

Cablefax Daily™

Friday — March 29, 2019

What the Industry Reads First

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Pump the Broadband: NCTC Working on 2-3 Carrier Deals by 3Q

Need further evidence of how operators are putting broadband first? NCTC brought former C-Spire exec Jared Baumann on board in January as vp, broadband solutions. One of his first big projects is launching a Broadband Solutions Access Program aimed at lowering broadband access costs for the co-op's more than 750 cable and broadband operators (CEO Rich Fickle alluded to the program during his comments at ACA Summit last week). Put simply: NCTC is talking to Tier 1 carriers—companies such as Century Link, Level 3, NTT, Telia, XO, Zayo—to create a master service agreement that members can opt into. NCTC released its Request for Proposals Thursday morning, with Baumann telling Cablefax that NCTC will probably end up doing no more than 2-3 carrier deals. “Instead of trying to do a deal with all those top carriers, which wouldn't necessarily provide the same benefit to the carrier or member operators, we're really looking at finding who is going to be able to partner with us the most effectively to give our members the most value and support,” he said. “Our expectation is to have an announced deal where we can have customers signed up by Q3.” Just months after bringing on the co-op's first broadband solutions focused employee, NCTC is now hiring a director of network operations that will report to Baumann and oversee and support various NCTC broadband programs. “That person will also be looking at some new projects that we expect to be announcing in the coming weeks. This is really the first of several different initiatives we're going to be making around the broadband side,” Baumann said. “Here we're specifically focused on access, but we'll talk a little bit more in the coming weeks about what we're wanting to do on the transport side. We also expect to help some of our members on peering and caching options as well.” NCTC's approach to caching and peering will probably take a different form than this first program aimed at carriers because transport is complicated. That means there probably won't be one big master service agreement. “There are going to be some little twists,” Baumann teased, adding that more details should be released in the coming weeks. For most NCTC members, broadband customers have surpassed video customers so the co-op's involvement in the space will continue to grow where it makes sense.

Crackle Gets Some Chicken Soup: Sony Pictures TV has sold a majority stake in ad-supported streaming service Crackle to Chicken Soup for the Soul Entertainment (CSS Ent), Variety reports. Sony will launch a new jv

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“
The Cablefax Retreat was a great way to hear a wide variety of opinions on industry issues and challenges. I was really impressed with the people who attended as well as the topics of discussion. I definitely had good takeaways from the meeting.

JIM GLEASON
CEO | Vast Broadband

“
The 2018 Cablefax retreat was an intimate and unique experience that brought a variety of constituents together to air their views as well as brainstorm on how best to tackle the various challenges and issues facing the television ecosystem. Meeting and talking to people of all levels in such an open and relaxed environment was absolutely invaluable to me. I look forward to the next retreat!

MARCI RYVICKER
Managing Director | Wolfe Research

“
Great forum to help improve the collaboration in the industry, understanding differences, making it better. It provided me with several great ideas and created new relationships that will be highly valued. The venue and vibe were terrific.

RICH FICKLE
President | NCTC

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with CSS Ent called **Crackle Plus** that would also include CSS' **Popcornflix** and related video businesses. AVOD has been on a hot streak, with **Viacom** plunking down \$340mln for **Pluto TV** earlier this year. But there's a lot of AVOD out there... That seems to be part of the logic behind the deal—consolidation. "It doesn't make a lot of sense for there to be hundreds of AVOD networks," CSS Entertainment chmn/CEO **Bill Rouhana** told the Hollywood pub. Variety said SPT chief digital officer **Eric Berger** is expected to leave the company once the deal closes. CSS recently brought **Fusion Media's George Lansbury**, who helped launch Fusion TV, on board to head content strategy. Former **A+E Networks** exec **David Fannon** is leading distribution at CSS.

Pay-TV Services: Live streaming vMVPD pay-TV services seem to be most popular in younger age groups, with 18-44-year-olds accounting for 71% of adults in the US that have one. Overall, 16% of adults in the age range have a vMVPD service, compared to just 6% ages 45 and above. The research comes from **Leichtman Research Group (LRG)**, which also found that of those that have a vMVPD service, 43% switched from a traditional (cable, satellite or Telco) pay-TV service, and 25% also have a traditional service. Interestingly, 17% switched from a different vMVPD service, and 15% were recently non-subs to any kind of service.

fubo Increases: As channels go up on vMVPD services, so does their price points. Starting Thursday, **fuboTV** is increasing the subscription price of its base package, **fubo**, to \$54.99 a month (a \$10 increase) for all new subs. Subs who sign up at the new price will receive a \$10 discount off their first month, and the recently launched Family bundle remains at \$59.99. "With the addition of popular channels over the past year, including **AMC, Cartoon Network, CNN, TBS, TNT** and, soon to come, **BET, CMT, Comedy Central, MTV, Nickelodeon, Nick Jr., Paramount Network, TV Land, VH1** and more, plus dozens of other national and regional channels, **fuboTV** is re-pricing its base subscription package," the company said in a statement. "We are committed to continuing to deliver the best of live TV to our customers, as well as an exceptional user experience with 4K streams and premium features." Fubo has not raised its prices in over a year, and the service will be launching on more platforms, including smart TVs, starting this spring.

Sling Shot: **Sling TV** launched **MLB Network** and **MLB Network Strike Zone**, just in time for Opening Day. This will bring more than 150 regular season MLB games in addition to original programming, highlights and analysis to the streaming service. Both channels are now included in Sling TV's Sports Extra add-on package, which is \$5 a month to Orange customers and \$10 a month to Blue customers. The service also moved **E!** and **Paramount Network** channels from its Lifestyle Extra and Comedy Extra add-ons to its Blue base service at no additional cost.

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MARK GREENBERG
President & CEO
MSGCI

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605 Expands: **605**, an independent data analytics company measuring the impact of TV advertising and programming, now includes **Inscape** viewing data. The deal expands the company's measurement footprint to more than 20mln households across all 210 DMAs. It adds to 605's census-based national dataset, and makes 605 one of the few in the industry to capture and measure both set-top box data together with other sources of TV viewership data, such as OTA and basic OTT viewing data from Inscape's 10.5mln smart TVs.

T. Howard: The annual **T. Howard** Diversity Dinner took place in NYC Wednesday evening, honoring **Starz** with the Corporate Leadership Award and the cast of **ABC's** "Fresh Off the Boat" with the Diversity Advocate Award. Executive Leadership Awards were bestowed on **CBS** evp, CFO **Christina Spade**, **Fox Corp** evp, gen counsel **Rita Tuzon** and **CBS News** pres, senior ep **Susan Zirinsky**. The program started with the introduction of the 2018 intern class, before diving into the awards. "Looking at everybody here tonight, all of the mentees, all the interns, all the alumni, it's a very empowering," Tuzon said onstage while accepting her award. "The media and entertainment industry isn't just for people in front of and behind the camera. There are lots of amazing opportunities and jobs in the industry, whether it's in finance, engineering, and of course, lawyers." The night also featured a silent auction to benefit T. Howard and its mission of promoting diversity in media and entertainment. Two tickets to Super Bowl 54 brought in more than \$4K. Another hot item, going for \$3K, was a private dinner for 10 at the **Food Network** kitchen.

Be Counted: **Telemundo** launched a multi-year civic engagement campaign to increase civic participation from the Latinx community and to ensure an accurate representation in the 2020 Census. "Hazte Contar" (Be Counted) will tap into Telemundo's multiplatform portfolio and community partnerships and will inform the community about the importance of participating in the Census and will be on hand to offer assistance to viewers. Telemundo will partner with over 50 national and local Hispanic organizations to expand its reach, will launch a series of special segments focused on the Census across network shows, as well as rolling out a series of PSAs featuring top on-air talent.

Super Starz: **Starz's** premium streaming service **Starzplay** is launching in Spain on **Orange TV** beginning Thursday. The service will give Orange customers that are subscribers of Orange TV the opportunity to watch Starz series all in one place.

Ratings: **Univision** saw 1.7mln P2+ viewers from Thursday's Mexico-Paraguay soccer match simulcast on **UniMás/Univision Deportes**, making it the No. 1 rated soccer telecast of the year on any network, regardless of language. You may wonder if the programmer's return to **DISH** helped boost ratings, but it's too soon to draw a correlation. After all, the Mexico-Chile match on Friday, before DISH carriage was back, was the previous No 1 match (1.6mln/845K).

Upfront Season: With the **Fox** acquisition now closed, **The Walt Disney Co** announced it will hold its first ever combined upfront event with all its networks: **ABC, ESPN, Freeform, FX Networks** and **Nat Geo Networks**. It's set for May 14th in NYC. -- **Lifetime** unveiled its upfront slate, with a slew of projects in the works. The net greenlit the special "Smart Justice: The Jayme Closs Case" with **Elizabeth Smart**, premiering April 27 at 8pm. For 2020, it ordered doc special "From Darkness to Light," executive produced by gymnast **Aly Raisman** on victims of sexual assault. **Jo Frost** will helm 20 new eps of "Supernanny," and the net ordered "Hopelessly In Love" to join its unscripted roster. **Queen Latifah, Mary J. Blige** and **Missy Elliot** will ep the film "The Clark Sisters: The First Ladies of Gospel" and miniseries "Salt-N-Pepa" will follow two nursing students entering the world of rap and hip hop. -- From other **A+E** nets, **Sylvester Stallone** will direct and ep drama series "The Tenderloin" at **History**. The net also greenlit new nonfiction series "The UnXplained" hosted by **William Shatner** and a second season of "In Search Of." **A+E's** "Biography" set **Garth Brooks** four-part TV special "Garth: The Road I'm On" (wt) for Q4 2019, and K-9 competition series "Top Dog" (wt). -- At **Freeform's** Summit in LA Thursday, the net announced its dive into animation with two female-focused animated projects in development. "Betches," based on the multimedia brand, is a half-hour animated series following three best friends and roommates as they navigate early adulthood in NYC. "Woman World" is a half-hour comedic animated series based on the graphic novel of the same name. "Grown-ish" will return for Season 2 on June 5, and "Good Trouble" returns for its second season on June 18 at 8pm. The net also announced a \$25K donation to **The Trevor Project**, matching "Shadowhunters" fans donations.

Programming: **INSP** greenlit a new original Western adjacent reality/docuseries "Turquoise Fever." The series, premiering this summer, follows the **Otteson** family as they grow their turquoise mining empire outside Vegas. -- **CNBC** will recognize Financial Literacy Month in April with special month-long coverage. -- **TLC** renewed "I Am Jazz" for a sixth season to debut next year.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

'The Act' of Loving Too Much

Leukemia. Fibromyalgia. Muscular dystrophy. Chromosomal defects. Sleep apnea. An allergy to sugar. Those are just a few of the illnesses *Dee Dee Blanchard* believed her daughter *Gypsy Rose* to have had in her young life. Surgery after surgery was performed, another drug prescribed, but eventually another issue would arise. There's only one problem: Gypsy was never sick at all. The pair are at the center of the first season of **Hulu's** seasonal true crime anthology series "The Act" (the first two episodes premiered on March 20). The five-part series traces their history from when they moved into a **Habitat for Humanity** home in Missouri to Dee Dee's murder in 2016, a plot that freed her from her overprotective mother but placed her behind bars. The show goes back and forth from the murder scene in 2016 to ten years earlier, slowly chronicling Dee Dee's psychotic fall as Gypsy Rose becomes more aware of the lies her mother had fed her about her medical history. "She would have been the perfect mom for someone that was actually sick," Gypsy Rose said to **Buzzfeed News** contributor *Michelle Dean* (who also co-created the Hulu series) in an interview for the article that inspired the series. But to Gypsy Rose, Dee Dee was the monster that lied to her about her age and mental capacity, kept her on a feeding tube and stopped her from being able to make friends. Dean teamed up with co-creator *Nick Antosca* for the series. Antosca, a major horror buff, is no stranger to monsters, creating **Syfy's** "Channel Zero" and constantly working with teams of choreographers and artists to craft original monsters. While Dee Dee may never be able to explain her side of the story, Antosca and actress *Patricia Arquette* (playing Dee Dee) brought a woman to life that was as much light as she was dark, who loved her daughter as much as she loved the attention and sympathy that came with her existence. – *Sara Winegardner*

Reviews: "Hostile Planet," series premiere, 9pm, Monday, **Nat Geo**. What is it with Nat Geo and heights? Earlier this month it showed its tremendously exciting, Oscar-winning film "Free Solo," about *Alex Honnold*, who climbs mountains without ropes. Now we have "Hostile Planet," whose opening ep also deals with mountains and is no less exciting than Free Solo. In this tale of survival, the first thrill comes immediately, as two animals battle and then plunge hundreds of feet off a cliff. The camera does a great job following them. In fact, the footage throughout and music are top-notch. They add to the fine storytelling, which, a few minutes later, delves into climate change-induced issues a trio of mountain duck chicks and their mother are experiencing. What happens next features footage that's not to be missed, though it will be difficult viewing for some. -- "VEEP," final season premiere, 10:30pm, Sunday, **HBO**. The hilarious insults keep coming at breakneck pace as Selena (*Julia Louis-Dreyfus*) makes a run for the presidency. If her campaign staff is indicative of what her administration will be like, the nation should begin worrying now. Her entourage bumbles at top speed, leading Selena to take charge. She barks orders with a mouth so foul and politically incorrect it could make a gang of bikers blush. – *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable P2+ Prime Rankings* (03/18/19-03/24/19)		
Mon-Sun	MC US	MC US AA
	AA%	(000)
FNC	0.801	2,445
TBSC	0.700	2,140
MSNBC	0.553	1,689
TNT	0.533	1,628
HGTV	0.420	1,282
USA	0.398	1,215
HIST	0.397	1,213
TRUTV	0.361	1,103
DISC	0.345	1,053
ID	0.341	1,043
NICK	0.317	968
HALL	0.313	956
AMC	0.293	894
FOOD	0.291	889
CNN	0.289	881
TLC	0.277	846
ESPN	0.253	772
A&E	0.249	760
BRAVO	0.238	727
NAN	0.233	710
TVLAND	0.232	710
ADSM	0.225	687
FX	0.220	672
INSP	0.193	590
DSJR	0.166	506
MTV	0.164	502
VH1	0.163	497
TRAVEL	0.161	493
OWN	0.158	483
HBO	0.158	481
DSNY	0.157	479
APL	0.157	478
LIFE	0.155	475
HMM	0.155	474
SYFY	0.147	449
GSN	0.134	411
WETV	0.134	411
FRFM	0.133	406
CRN	0.131	400
NKJR	0.128	390
NATGEO	0.125	382

*P2+ L+SD rankers are based on national Nielsen numbers, not coverage.

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- Cablefax Publisher Michael Grebb.



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