

Cablefax Daily™

Thursday — August 16, 2018

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 29 / No. 157

Three's Company: Knorr Working to Unify RCN, Wave, Grande

Patrick Knorr just earned a major promotion, stepping into the role of chief commercial officer and evp of commercial services for **RCN, Grande Communications and Wave Broadband**. **CFX** caught up with Knorr to talk the new job and how he's working to unify commercial services under one roof. **What's your focus in this newly-created role?** The role is really to unify all the commercial sales operations of the different entities (Grande in Texas, RCN in Chicago and the northeast and Wave on the west coast) and bring those together as a national competitive fiber provider. There's a lot of infrastructure already in place and just to try to upgrade our back-end systems and processes to maximize our ability to leverage that, providing competitive alternatives to enterprise customers but also to other carriers. **What's your approach to bringing together these three providers?** The focus becomes a question of scalability. For commercial customers in particular, it's all about execution and being able to execute at scale and deliver reliable services quickly. In terms of integration, it's really about trying to take advantage of all the unique talents and successes that the individual operations have and make sure that the sum is greater and that we don't take any steps backwards from the success of the individual operations. **What are those individual strengths?** Wave was doing more with other carriers and cellular backhaul, and doing big data transport. RCN was doing a lot of business with CDN and some big data for video transport with media partners. At the core... the opportunity is in big data. More and more companies are needing more and more capacity, especially as services move to the cloud and with what can be done with video and data analysis. All of those are putting more demand on having bigger pipes and more redundancy. Data is so crucial to almost any business now that it can come to a halt. Being a part of redundancy strategies for companies and other carriers is the other part of the opportunity as we leverage those assets. **What other trends are you keeping an eye on?** [Our focus] is not necessarily being on the cutting-edge. Our focus is really to bring focus to the foundation. Whether it's 5G cellular wireless, CDN networks, cryptocurrency, cloud computing, all of those—at the foundation, there's fiber infrastructure in the ground. What we want to do is make sure that we're providing a great competitive alternative to enterprise customers and other carriers for



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Cablefax Daily (ISSN 1069-6644) is published daily by Access Intelligence, LLC ● www.cablefax.com ● 301.354.2101 ● Editorial Director: Amy Maclean, 301.354.1760, amaclean@accessintel.com ● Publisher: Michael Grebb, 323.380.6263, mgrebb@accessintel.com ● Associate Editor: Sara Winegardner, 301.354.1701, swinegardner@accessintel.com ● Associate Editor: Mollie Cahillane, 212.621.4951, mcahillane@accessintel.com ● Acct. Exec: Olivia Murray, 301.354.2010, omurray@accessintel.com ● VP Marketing: Amy Jefferies, 301.354.1699, ajefferies@accessintel.com ● Director of Marketing: Kate Schaeffer, kschaeffer@accessintel.com ● Prod. Mgr: Joann Fato, jfato@accessintel.com ● Diane Schwartz, SVP Media Comms Group, dschwartz@accessintel.com ● Group Subs or Subscription Questions, Client Services: 301.354.2101, clientservices@accessintel.com ● Annual subscription price: \$1,699.97/year ● Access Intelligence, LLC, 9211 Corporate Blvd., 4th Floor, Rockville, MD 20850

that foundation. We'll put applications on top of that. But Job 1 is to make sure we're providing that foundation. **With this expanded fiber footprint, how do you keep producing localized, scalable solutions?** It's really about looking at the back office because the volume is there. There's no question about trying to find business. It's making sure we can execute on the business that's out there. Systems is a part of it, but a lot of it is process and culture, really trying to be customer-centric. There's been a lot of consolidation in the telecom industry and I think, in some cases, a casualty of integration can be the focus on the customer. With data transport, whether it's dark fiber, wavelength solutions or metro ethernet—whatever that solution is—we want to make sure that we will provide that reliably and with a focus on what does the customer need to support their applications, whether it's an enterprise customer, a large infrastructure customer or another telecom carrier that we're partnering with.

Rolling Out: Indianapolis will be the next city to receive the **Verizon 5G** treatment. This marks the fourth and final city to be included in the 5G residential broadband deployment, joining Houston, LA and Sacramento. 5G isn't entirely new to Indianapolis, as Verizon trialed it during the Indianapolis 500 in May 2017. Customers in those cities won't only be receiving 5G broadband service. Verizon also announced that **YouTube TV** and **Apple TV 4K** will be included with the initial offering.

A New Addition: **AT&T** completed its deal to acquire **AppNexus**, building out its advertising and analytics portfolio. AT&T will turn to AppNexus for machine learning, engineering and advanced analytics to expand AT&T's ad-supported offerings with **Turner Networks**, **Otter Media**, **DirectTV** and more. AppNexus co-founder and CEO *Brian O'Kelley* will now report directly to AT&T CEO *Brian Lesser*. He'll continue to lead the business while spearheading the integration.

Charter Reorg: **Charter Communications** will close customer service centers in Detroit and Indianapolis, impacting more than 140 workers. The changes go into effect Aug 28. Charter has been consolidating several small call center facilities to grow staff in larger centers as part of a plan to hire 20,000 employees, bring call center jobs in L-TWC markets back to the US, insource the workforce and grow to meet customer demand. "An important part of Spectrum's strategy for providing better customer service is larger call centers, where we can deliver information, training and technology to our representatives much more efficiently," said Charter in a statement. "At the same time, we know this is a difficult time for our employees in these locations affected by this decision. We are working directly with them to provide comprehensive severance benefits, including salary continuation, health insurance and outplacement services."

Cablefax:

What's Happening in October

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	Sara Winegardner	• swinegardner@accessintel.com
ADVERTISING:	Olivia Murray	• omurray@accessintel.com
AWARDS:	Mary-Lou French	• mfrench@accessintel.com

>> Most Influential Minorities Magazine

Cablefax's annual Most Influential Minorities magazine, celebrates the men and women who are shaping the industry and opening doors for minorities across all areas of business.

>> Hispanic Heritage Month

This growing demo has a huge impact on every aspect of the industry. This series we'll explore upcoming trends in the Hispanic marketplace, examine the latest research and look at what networks and distributors are doing to cater to this powerful segment.

>> CTHRA

Cablefax looks at the HR side of the business. What do the hiring trends and needs say about where cable is headed? Coverage will include HR organization CTHRA's annual Symposium and awards.

>> Diversity Week

Cablefax will be on the ground in New York for all the Diversity Week happenings, including WICT's Leadership Conference, NAMIC's annual conference and The Walter Kaitz Annual Fundraising Dinner.

>> SCTE Cable-Tec Expo

Daily coverage from the Expo show floor along with a preshow special report. We'll look at the technology and standards development that you need to know about right now. Our preshow will also highlight SCTE, WICT and Cablefax's Woman in Technology award winner.

Events

Cablefax & NAMIC Diversity Breakfast
October 16
NYC

Public Knowledge: American Antitrust Institute, Consumers Union and Public Knowledge are the latest to join a chorus of voices supporting an appeal of the approval of the **AT&T-Time Warner** merger. The groups filed an amicus brief to appeal U.S. District Court Judge Leon's decision. "The fact is, Judge Leon got it wrong" *John Bergmayer*, senior counsel at Public Knowledge, said in a statement. "The inappropriate evidentiary criteria he applied in this case seems almost designed to ensure that the government could not prevail."

Got Your Back: **NCTA - The Internet & Television Association** has a friend in **ACA** when it comes to revisiting and potentially dropping the **FCC's** rules on leased commercial access. ACA filed reply comments to the FCC's FNPRM on the issue and asked for three things: that the FCC adopt and publish a "safe harbor" per channel rate that cable operators may elect to use, that the list of information cable operators must provide in response to such requests (which can include technical costs and sample contracts) be revised and that it allows cable operators to charge a "reasonable, nondiscriminatory closing fee when a leased access agreement has been finalized." "ACA agrees with NCTA that the Commission should consider eliminating or limiting part-time leases, and permitting cable operators to establish minimum per day purchase requirements," the reply comments read. The current rules force operators to give third parties access to certain channels on a part-time basis.

Choose Kindness: Five additional **MLB** Clubs have joined **ESPN's** Shred Hate initiative, supported by **MLB** and **X Games**. The **Angels, Dodgers, Phillies, Pirates** and **Rangers** joined the original list including the **Cubs, White Sox, Twins** and **Nationals**. The Shred Hate initiative, which works to end bullying in schools by encouraging youth to choose kindness, originally launched in Jan 2017 at X Games Aspen and now has nearly 30,000 students. The "No Bully" methodology utilized by the initiative reportedly has helped diminish more than 90% of bullying instances.

Fast Cars Fast Ads: The **Video Advertising Bureau** released a report finding that 76% of the top 25 automotive manufacturers showed a direct correlation between TV ad spend and website traffic, with brands that increased their TV spend by 15% seeing a 48% increase in unique website viewers, whereas brands that decreased by 15% saw a 28% decline. -- **Pluto TV, Adam Carolla** and **Chassy Media** are teaming up to launch Chassy, a channel on the service dedicated to everything automobile and motor-centric. The channel will launch exclusively on Pluto on Tuesday, August 21.

Social Hour: **Food Network, HGTV** and **Travel** are finding success in their use of cross-platform programming strategies. Food's **Facebook** series "Viv's Tips," launched in conjunction with the network's premiere of "Let's Eat," drove more than 400K views on August 11. Let's Eat's August 12 was simulcast on the social platform. This season of **HGTV's** "Flip or Flop" has 8mln video views across Facebook and **Instagram**. Social content tied to **Travel's** "Ghost Adventures" has driven more than 2mln views across Facebook and Instagram.

Distribution: **ESPN+** reached an exclusive, multi-year rights agreement in the US for the Emirates FA Cup, the longest-running domestic cup competition in soccer. The agreement includes 79 matches, kicks off November 10 and runs through the final at London's Wembley Stadium on May 18, 2019.

Ratings: **Nat Geo WILD** and **Nat Geo's** "Yellowstone Live" scored a total of 13mln viewers across the four-night live special event on multiple platforms. Aug 5, the first night, had total viewers P2+ at 1.9mln.

Programming: **ESPN** is partnering with **Millennial Esports** to have esports racing content featured on the network during the second half of the Formula 1 season. "World's Fastest Gamer powered by Millennial Esports" will connect the world of Formula 1 with the gaming community, telling the story of how **McLaren** brought in esports competitors to compete to become the team's next simulation driver. The series will air on ESPN2 and stream on the ESPN app at 7am on August 25. -- **NBC Sports** will air 109 **NHL** regular-season games this coming season, the net's most since acquiring NHL rights prior to the 2005-06 season. Highlights include new "Wednesday Night Hockey" programming, which will showcase a diverse and exclusive schedule as well as highlighting NHL's rising stars. NBCSN will also present the 2019 All-Star game live in primetime for its first time since 1997. -- **Netflix** announced Colombian series "Wild District" will premiere on Oct 19. The 10-episode series stars "Narcos" *Juan Pablo Raba*. -- Brides gone wild! **WE tv** renewed rebooted docu-series "Bridezillas" for a 10-episode season after the show earned double-digit ratings growth over the past season. The original Bridezillas ended in 2013 after 10 seasons. -- **USA** ordered 14 more episodes of "Miz & Mrs" for its first season. The show follows married **WWE** superstars *Mike Mizanin* and *Maryse Mizanin*.

Think about that for a minute...

In The Dark

Commentary by Steve Effros

It seemed like just another normal night. We'd had friends over for dinner, they'd gone home, the dishes were washed and we sat down, somewhat exhausted but not quite ready to go to bed and turned on the television to see what might amuse or inform us for a little while. Then everything went dark. A power outage.

To be clear, unlike most of the rest of the summer, there were no flood watches Tuesday night. No torrential rainfall that has been an almost "new normal" unnerving experience. Nope, a nice, albeit warm and humid night. In other words, there was no warning whatsoever that we might suddenly be sitting in the quiet dark.

That was one of the first things we noticed; it was so quiet. It was kind of nice. We just sat there, the expectation being, based on experience, that the lights would pop back on in a very short while. Didn't happen. At some point it became incumbent on me to start checking how many other houses were dark. Lots of them. Not all, mind you, there was another part of our little town of 290 souls that clearly had light. But not us.

Time to notify our power co-op. One that I have been very impressed with over the years. They do a good job. The same was true on Tuesday. My emergency generator kicked in so I knew the refrigerator and the water pump (didn't need the sump pump, thankfully) would work and I had some limited electricity for lights and, as it happens, my modem. I took a little guilty pleasure in the fact that the modem lights started blinking merrily without problem. The power may be out, but the cable system wasn't! A small



personal victory.

It reminded me of when I worked at the FCC in 1972 and "cable" was just getting to be on everyone's mind. There was a fierce ice storm in Vermont. Power and telephone poles were down all over the place. I got a call from an irate Vermont subscriber complaining that his cable didn't work! I asked if he had electricity, he said no, but he did have a generator and he turned on his TV and the cable was out! He was outraged.

Now as I said, it was sort of nice to sit in the quiet dark the other night, but a little unnerving to realize how dependent we have become on things like the electric power grid, our telephones (our cell phones continued to work) and our communications links. Few folks really focus on that stuff until it suddenly disappears, and then the only question is how long it will be before "they" get it fixed! In our case the co-op told us both by phone and by email that they expected to have the power back up in about three and a half hours. It only took them three.

Cable, like the power company, has built and is maintaining an extraordinarily complex and, yes, always vulnerable infrastructure. Don't know why the lights went off, will probably hear the story of a big tree down or a car hitting a pole soon. But it doesn't matter. Sitting in the dark the point was made; everyone relies on what we do, and in most cases we do it damn well with very high reliability. It's time, as I have often said, to explain all that to our customers and to thank our employees. Don't keep everyone in the dark.

Steve

T:202-630-2099
steve@effros.com

(Steve Effros was President of CATA for 23 years and is now an advisor and consultant to the cable industry. His views do not necessarily reflect the views of Cablefax.)

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