

Cablefax Daily™

Monday — February 25, 2019

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 30 / No. 036

WEC Preview: WiFi, Broadband Will Dominate Atlanta Show

If you'll be in Atlanta this week for **NCTC's Winter Educational Conference**, there's really one word you need to remember: broadband. It'll be a hot topic amongst the NCTC and **ACA** operators gathered for two days of working towards this year's "Optimize Your Playbook" theme. For NCTC, that means continuing to educate its members on how they can be more than just competitive in the marketplace, but actually lead the way. "There's an extremely competitive environment that almost all of our members face today with some of the largest of the cable companies that are out there," NCTC broadband solutions vp *Jared Baumann* told **Cablefax**. "We're really trying to take a lead in giving them great information and resources to be able to come up with strategies to compete against those very large competitors of theirs." But it would be a mistake to think this is all about growing profit margins or getting ahead of the biggest behemoths. There's always a focus on how members can take what they learn from WEC and use it to provide better services. Specifically, NCTC has been investigating ways to help its members differentiate video offerings as well as improve the ability to provide top-notch WiFi connectivity. "WiFi has become an increasingly important part of our business as well as better broadband options... even looking at things like fixed wireless solutions and how those things are going to affect them," Baumann said. A breakout dedicated to Home WiFi is set for Tuesday's with experts from **Accenture** and **Kyrio**. It will be followed by another session on broadband pricing and packaging plays that work. **OpenVault** CEO *Mark Trudeau* will be on hand at the second panel to talk about the increase of broadband network usage with the rise of OTT. "What we try to help our operators do is understand where that growth is happening, where user behavior is changing but also, very importantly, how you can monetize that growth," Trudeau said. As much as WEC sets out to further the learnings of its attendees, that's not to say NCTC and ACA aren't also getting an education themselves. "WEC provides great insight on the rapidly changing technology in our industry and allows us at ACA to show where technology and policy issues intersect," ACA pres/CEO pres *Matt Polka* said. And while both groups are talking to their members continuously, nothing replaces a time dedicated to sitting down and chatting face-to-face. "This is one of the very best opportunities throughout the year for us to see a large number of members..." Baumann said. "It's just a natural place for us to be able to hear about their pains, their issues and the things that they would like us to solve."

INVITATION FOR PROPOSALS – CABLE TELEVISION FRANCHISE TOWN OF BROOKHAVEN, SUFFOLK COUNTY, NEW YORK

The Town of Brookhaven in Suffolk County, New York, is soliciting proposals for cable television franchises to serve the more than 486,000 residents of the Town. With a land area of 259 square miles, Brookhaven is the largest and most populous Town in Suffolk County.

The Town is presently served by a single cable television provider and believes that there is ample market share available for one or more additional providers.

To indicate interest or to obtain additional information, providers should contact the office of the Town Attorney, Annette Eaderesto, at Brookhaven Town Hall, One Independence Hill, Farmingville, New York 11738, or by calling (631) 451-6500.



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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 ● Senior 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

Sports of Tomorrow: Streaming, DTC, OTT or Linear?

In a rapidly changing industry, live, linear sports has long-remained a constant. Distributors and networks could usually rely on folks to tune in to catch whichever 'Big Game' is important to them. However, no one is immune to disruptors in the industry, sports included. "I wish I knew where the future was headed. I think what has become obvious is there was a point in time at which the notion was maybe the sports bubble is bursting, but what we've seen is it's quite the opposite. Live sports is more valuable than ever," *Val Immele*, svp of business, **Turner Sports**, told **Cablefax**. "Television remains a critically important platform as that's where the massive audiences are. I really think that the right balance between linear platforms and streaming platforms will be where we land. I think we probably end up in a space where there's potentially even equal consumption," she continued. Streaming, DTC and OTT offerings are becoming increasingly relevant as cord cutting continues to rise (by 2020 more than 45mln people are expected to be without pay TV, according to **eMarketer**). "We're going to see some [sports] OTTs that will live and die in the next two or three years. There's a serious need to prove how OTTs are going to operate, and in our case we decided we're going to partner with our distributors to align our digital and streaming orientations," said *Juan Carlos Rodriguez*, pres of **Univision Deportes**. Rodriguez emphasized the net works with its partners, including vMVPD offerings like **fuboTV**, instead of in competition with them. Deportes found its home with soccer and is projecting to account for 51% of all soccer viewership in the US in 2019. With marquee events, programmers are finding ways to supplement linear viewing. Take last year's FIFA World Cup on **Telemundo**. The programmer launched the Telemundo Deportes VR App to give users the feeling of being in the stadium and live streamed all 64 World Cup matches on Telemundo Deportes En Vivo. **beIN Sports** also bet on soccer, with the net telling us it plans to expand its DTC offerings in the US. "Streaming will continue to play a major role in the proliferation of local and global niche sports fandom, allowing for greater pools of viewership that would include sought after casual fans in addition to baseline hardcore or avid viewers who would do whatever it takes to seek out hard to find yet compelling content," said *Roy Meyerinhg*, vp of business development and affiliate sales. Indeed, the proliferation of streaming is allowing sports outside of major leagues (**NFL, NBA, NHL, MLB**) to begin to thrive. **FloSports**, a DTC subscription company, now has 25 different sports verticals in its network. Founding brothers *Mark* and *Martin Floreani* participated in track and wrestling in college, but realized their favorite sports wouldn't have the chance to grow in the same way as the big four. "They found out quickly the gap in track and wrestling exists in a whole bunch of other sports, which is how we got to where we are now," said *Nick Schenck*, vp, customer acquisition and marketing. "I think more and more sports rights are moving online to OTT, and it's great for us because it validates our approach. The viewing experience is better for fans, and you're going to see more and more sports rights and sports holders moving over. I think linear is still going to exist, but I think in two to three years you're going to be able to watch any sporting event that you want in OTT options," Schenck continued. Turner Sports also has its toes in the OTT game, with the launch of **B/R Live** in March 2018 and continued expansion of its digital properties. "I believe those sorts of platforms are what are continuing to drive up the price of sports rights, as new entrants come in and need to acquire content," explained Immele. "Without streaming and OTT platforms, I don't think we would have seen the tremendous growth that we have without them. It gives fans of smaller, less-known sports a home. We've seen that in our partnership with the **National Lacrosse League**. Their fans didn't have a place to watch their games before. I think that's part of the beautiful thing that will come from streaming platforms, more sports will be accessible to fans everywhere."

Next Up at the FCC: The FCC's March 15 meeting is expected to include votes on rules for establishing the reimbursement of funds to cover broadcaster transition costs related to the 600 MHz band repack as well as an order that would make 21.2GHz of spectrum above 95GHz available for unlicensed use across four frequency bands. There's also a proposal on the table that would allow experimental use on any frequency from 95GHz to 3THz as well as an NPRM that would reconfigure the 900MHz band for broadband use.

Ratings: **Travel Channel's** "Paranormal Caught on Camera" became the top series debut in network history for the target demo, P25-54. Earning a .55 rating and 429k viewers P25-54 for its Feb 13 debut, Paranormal Caught on Camera bested the previous record held by World Poker Tour (4/02/03). -- **Univision's** broadcast of the 31st edition of Premio Lo Nuestro Thursday night averaged 2.8mln viewers with nearly 7mln tuning in to at least part of the three-hour telecast. It

notched 1.3mln 18-49s and 595K 18-34s, ranking as the net's highest-rated primetime performance in the current season (supplanting November's Latin Grammy telecast). -- **Hallmark Channel** has gone to the dogs, and it's paid off. The net's second "American Rescue Dog Show" delivered 1.1mln total viewers across the two-night event (Feb 17-18), and we hear HH ratings beat those for that other dog show.

Programming: Ryan Murphy's development deal with **Netflix** is kicking off with series "Hollywood." Murphy previously had two shows at Netflix, but those series came under his deal at **20th Century Fox**. Hollywood, which Murphy describes as "a love letter to the Golden Age of Tinseltown," is his first original series under his overall deal at the streamer.

People: Alex Dudley has left **Charter**, where he's served as svp, communications since joining the company from **Time Warner Cable** in 2013. A Charter rep said the company thanks Dudley and wishes him the best. Before his time at TWC, Dudley an svp at **Dan Klores Communications** and spent time in communications positions for NY State government under Gov *George Pataki*.

Editor's Note: Mark your calendar for April 29-30 for the 2019 **Cablefax Leaders Retreat** in Key Largo. Because of the roundtable format and high-level, off-the-record atmosphere, seats are extremely limited. Contact *Michael Grebb* at mgrebb@accessintel.com for more information.

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This week's #ChartoftheWeek trends the top TV spenders ranked by parent company from 2015 through 2018. #FAANG (Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Netflix & Google) would now rank as the #2 TV spender in the U.S., having spent over \$2 billion on TV in 2018!

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Fiercely female. #TCA19 #STARZ



Up Ahead

Feb 25-26: NCTC Winter Educational Conference; Atlanta

March 7-8: MFM CFO Summit; Fort Lauderdale

March 8-17: SXSW; Austin, TX

March 19-21: ACA Summit; DC

March 27: T. Howard Foundation Diversity Awards Dinner; NYC

April 3-4: CableLabs European Conference 2019; London

Research

> By 2022, mobile networks will support more than 8bln personal mobile devices and 4bln IoT connections.

> Average global mobile network speeds are set to increase more than three-fold from 8.7 Mbps in 2017 to 28.5 Mbps by 2022.

> 2022 will see smartphones exceeding 50% share of total mobile devices/connections and 90% share of total mobile data traffic.

(Source: **Cisco VNI Global Mobile Data Traffic Forecast, 2017-2022**)

Quotable

"It's headed down a path where it will be a competitive environment and I obviously, being of a capitalist mindset, think that's the right way. That's what will drive the fastest deployment of this... Who gets there first? Who gets there with the best quality? Who gets there with the best service on top of it? So it will be each company developing their own 5G infrastructure. There are standards around it so that equipment manufacturers can develop to the same standards and you have interchangeability and interoperability." — **AT&T CEO Randall Stephenson** *Talking 5G on the "Recode Media with Peter Kafka" podcast*

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- Cablefax Publisher Michael Grebb.



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