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What the Industry Reads First

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Green Light: Synamedia Finally Open For Business

It wasn't the typical Monday morning for **Synamedia** this week as the company finally opened for business after the completion of **Permira** funds' acquisition of **Cisco's** service provider video software solutions group. The lead-up to the official opening was far from quiet with the company releasing its strategy and investment focus last month. "Synamedia has more than 200 customers ranging from **AT&T** to **Disney** to **Comcast** and many in between, and our commitment to them is simple: to help them find unique ways to leverage IP and cloud video to generate revenue, and to help them protect their revenue with innovative security solutions," *Dave Longaker*, Synamedia's svp & gm for the Americas, told **CFX**. The announcement of his appointment coincided with the company's opening. His role will be vital to the business moving forward as he leads growth and expands customer relationships, something he's far from unfamiliar with thanks to his two years at **Rovi/TiVo** as CRO. That growth and creation of new partnerships was an integral part of Synamedia's initial strategy, and Longaker will lean heavily on the company's Cloud DVR and the Infinite Video Platform to build out its customer base. Cloud DVR currently supports 10mln subs each week, but Synamedia is focusing on expanding the solution with support for hybrid and multi-cloud environments. The eventual goal will be developing a fully-managed service. Aside from those efforts, Synamedia is making major investments in the research and development of new approaches to combat illegal streaming and protect revenue streams of operators. "Illegal streaming—whether intentional by the viewer or unintentional—is an area we are fully committed to addressing," Longaker said, calling the potential loss of revenue astounding even as viewers are consuming more video content than ever before. By 2021, pay-TV operators are expected to have lost \$10bln thanks to the sharing of credentials, according to Longaker. "Synamedia is committed to helping our customers begin by keeping honest people honest and converting them to packages that align with their needs." It won't be releasing simple watermarks. Tapping into its current relationships with cybersecurity firms, Synamedia is investigating methods to help customers with piracy prevention as well as speedy detection and response.

5.9 GHz Test: **NCTA** feels good about just-released **FCC** 5.9 GHz tests, which look at whether auto safety features and WiFi can share the band. "With this testing complete, and a congressional mandate to free up new spectrum for unlicensed uses, now is the time to move forward. Given fundamental changes in both the wireless broadband and

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automotive safety landscapes, the FCC should take a fresh look at how 5.9 GHz spectrum can be an important element in delivering gigabit WiFi and fulfilling our nation's agenda of delivering ubiquitous broadband to all Americans," NCTA said. The FCC's Office of Engineering and Technology found prototype devices reliably detected Dedicated Short Range Communications signals. **Cisco, Qualcomm, KEA Tech, Broadcom** and **CAV technologies** submitted a total of nine devices in response to the U-NII-4 Public Notice for Phase I testing. The FCC is seeking comment on the tests and how developments in the market should impact plans. Commissioner *Jessica Rosenworcel* criticized the agency for moving too slow. "These results are long overdue. But we need to do more than just make our work public. We need to start a rulemaking to take a fresh look at this band and its real possibilities," she said. Commish *Michael O'Rielly* also called for a rulemaking, saying the test results weren't that surprising given the "simple questions" posed. "The Commission should move past this and initiate a rulemaking to reallocate at least 45 megahertz of the band, which is completely unused today for automobile safety," he said.

Yeas and Nays: Comments came flying into the **FCC** Monday as the filing deadline on the **C-Band Alliance's** proposal to repurpose C-band downlink spectrum to support 5G deployment. The proposal gained huge momentum last week as it upped the amount of spectrum involved from 100 to 200 MHz, but that doesn't mean it still doesn't face opposition. **C-SPAN** showed concern over the plan, noting that some of the proposed changes to how the C-band currently operates could, if taken too far, negatively affect its mission to bring public affairs programming to cities, rural areas and as many places in between. While it has considered fiber technology and long-term use of the Ku-Band spectrum, C-SPAN said in its filing that neither was an adequate substitute for the C-band spectrum should it be required to modify its earth station licenses for changes in the operating parameters. "The C-Band spectrum is now, and has been a reliable workhorse serving many communications business interests that in turn benefit millions of American consumers," C-SPAN said. "As it considers changes to the 3.7-4.2GHz environment the Commission should take care to protect the core interests of all of us C-Band incumbents so that we can continue to provide quality services." While **NAB** did not support any proposal for C-band reallocation, it urged the FCC to take three steps: ensure that C-band users are protected in any reallocation by requiring a transparent and fully-funded plan; balance public interest considerations when making reallocation decisions and not "succumb to artificial pressures to allocate higher amounts of spectrum arbitrarily;" and to not allow shared use of the portion of the band that is not reallocated for mobile use.

Bucking the Trend: The **Dow** slid nearly 250 points Monday, while the **Nasdaq** closed down 116 points and the **S&P 500** fell 17.43. Cable stocks, however, did pretty well following good earnings news last week. **Charter** and

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Comcast both closed up about 2%, while Cable ONE was up 2.65%. **Altice USA**, which hasn't reported 3Q numbers yet, was down 3.9%. On the satellite side, **DISH** was down 0.8%, while **AT&T** climbed 1.9% after last week's disappointing sub metrics. The market losses may be due to a *Bloomberg* report that President *Trump* is preparing to place tariffs on all remaining Chinese imports if talks between the two countries fail next month. **Arris** was at the **FCC** recently warning about the harmful effects of recently-enacted tariffs on Chinese imports. "The tariffs, which have already gone into effect, impose additional 10% duties on \$200bln of goods, including core broadband infrastructure and networking equipment and other critical inputs for wireless and wireline connectivity, as well as consumer broadband equipment. These tariffs will automatically increase to 25 percent on January 1, 2019," Arris said in an FCC filing. Arris shares closed down 0.87% Monday.

Hurricane Michael: The **FCC** deactivated its Disaster Information Reporting System for Hurricane Michael on Friday at the request of **FEMA** and **Homeland Security**. However, the agency said it will continue to monitor the status of communications services. Its final daily status report from Friday morning found 43,182 cable system and wireline outage subscribers out of service in the affected areas in Florida, down from 44,917 the day before. Panama City Fox affil **WPGX** was still listed as out of service Friday morning, but has since returned to the air. **WOW!** showed the World Series from a feed outside the market on Thursday.

Scripps Expands: **Scripps** announced its acquiring 15 TV stations across 10 markets from **Cordillera Communications** for a purchase price of \$521 mln. All but one of the new stations ranks as No. 1 in their markets, and adds three duopolies: Helena and Great Falls, MT, and Corpus Christi, TX. This will grow its local TV footprint to 51 stations in 36 markets, reaching nearly 21% of US households.

Head in the Clouds: **IBM** just completed one of the year's largest tech acquisitions with its purchase of **Red Hat**. The company will acquire all issued and outstanding common shares for \$190 a share in cash, a total enterprise value of approximately \$34bln. IBM and Red Hat will provide an open approach to cloud, completely changing the landscape. According to IBM chairman, pres and CEO *Ginni Rometty*, most companies today only are about 20% "along their cloud journey." The acquisition will bring together two of the top hybrid cloud providers and enable companies to securely move all business applications to the cloud. The two companies will help clients create cloud-native business applications faster, drive greater portability and security of data and applications across multiple public and private clouds with consistent management.

The Bright Side: While there's plenty to celebrate as far as change for women in the entertainment industry, there's still plenty of room to grow. Some 35% of women have seen gender discrimination in their workplace, while 76% believe that women feel uncomfortable reporting harassment, according to a survey from **CNBC** and **LinkedIn**. Half of respondents called out an unsupportive or biased corporate culture as a major challenge hindering women. As far as solutions moving ahead, 68% of females said that studios and productions need to give female directors and writers more opportunities. While it may take time, both male and female respondents said the industry is moving in the right direction, with 71% of all respondents saying more equal representation will be seen in the next ten years.

Smithsonian Vets: **Smithsonian Channel** is launching its first Veterans Month tour this November. The net is hosting screening events of two upcoming veteran titles, "Gun Trucks of Vietnam" and "The Lost Tapes: Tet Offensive." Screening events are held in partnership with **CBS Veterans Network** and affiliates **Charter**, **Altice** and **Comcast**. The first screening kicks off Thursday at the Frontiers of Flight Museum in Dallas with Charter. On Nov 12, Gun Trucks of Vietnam will be screened at the National Museum of American History in DC with Comcast, and on Nov 14 The Lost Tapes will screen at Altice USA's Bethpage office.

Ratings: **fuboTV** scored its most viewed day ever on Sunday with nearly 170K unique viewers, a 21% increase over its previous all-time high. Customers tuned into the World Series, NFL Sunday, English Premier League soccer, a new ep of "The Walking Dead" and others.

Programming: **HGTV** and **TLC** are taking advantage of **Discovery's Scripps** acquisition to bring back "While You Were Out." The nets will co-produce the series, debuting in 2019. It marks the first series co-production across the expanded Lifestyle portfolio since the purchase earlier this year. It will simulcast on both nets, and production begins this month.

People: *Adam Bonnett*, evp original programming at **Disney Channels Worldwide**, is exiting the company after 21 years, the Hollywood trades report. He is expected to leave next month with a replacement named in the next few weeks. Bonnett plans to segue into producing.

CFX TECH

Connecting Smart Cities with Smart Schools

With cable's gigabit speeds offerings and 5G rollouts, smart city is increasingly becoming a buzzword. But it's important not to get too caught up on the word city.

"At the beginning, we thought smart cities were very much focused on the large, mega cities. Your New York City's, your London, your Paris, San Francisco. It was supposed to be the density, the scale, that then would eventually trickle down to the rest of the communities. That actually resulted in a big backlash," explained *Debra Lam*, who serves in the newly created role of managing director of Smart Cities and Inclusive innovation for **Georgia Tech**. "It caused a lot of inequality."

Not what anyone needs as America is still working toward bridging the digital divide. Lam, who presented at a Connected Communities seminar during **SCTE-ISBE's Cable-Tec Expo** last week, said the definition has really evolved. And it's about more than just bringing in smaller communities, with some of the early thinking too often focused on garnering as many gadgets as possible. "There was a perception that once I obtained these gadgets, I would become smart and it resulted in a tech arms race," Lam said. "It wasn't sufficient. We really need to think about what are we going to do, what is the problem you're trying to solve, and ultimately where is it going in terms of innovation."

Lam describes a smart city as the integration and application of technology and data to improve the quality of life. With such a definition, all communities can be smart. That even includes the Georgia Tech campus. But the university has expanded beyond that, working with the city of Atlanta. As other communities look to partner with academia, Tech offers an interesting solution. Rather than one-off projects that ebb and flow as students graduate or a grant runs out, it has forged a formal relationship where the city will bring up its challenges and the school will look to help.

But wait... Atlanta is a big, mega city! Don't worry. Tech has started building a statewide program, selecting four communities an inaugural "Georgia Smart Communities Challenge." The Tech-led initiative bring industry and public agencies together to solve pain points—and they represent diverse locales.

In the southern part of Georgia, Albany is working on an automated housing registry that will encourage a safe and sustainable housing inventory for the city. In metro Atlanta, Chamblee is studying improvements in mobility through the use of autonomous vehicles that travel from public transportation stations into the community and Gwinnett County is looking at traffic management. Down by the coast, Chatham County is developing and testing a pilot sensor network for measuring seal level flood risk during natural disasters and storms.

The key takeaway is that no matter the size, there's opportunity. "We have several fully wired cities that are doing experimental pilot programs, not just in autonomous vehicles, but in city services—monitoring, sensing," added **Florida Internet & Television** pres/CEO *Brad Swanson*. "There are a lot of pilots going on in Florida. We're the third largest state. We're spending money; we're investing money at the city, county and state level."

The Tech relationship was presented as a good role model for other communities, as partnering with academia can provide towns with some of the most innovative research. It's critical that the research not go before the need though.

"What I'm very conscious of is that I'm not pushing or advocating my specific discipline or research," said Lam, who previously served as Pittsburgh's first ever Chief of Innovation & Performance. "When I go to a community, I'm trying to figure out what is the most suitable research... and then I pull that faculty or researcher to help. That is a powerful way to talk to a community."

– Amy Maclean

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