

# Cablefax Daily™

Tuesday — July 3, 2018

What the Industry Reads First

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## Heated Discussions: Plenty of Programming Flare-Ups this Summer

The heat wave hitting a large chunk of the country probably isn't doing much to help soothe programmer and operator tensions. There are more than a few disputes bubbling over right now. Here's a rundown of the latest. **DISH-Univision:** These two are pros when it comes to disputes—and it showed with the number of talking points both sides presented as **Univision**, **UniMas** and **Galavision** went dark on **DISH** Saturday at 5pm MT (**Sling TV** customers lost all Univision networks). Univision went through a month-long blackout with **Verizon** in the fall, and DISH has rumbled several times with broadcasters big and small in the past year, including a three-day blackout in November with **CBS** that encompassed Thanksgiving Day football. The PR teams had a point-counterpoint for every argument this weekend, with Univision challenging DISH's claims that it's the 12th most-watched network per its set-top data by saying that **Nielsen** data shows it's the No 3 most-watched channel in any language on the satellite service (Nielsen, NPM, 2017 calendar year, A18-49, broadcast prime, L+SD). DISH had a graphic purporting to show how Univision's rates have increased since 2013 even as internal data shows viewership declining, while Univision blasted the satellite provider for rejecting a two-week contract extension. DISH claims Univision is seeking a 75% price increase. On social media, Univision had the backing of some Latino groups such as the **National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts**, **Georgia Latino Film Fest**, **LULAC** and the **National Hispanic Council on Aging**. The latter tweeted Monday, "@DISH should be treating @Univision on par with English language networks. Can't market to Latinos and then act like Spanish-language is worth less." **Bad Faith Complaint:** It's not as high profile as Univision-DISH, but it's always worth taking note of retrans-related complaints filed at the **FCC**. On Friday, **Coastal Television Broadcasting** filed a complaint against Anchorage operator **MTA Communications**. MTA customers have been without Fox affil **KTBY** since the beginning of the year. Coastal argues that MTA has failed to negotiate in good faith by refusing to provide a counter-offer for more than three months, putting forth counter offers that have been lower than previous offers and failing to explain why it is unwilling to negotiate further. **HITV** filed an unsuccessful good faith complaint at the FCC against **DirecTV** last year, complaining it put forth only one proposal—to elect mandatory carriage under must carry. HITV's **MyNetwork** affil **KFVE** returned to DirecTV homes last month following an 8.5 month blackout. **Iodine State:** South Carolina's **Horry Telephone** lost **Nexstar**-owned **CBS** station **WBTW** over

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the weekend. **ACA** jumped into the fray, fighting for its member operator, which services the Myrtle Beach area. “Nexstar refused to allow HTC to carry the signals in question after HTC declined Nexstar’s ridiculous 163% monthly rate hike. All cable subscribers shoulder the cost of broadcasters’ greedy retransmission consent demands because TV station owners insist that all subscribers take the package that includes local stations,” ACA pres/CEO *Matt Polka* said. Nexstar said WBTW’s proposals are “entirely reasonable and in line with the agreements it has already secured with other distributors.” **Comcast-belN:** This one isn’t a retrans complaint, with **belN** filing a program carriage complaint at the FCC earlier this year that claims **Comcast** gives better treatment to its own networks (**NBC Sports Network** and **Universo**). The latest has the two sides arguing over a surreply motion filed by Comcast. A surreply is an additional reply filed after the complaint has been fully briefed. Comcast said such a move is necessary because belN introduced new allegations and data in its reply. In asking the FCC to strike Comcast’s motion for a surreply, belN argued that Comcast has “notoriously played the clock” and had protracted disputes, with **Tennis Channel’s** carriage complaint (one of the proceedings it was allowed to surreply in) lingering for five years. While there are a lot of procedural weeds to wade through here, the key thing to take note of is that belN’s agreement with Comcast expires July 31.

**Cable’s Mobile Business:** As expected, **Charter** rolled out its Spectrum Mobile service across its footprint Saturday, offering unlimited talk and text for \$45/line and a \$14 by the gig price. As with **Comcast’s** Xfinity Mobile, Spectrum Mobile unlimited users who exceed 20 GB per line may experience reduced speeds for the rest of the billing cycle. It’s worth noting that Charter specifies that video typically streams at 480p. Comcast, who is also offering mobile through an MVNO with Sprint, was making headlines Monday for an announcement that video quality will soon be restricted to 480p to help users conserve data. Xfinity Mobile subs who opt to keep video at 720p will eventually pay a fee to do so. Comcast also said that any device connected to a personal hotspot via the Unlimited plan will not have speeds exceed 600 kbps. According to its website, Charter reduces hotspot speeds to a maximum of 600 kbps after the 5 GB of mobile hotspot data use in a billing cycle.

**Headed for a (Price) Hike:** **DirecTV Now** customers should prepare for a price increase. The service will up its pricing by \$5/month across all base packages except “Todo y Más.” “In the 18 months since our launch, we have continued to evolve our DirecTV Now products to serve this new customer set and compare favorably with our competitors,” an **AT&T** company spokesperson said. “To continue delivering the best possible streaming experience for both new and existing customers, we’re bringing the cost of this service in line with the market—which starts at a \$40 price point. This change is effective July 26 for new customers and varies for existing customers based on their billing date.” And the market has been increasing. **Sling TV** changed its pricing structure last week, upping its

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## Who are the Industry’s Most Powerful Women?

Nomination Deadline is **Friday, July 27.**

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Sling Orange subscription to \$25/month while keeping the combo package of its Orange and Blue packages at \$40/month. **YouTube TV** also sits at \$40/month for new members.

**Upcoming FCC Deadlines:** Comments are due to the **FCC** on July 30 regarding its FNPRM on leased access. The agency is seeking input on whether it should extend the timeframe for providing responses to leased access requests, and permit cable operators to require leased access programmers to pay a nominal application fee and/or a deposit. Under leased access rules, cable ops must set aside channel capacity for commercial use by unaffiliated video programmers. Reply comments are due Aug 13. -- The FCC's Media Bureau reminded MVPDs Monday that the deadline to file EEO program annual reports (Form 396-C) is Oct 1 (since Sept 30 falls on a Sunday). The Bureau also released a list of MVPDs who must complete the Supplementary Investigation Sheet of the form for this year.

**Shark Attack:** The 30th anniversary of Shark Week is a major affair at **Discovery Channel**, with the celebration extending to its digital platforms. Discovery Digital developed six digital original series as part of the event to air across Discovery Go and social media platforms. "The Daily Bite: Countdown to Shark Week" premiered on Discovery Go on July 1 and is the first daily series to come to the platform, revisiting the top shark moments in history. Shark Week will come to **Snapchat** for the second year in a row after drawing 12mIn unique viewers last year. Other digital original Discovery Go programs include "Fin Frenzy: 30 Years of Shark and Awe," "Shark Week's Most Intense Encounters," "30 Sharks of Shark Week" and "The Faces of Shark Week: Their Best Moments."

**Not Without a Fight:** **MoviePass's** parent company **Helios + Matheson** isn't ready to give up on the service just yet, planning to raise \$1.2bln to keep it running. It stated in an **SEC** filing Monday that it intends to use the sale of the securities for the "general corporate purposes of Helios and its subsidiaries and/or to support MoviePass and MoviePass Ventures operations." Helios + Matheson currently owns 91.8% of MoviePass, the subscription service which allows customers to head to the movies once per day for \$10/month. It also has to prepare to face more competition, with **AMC** launching a \$20/month service in June that allows subscribers to head to three movies per week while receiving discounts on concessions.

**First in the Biz:** **fuboTV** launched 4K HDR10 support in beta, saying it's the first vMVPD to offer content in UHD and HDR. Main broadcasts of Russia 2019 World Cup matches on **Fox** and **FS1** are now available in 4K HDR10 with fuboTV on **Chromecast** and **Fire TV** devices. The capabilities are coming to **Roku** and **Apple TV** in the coming weeks.

**Pirates Strike Again:** The biggest events in the world are far from immune to internet piracy. **Irdeto** detected 5,088 unique illegal streams redistributing 2018 World Cup matches through the group stage. Brazil was the most pirated team with more than 580 illegal streams through its three matches, followed by Morocco (561 matches) and Portugal (535 streams). Although all of England's matches were shown on free-to-air channels, it was the fifth most pirated team with 523 streams.

**Live from South America:** **Telemundo Deportes** acquired the exclusive Spanish-language US media rights to the 2019 Copa America. The 46th edition of the event will be held in Brazil.

**BDAC Appointments:** **FCC** chmn *Ajit Pai* appointed **Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee** member *David Young* as vice chair. Young represents the **National League of Cities** on BDAC and is the Fiber Infrastructure and Right of Way Manager for the City of Lincoln, NE. He replaces *Kelleigh Cole*, who left her position as the director of the **Utah Broadband Outreach Center** and resigned from the BDAC last week to pursue opportunities in the private sector. Additionally, Pai appointed *Danna Mackenzie*, a member of the BDAC's Removing State and Local Regulatory Barriers working group, to serve on the BDAC as a representative of the **Minnesota Office of Broadband Development**.

**Upgraded Specs:** **CableLabs** released its first Point-to-Point Coherent Optics specifications. They boost the capacity of the fiber access network by 10 times and will support 1000 gigabits of data per wavelength. The new specs are for MSOs to leverage their existing fiber structure and adjust to growing capacity demands while bringing on new services.

**People:** **RLJ Entertainment** tapped *Catherine Mackin* as managing director of **Acorn Media Enterprises**, the UK-based development division for **Acorn TV**. Based in London, Mackin will replace *Shane Murphy*, who is heading to Dublin to serve as group head of drama & comedy at **RTÉ**.

**Trade Winds:** *Jeff Baumgartner* has left *Multi* for *Light Reading*, where he'll serve as senior editor. Baumgartner, a former **Cablefax** editor, was site editor for *Light Reading* from 2007-13.

**Editor's Note:** Your next issue of **Cablefax Daily** will arrive Thursday as we take a little break to enjoy the July 4th holiday. We'll keep you posted of any breaking news at **Cablefax.com**. Happy Independence Day!