

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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5Q with Katherine Gessner: Taking Over the Family Business

Katherine Gessner has replaced her father Bob Gessner as MCTV president, and she's ready to make the family proud. Katherine sat down with CFX to discuss her unique perspective on the industry after and her decision to take on the family company. How has growing up in the cable industry shaped your views and goals moving forward?

The industry changes so rapidly. Because I've always grown up hearing about it around the dinner table, I understand the history a lot more than somebody else my age coming into it. I know how we were built, where we came from. It's so important to have a good understanding of where we were and how far we've come. It's given me a huge appreciation for our front line employees that get called out on holidays when there's an outage because, as a kid, I saw that with my dad. Our people work really hard to make sure our customers have good service. In terms of how that helps me lead, I don't know if it does because it's all I've ever known. I look at it and say would my dad or grandpa be proud of this decision, if it was something they believed in. It's honoring the past while leading towards the future. **How does being so engaged in your community change cable's sometimes negative image?** It's what we were founded on. We're here to serve the community and make sure that our communities have what they need to thrive in today's society. It keeps you humble that it's your friends and neighbors that you're serving, and it's not somebody across the country. We see and talk to our customers everyday, so it definitely changes your perspective on the decisions you make. Every time we have a conversation, that's what we're focused on: how this impacts the customer, how are we going to make sure it's okay. **And that connection gives you the insight to understand their needs.** You see what the community as a whole goes through, and it impacts you just the same. We live here, we work here, so we get it. In June, we purchased some small systems about 30 miles from us. We're working on building our own fiber network and we're going to pass through another town. Someone asked about what competition was there and the response was, "There's nothing. There's not even DSL." It's amazing how many of those communities and people are out there that we take for granted. **What about Excellerate?** We completed the aerial construction of the network, about 1200 miles, that we got up in 2.5 years. Now we're focused on splicing and converting customers. Our long-term goal is to convert all of our customers to fiber because we know it's the better product in the long run. We're focused on internet-only customers right now

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because they're heavy bandwidth users, so we want to get them off of our DOCSIS plant to free up that bandwidth for other customers. Fiber's the endgame. It's where we need to be, and customers will only continue to demand more and more internet speeds as it takes over. **When did you decide to fully commit to the cable path?** I would be lying if I said I had never thought about what else I would do. Twelve years ago, my dad approached me, and he said if you're serious about working for the company, here's what you need to do, and he laid out a plan. It included getting my MBA and working somewhere else for a couple years to gain outside experience. He wanted to make sure I had the opportunity to experience different work environments and industries, go do my thing to know I was ready to come back. It gives you an appreciation for coming back and how unique it is to work in a family business. [Editor's Note: Katherine will be one of a select group of executives attending the Cablefax Leaders Retreat, an off-the-record gathering held in Key Largo, Florida from April 28-30. For more info, visit: <http://www.cablefax.com/event/clr19>]

Talking Points: The FCC's May open meeting will cover everything from **China Mobile USA** to toll-free numbers, according to the tentative agenda released Thursday. Of course, spectrum will also have a place at the meeting, with the Commission considering an NPRM seeking comment on reallocating the 1675-1680 MHz band for shared use between federal and non-federal users. It will also consider an NPRM to seek comment on proposed regulatory fees of \$339mln for FY19 as well as modifications to the Commission's regulatory fee authority under the **Ray Baum Act**. The five comishes will also be looking at ways to improve video relay services and examine ways to protect the VRS program from waste, fraud and abuse. Other items on the agenda include a Report and Order that would adopt streamlined rules related to interference caused by FM translators and expedite the translator interference complaint resolution process.

Stormy Skies: The Weather Channel briefly went off the air Thursday morning by what the net described as a "malicious software attack" during its morning show "AMHQ," scheduled to start at 6am. Instead, consumers saw a taped episode of "Heavy Rescue: 401," a Canadian reality show. Scheduled programming came back at around 7:45am. "We experienced issues with this morning's live broadcast following a malicious software attack on the network," TWC said on **Twitter**. "We were able to restore programming quickly through backup mechanisms. Federal law enforcement is actively investigating the issue. We apologize for any inconvenience to viewers as we work to resolve the matter."

Making Moves: Streaming giant **Netflix** is taking its talents to the Big Apple. NYC gov *Andrew Cuomo* announced the company will open a corporate office and production facility that will add thousands of jobs and bring up to \$100mln in investment, according to the governor. The office will be located at 888 Broadway in the Flatiron District and take up 100K sq-ft of office space. The company also leased 161K sq-feet in Brooklyn that will eventually hold production crew

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jobs over the next five years. The Empire State Development program offered \$4m in tax credits to Netflix, which must create 127 corporate jobs by 2024 to get the full reimbursement.

Getting in the Game: *Magic Johnson* may no longer be the president of the **Los Angeles Lakers**, but that doesn't mean he's getting out of the business of sports. According to a tweet from rapper *Ice Cube*, Johnson has joined professional basketball league **Big3 Networks** as it gears up to bid for 21 **Fox** RSNs on sale by **Disney**. "Very happy to add Magic Johnson to our bidding group for Disney's RSNs," the tweet from Wednesday read. Big3 was formed by Ice Cube and entrepreneur *Jeffrey Kwatinetz*. It's still unclear exactly how Johnson will be involved in the bid, which has also found backing from **Macquarie Group**. Big3 will reportedly be competing with **Sinclair** and **Liberty Media** for the final sale, which Disney must complete with 90 days of its acquisition of Fox closing.

Fired Up: **Amazon** and **Google** joined forces to launch the official **YouTube** app on Amazon Fire TV devices and Fire TV Edition Smart TVs, and the Prime Video app for Chromecast and Chromecast built-in devices. Standalone YouTube TV and YouTube Kids apps will launch later this year.

Prepared for 5G: FCC commish *Brendan Carr* is working on establishing community college programs to prepare technicians for 5G jobs. Carr announced the initiative after visiting the Tower Installation Program at Aiken Technical College in Graniteville, South Carolina. The program provides the practical and classroom training required for workers to find jobs as tower climbers. "A skilled workforce is essential to winning the race to 5G and building next-gen networks in communities across the country," Carr said. "It's time we build on the success here at Aiken and stand up similar tower training programs in community colleges and technical schools throughout the US." Carr added that he has already been working with the **National Wireless Safety Alliance** to establish similar programs in other communities.

Best Of: *Forbes* released its annual list of America's "Best Employers," and companies from the industry made a strong showing. **T-Mobile**, **Altice USA**, **Verizon** and **AT&T** all appeared on the publication's "Best Large Employers" list, and **Mediacom** and **Cable One** earned spots on the midsize company list.

On the Circuit: **The Cable TV Pioneers** announced the 25 members of the cable industry that will be inducted into its Class of 2019 at the upcoming 53rd Annual Cable TV Pioneer Banquet: *Brian Bane*, **Comcast**; *Dick Beard*, **Ervin Construction**; *Thomas Cloonan*, **Arris**; *Marc Cohen*, **Evolution Digital**; *John DiCandilo*, **Dycom**; *Duane Dick*, **Sand Cherry Associates**; *Marty Dominguez*, **C-SPAN**; *Barry Elson*, retired; *Jim Faust*, retired; *John Fellet*, retired; *Chris Fenger*, **Patriot Media**; *Ralph Galione*, **Hewlett Packard**; *Jean Gay*, **Commscope**; *Sandra Howe*, **Technetix**; *Ricardo La Guardia*, **Arris**; *Gary Lauder*, **Lauder Partners**; *Ed Marchetti*, **Comcast**; *Himanshu Parikh*, **iOPENC, LLC**; *Catherine Rasenberger*, **Rasenberger Media**; *Joyce Reitano-Salaj*, posthumous; *Matt Stanek*, **Charter**; *Tim Vaas*, **Cableserv**; *Bill Warga*, **Liberty Global**; *Tom Williams*, **Shurz Communications**; *Melinda Witmer*, **Look Left Media**. The ceremony takes place in New Orleans, LA on Oct 2 during the **SCTE-ISBE Cable-Tec Expo**.

The Business of Hip Hop: **REVOLT** and **AT&T** have teamed up to launch the REVOLT Hip Hop Summit. The multi-city event will be inspired by the former REVOLT Music Conference, but will encompass more than music. The Summit will be designed as an experiential opportunity for young people to develop and hone the skills business owners need to survive in the world of hip hop and culture. Summits will be held in Atlanta (July 25-27) and Los Angeles (October 24-26).

Just Added: **DISH** added **Hallmark Movies Now** and **The Country Network Plus** to its on-demand subscription packages. HMN is available for \$5.99 monthly, and **TCN+** will cost \$2.99 a month.

Programming: **BET Networks** is bringing back All-American gospel competition "Sunday Best" after a four-year hiatus. Season 9 will premiere in the US on June 30 and internationally on July 7. -- **E!** is premiering docuseries "Relatively Nat & Liv" on June 2 at 10pm. The series follows social influencers and cousins *Natalie Halcro* and *Olivia Pierson*. -- **HBO** is producing a documentary series diving into the NXIVM sex cult scandal. Former "Smallville" actress *Allison Mack* was involved in the cult, and pleaded guilty to charges of sex trafficking and conspiracy to commit forced labor. Directors *Jehane Noujaim* and *Karim Amer* are behind the film. -- **Bravo** is creating a modern-day reboot of the dating series "Blind Date," updated for 2019 with social media and diverse couples. The original show debuted in 1999 and ran for 10 seasons.

People: **Freeform** tapped *Lauren Corrao* to take over as evp, original programming and development for Freeform. The role has been vacant for five months, ever since *Karey Burke* was promoted to **ABC** entertainment pres. Corrao comes over from **Torante TV**, where she served as co-pres. Before that, she worked as pres, original programming and development at **Comedy Central**. -- The **FCC Media Bureau** upped *Holly Saurer* to deputy bureau chief, and Paul Jackson rejoined the FCC as associate bureau chief. Jackson most recently was a staff member at the **House Energy and Commerce Committee**, where he focused on digital commerce and consumer protection.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

La Reina Ready to Reign

After eight years off the air, **Telemundo's** gearing up to bring back "La Reina del Sur" for a second season (April 22, 10pm) and it looks like fans are excited. The show's trailer recorded 8.1mln views in its first week across all platforms. That number is now north of 10mln. "This shows us that Telemundo's audiences are extremely eager for the return of La Reina, and interest in the main character's storyline shows no sign of stopping," Telemundo Networks programming evp **Ronald Day** told **Cablefax**. La Reina reigns as Telemundo's most successful series. The new installment is set eight years after drug trafficker Teresa Mendoza disappeared into the US Federal Witness Protection Program. It's an ambitious production, filmed in eight countries over two years with Netflix as a partner. Telemundo's hoping to expand Reina's appeal, offering closed captions in English on TV and with subtitles across all platforms. So, why the long hiatus? "When season one aired in 2011, returning series were not common on Spanish-language television, but we always knew we wanted to build up and continue this incredible series and storyline," Days said. "As soon as we knew we could work with **Arturo Pérez-Reverte** and **Roberto Stopello** to develop the continuation of this story and have **Kate del Castillo** as the lead actress return, we began planning for season two. Writing and adapting the continuation was a long process, and we wanted to stay truthful to the original storyline, so we did not rush this process." Telemundo isn't the only **NBCU** property to adapt Pérez-Reverte's novel. USA debuted "Queen of the South," an English version, in 2016 with a fourth season to bow this year. Mendoza, played by Kate de Castillo in La Reina and **Alice Braga** in Queen of the South, "share similar traits of strength and independence, yet the journey each woman takes is different," Day said. In Reina's new season, "her life takes an unexpected turn, and she will do the impossible to reclaim her throne as La Reina del Sur." – **Amy Maclean**

Reviews: "Vice Special Report: The Future of Work," Friday, 10pm, **HBO**. In a way, this excellent doc is as scary as a horror film. Nobody gets killed, yet the implications are terrifying. We've heard AI and robots won't take your job. This doc will make you rethink things. Sure, we know robots' first targets are low-wage jobs. And some know about cobotics, where humans and robots collaborate. Yet this doc argues robots are aiming at high-wage, skilled positions, such as lawyers. The thrust is that robots eventually will make judgment calls better than humans. As one engineer in the doc says, "An AI systems never forgets, never gets tired and doesn't need to drink coffee." – **Notable:** A 20-year anniversary is huge in TV, so props to **TBS** for its marathon earlier this week commemorating two decades of "The Family Guy." A clever touch was featuring creator **Seth MacFarlane's** top 20 favorite eps. And kudos to the TBS PR team for including MacFarlane's comments about each ep. Noting the relationship between Stewie and Brian, his dog, MacFarlane wrote, "This episode was our fresh take on that classic trope of a dog and a baby hitting the road together." A musical ep was "when I realized that if you have songs in an episode, you have to write way less." -- **Seth Arenstein**

Basic Cable P2+ Prime Rankings* (04/01/19-04/07/19)		
Mon-Sun	MC US	MC US AA
	AA%	(000)
FNC	0.779	2,380
MSNBC	0.510	1,559
USA	0.390	1,190
HGTV	0.387	1,182
TBSC	0.365	1,114
HBO	0.332	1,014
HIST	0.331	1,011
TNT	0.329	1,005
ESPN	0.320	979
A&E	0.319	973
HALL	0.315	963
ID	0.305	930
DISC	0.294	899
FOOD	0.275	840
TLC	0.275	840
NICK	0.272	832
CNN	0.226	690
BRAVO	0.213	652
NAN	0.201	613
TVLAND	0.199	609
INSP	0.187	572
ADSM	0.185	564
LIFE	0.167	511
AMC	0.162	496
DSNY	0.159	487
DSJR	0.156	475
MTV	0.149	455
FRFM	0.142	434
VH1	0.140	429
TRAVEL	0.140	428
HMM	0.138	422
WETV	0.137	420
APL	0.137	418
SYFY	0.129	395
GSN	0.127	388
FX	0.127	387
NKJR	0.127	387
NBCSN	0.127	386
NATGEO	0.126	386
CRN	0.115	352
WGNA	0.112	341

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

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