standard, also known as ATSC 3.0, could be a vehicle for making retrans negotiations tougher, there seems to be growing acceptance that the technology is coming. In November, the FCC released its Next Gen TV report and issued a further notice of proposed rulemaking that seeks comment on issues such as waivers of the local simulcasting requirement and whether full power broadcasters should be able to use channels in the broadcast band that are vacant to facilitate the transition to 3.0. Non-commercial stations have argued that a simulcast mandate for 3.0 isn't necessary for them, but representatives are quick to say that doesn't mean viewers would be left without a way to see signals. "I think the vast majority of public stations will simulcast when they have any possibility of simulcasting, but a lot of our stations simply do not have a simulcasting partner," *Talia Rosen*, assistant gen counsel for **Public Broadcasting Service**, told **Cablefax**. "So they are looking other possibilities like using a vacant band channel in rural areas where there are available frequencies as a way to get the programming out in 1.0 and 3.0." Another possibility would be free or low-cost converter devices for viewers who don't have the new equipment to view 3.0 or possibly a fiber or microwave feed to get a signal to a cable headend, Rosen said. What about waivers for commercial stations? They need to be flexible, broadcasters **Meredith** and **Pearl** told the FCC on Tuesday. When it comes to waivers, "more important than hypothesizing different scenarios is ensuring a flexible framework that can address scenarios we cannot predict," Pearl said in its comments. **One Media**, a jv between **Coherent Logic** and **Sinclair** to guide the Next Gen transition, agrees local simulcasting is a core element of the transition, but added there

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6:00 PM General Reception and Silent Auction **7:30 PM** Dinner and Program (Business Attire) **9:00 PM** After-Party

**For further information, including table prices, please contact Maria Ducheine
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will be instances where stations want to deploy 3.0 but are unable to find a simulcast partner. One Media urged the FCC not to require a commitment from waiver applicants to preserve 1.0 service as a condition to grant a waiver. It also doesn't believe waiver applicants should be required to offer low-cost or free ATSC 3.0 converters to viewers. "The transition will take different paths in each market, and such a costly requirement might deter innovation in some markets without corresponding benefits," One Media said. We're still a few years away from ATSC 3.0 being adopted by stations, but demos like Monday's signal some broadcasters' eagerness to commit to the voluntary standard. Capitol's WRAL was a leader in offering digital and HD. And seems prepared to blaze trails again, with an ATSC 3.0 experimental license already in its possession. Other live ATSC 3.0 demos have included the 2016 World Series at **WJW-TV**, a **Tribune**-owned **Fox** affil that serves as a Next gen TV test station in Cleveland. There also is a test station in Baltimore and soon to be a Next Gen test market in Phoenix, with **E.W. Scripps**, Fox Television Stations, Meredith, **Nexstar**, **Tegna**, **Tel-emundo Station Group**, **Univision Communications** and Pearl TV forming a "model market" of 10 stations.

AT&T vs DOJ: A federal judge has ruled that the **Dept of Justice** doesn't have to turn over all communication with the White House about the proposed **AT&T** and **Time Warner** merger. That revelation came in an opinion published online Tuesday. There have been questions as to whether President Trump's negative view of Time Warner-owned **CNN** could have impacted the DOJ's review of the \$85bn deal. The case is slated to go to trial March 19. "Defendants have fallen far short of establishing that this enforcement action was selective," the judge wrote.

OTT for FNC: Fox News is planning a stand-alone subscription service to debut in the fourth quarter of 2018. Called "Fox Nation," the service designed for Fox News superfans will not overlap with the traditional network's 24-hour cable broadcast due to contractual agreements with cable operators. In addition to exclusive events and archival FNC programming from the last twenty years, Fox Nation will air live exclusive daily streaming content and long-form programming. Fox Nation is the latest OTT service to come as cord-cutting continues to rise, but it's lack of a cable subscription requirement sets it apart from competitors like **CNNgo** or **ESPN Plus**. The price of Fox Nation remains unannounced, with a monthly fee to come at a later date.

Around the World: Cisco released a revamped software portfolio to assist global service providers in the running of their large-scale networks. The Cisco Crosswork Network Automation software portfolio solutions are designed to deliver greater network visibility at scale, data-driven insights and outcome-based automation.

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Ratings: Ten Fox RSNs saw ratings gains at the NBA All-Star Break, driving a rise of 4% in household ratings YOY for the Fox RSN group. **FS Ohio** led the group at the All-Star break with the **Cleveland Cavaliers** earning the top household rating in the Eastern Conference and the second highest in the NBA (8.21 HH rating, +15%). **FS North's Minnesota** Timberwolves coverage rose 65% over the period (2.59 HH rating vs. 1.58) followed by **FS Detroit's** following of the **Detroit Pistons** (1.64 HH vs. 1.22). -- Not everyone's watching the Winter Olympics. **Disney's** original movie "Zombies" scored 10.3mln total viewers over the holiday weekend across eight telecasts. The Friday premiere notched 1.14mln kids 6-11 and 2.57mln total viewers. That makes it the top cable telecast among kids 6-11 since "Descendants 2" premiered in July 2017 and the #1 telecast across kid cable TV networks in total viewers since the debut of "Raven's Home" last July.

Programming: **Freeform** greenlit a pilot for "Girls Code" (working title), a half-hour comedy centered on a tech CEO and a social entrepreneur who must come together to co-run an all-female tech incubator. -- The team behind "Bojack Horseman" is bringing another animated comedy to **Netflix**. "Tuca & Bertie" will have a ten-episode first season with *Lisa Hanawalt* acting as creator and executive producer alongside *Raphael Bob-Waksberg*, *Noel Bright*, *Steven A. Cohen* and *Tiffany Haddish*. -- **Discovery Family** announced "Littlest Pet Shop: A World of Our Own" in celebration of National Love Your Pet Day. The 52-episode animated series will debut on April 14 at 12pm with two back-to-back episodes. -- **WGN America's** "100 Code" is set to premiere on May 29 at 10pm. The 12-episode crime drama stars *Dominic Monaghan* ("Lord of the Rings") and the late *Michael Nyqvist* ("John Wick"). -- Classic western film "County Line" will debut on **INSP** on May 5 at 8pm. *Tom Wopat* ("The Dukes of Hazzard") stars in the production as a former sheriff investigating the murder of his best friend. -- **WGN America's** "Shoot The Messenger" will premiere on Feb 26 at 10pm. The original scripted series was co-created and written by *Jennifer Holness* with *Sudz Sutherland* of **Hungry Eyes Media**. -- **Travel Channel** has renewed "Expedition Unknown" for 14 hour-long episodes, seeing explorer *Josh Gates* continue to explore the world's biggest legends. Production is slated to begin this spring on the new season.

People: **Epix** named *Nancy Cotton* evp, original programming, reporting to president *Michael Wright*. Most recently serving as president of **Heyday TV USA**, Cotton will be responsible for the development and production of all scripted original series. She has also acted as head of television for **Icon Productions** and vp of programming for **Mandalay Television**. -- **Arris** has appointed *Germán Iaryczower*, as svp/gm, DOCSIS CPE business, and *Marcos Takanohashi* as svp, sales for Caribbean and Latin America in order to focus on DOCSIS and international markets. Iaryczower has spent the last 22 years spearheading company efforts in the Caribbean and Latin America. Takanohashi will take over Iaryczower's former position, a natural extension of his current responsibilities as regional vp, sales. -- **Otter Media** added four members to its senior executive team. *Andy Forssell* has been named COO, *Sean Kisker* will act as chief strategy officer, *Jennifer Cho* is its new CFO and *Alan Beard* is the chief brand officer. All have proven track records in corporate enterprises and their own entrepreneurial endeavors.

Giving Back: **Cable One's** partnership with the **Arbor Day Foundation** has expanded to include the Foundation's Hurricane Tree Recovery Campaign, supporting its goal to plant 5mln trees over the next five years in communities impacted by hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria. The three-year commitment is in addition to Cable One's existing efforts with the Arbor Day Foundation, which has led to the distribution and planting of more than 70K trees over the past three years.

Cable Hall of Fame: The **Cable Center** announced the members of its 2018 Cable Hall of Fame honorary committee. Committee members will act as the official ambassadors for the Cable Hall of Fame celebration. **Penthera Partners** pres/CEO *Michael S. Willner* will chair the committee. Other members include **Liberty Global** pres/CEO *Michael Fries*, who serves as international chair; **Baker Media** founder and CEO *Bridget Baker*; **Charter Communications** chmn/CEO *Tom Rutledge* and **Comcast Cable** pres/CEO *David Watson*.

On the Circuit: The 12th annual Cable Apprentice Competition is set for March 9 in Denver, with grad students from the Univ of Denver's Daniels College of Business pitching long-term strategies for sustaining in the media space. The event, managed by the **Rocky Mountain Cable Association**, features a grand prize of \$4500 for the winning team. Each member also gets a preferred opportunity for a paid internship in the industry. Since its inception, 16 "Cable Apprentice" competitors have secured permanent jobs at area cable industry companies following successful internships.