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Wednesday — July 10, 2019

What the Industry Reads First

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Not So Fast: ACA Connects Says Study Proves C-Band Plan Would Work

ACA Connects has offered up evidence to the **FCC** that it is possible to free up at least 370MHz of C-band spectrum in all urban markets in 18 months through its joint plan with **Competitive Carriers Association** and **Charter**. That's nearly twice the amount capable of being freed through the proposal offered up by the **C-Band Alliance**. The claims come in the form of a study submitted by ACA Connects to the FCC Monday. It estimates that no more than 130MHz would be needed to support non-MVPD use, freeing up at least 370MHz for 5G use. The **Cartesian** study, which was commissioned by ACA Connects, fights back against CBA's criticisms of the rival plan, including that it would take well beyond 18-36 months to implement and bring into service a fiber-based architecture to replace the current C-band satellite infrastructure. The study argues that only 15% of MVPDs will need to connect via fiber, saying that many are already operating on- or near-net fiber networks. Most other markets will be able to be reached within 3 years, with hard-to-build areas being reached within 5 years, Cartesian concluded. The study also broke down the estimated costs of the ACA Connects/CCA and Charter plan, with the final total coming in at \$6-7bln for 420K fiber route miles over a 10-year period. Those costs are primarily driven by the fiber needed between video transport endpoints and earth stations, with the second-highest cost item (\$1.4-1.9bln) being interconnecting multiple earth stations with fiber. In the background, more folks have stepped out in opposition of a private auction as proposed by the CBA. In comments filed Friday with the FCC, the **Open Technology Institute at New America** said that the Commission lacks the legal authority to give the green light to a private auction. It claims that Section 309(j) of the Communications Act would prohibit the Commission to give the go-ahead to anything other than an FCC-administered public auction. "The authorization of a private auction or sale as proposed by the CBA would represent a complete abdication of the commission's traditional responsibility to ensure that both the reallocation and assignment of spectrum best serves the overall public interest," OTI said in its comments. "Without full transparency and close FCC supervision, a private sale is likely to distort competition in the mobile market." A group of 22 public interest groups including **Public Knowledge** and the **Broadband Connects America Coalition** sent a letter Tuesday to Sens **Roger Wicker** (R-MS), **John Thune** (R-SD), **Maria Cantwell** (D-WA) and **Brian Schatz** (D-HI) arguing



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that a public auction of the C-band would allow Congress a chance to fund the buildout of broadband infrastructure and close the digital divide. “The reorganization of the C-band to clear a portion of the band for emerging 5G mobile services gives Congress a unique opportunity to direct \$10 billion or more in auction revenue to pay for broadband infrastructure in underserved areas and to authorize the use of spectrum in that band for high-capacity fixed wireless service in rural and less densely populated areas on a shared basis,” the letter read. “The combination of dedicating public auction revenue to support rural infrastructure and authorizing shared access to unused mid-band spectrum for use by small and rural operators is the most promising way to close the rural digital divide, promote competition and make 5G more available and affordable for all Americans.”

WarnerMedia Unveils Streamer Name: The wait is finally over: **WarnerMedia** announced its upcoming streaming service will be titled **HBO Max**. Not to be confused with **HBO Go** and **HBO Now**, the upcoming subscription video service will launch in the spring of 2020 with an anticipated 10K hours of premium content. “Anchored with and inspired by the legacy of HBO’s excellence and award-winning storytelling, the new service will be ‘Maximized’ with an extensive collection of exclusive original programming (Max Originals) and the best-of-the-best from WarnerMedia’s enormous portfolio of beloved brands and libraries,” the company said in a press release (emphasis on “maximized” from WarnerMedia). The internet is already rioting, as HBO Max will have the exclusive streaming rights to “Friends,” which **Netflix** paid a reported \$100mln to keep on its service. Netflix announced the news in a tweet, writing “The One Where We Have To Say Good-bye.” The new streamer will also have the exclusive rights to “The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air” and “Pretty Little Liars,” and **The CW** shows “Batwoman” and “Katy Keene” (a spin-off of “Riverdale”). PLL will exit from Netflix on July 27. HBO Max will have exclusive production deals with *Greg Berlanti* and *Reese Witherspoon*, with an initial six movies expected. The service will have content from **Warner Bros**, **New Line**, **DC Entertainment**, **CNN**, **TNT**, **TBS**, **truTV**, **The CW**, **Turner Classic Movies**, **Cartoon Network**, **Adult Swim**, **Crunchyroll**, **Rooster Teeth**, **Looney Tunes** and more.

Arris Introduces Wi-Fi 6 Mesh System for the Home: **Arris** is ready to take networks to the next level with the introduction of its SURFboard mAX Pro and Plus Mesh Wi-Fi 6 System. It is a true tri-band Wi-Fi 6 mesh system and is up to four times faster than the previous Wi-Fi 5 standard. Consumer devices have typically used dual-band systems, using the 2.4GHz and 5GHz bands to connect to Wi-Fi. SURFboard adds a third 5GHz band to connect the routers in each system. Arris will offer a Pro version of the system, which delivers 12 streams for a combined system speed of 11Gbps, and a Plus version featuring 8 streams capable of delivering speeds of up to 7.8Gbps. Each system is available as a system and as a standalone router.

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Cisco Buys Acacia: Cisco is planning to buy **Acacia Communications** in a \$2.6bln deal on a fully diluted basis, the companies announced Tuesday. The acquisition will be for \$70 per share cash and should close during the second half of Cisco's FY2020. Acacia employees are expected to become part of Cisco's Optical Systems and Optics business upon close. Acacia designs and manufactures high-speed, optical interconnect tech designed to allow webscale companies, service providers and data center operators to meet consumer demands for data. Acacia is already an existing Cisco supplier. Cisco stock closed slightly up 0.27% at \$56.34, and Acacia jumped 35% following the announcement, closing at \$64.91.

Industry Maximizes Spectrum, More Still Needed: Since 2010, wireless providers have increased their spectrum efficiency by 42 times, according to **CTIA**. Nine years ago, wireless networks handled 948MB for every one MHz of spectrum, and now handle 39.9bln MBs/MHz thanks to significant industry investment. The wireless industry is facing a "hockey stick" growth curve, and CTIA says wireless providers must look at all strategies to increase network capacity. In the past five years, the number of wireless subscribers has increased more than 25%. Subs are using more mobile data, as the average smartphone user now exceeds 6.5GBs a month, up from 1.1GBs five years ago. The industry increased the spectral efficiency of their networks by "refarming existing spectrum, quickly deploying new spectrum assets, deploying denser wireless infrastructure and other efficiency-enhancing technologies." However, CTIA also says that the government needs to free up more low, mid and high-band spectrum to deliver 5G.

AccuWeather Relocates Global Office: **AccuWeather** announced an expansion and relocation of its global offices in NYC from Midtown to Lower Manhattan. The new offices are located at 7 World Trade Center, nearly doubling the space the media company occupied in Rockefeller Center. AccuWeather is headquartered in State College, PA.

TiVo, LG Electronics Partner Up: **TiVo** and **LG Electronics** entered into a global intellectual property license. The multi-year deal expands on LG's previous **Rovi** patent portfolio license to also include the TiVo patent portfolio.

Fox Fills Out SIDECAR Team: **Fox Entertainment** is beefing out its SIDECAR: A "Content Development Accelerator" with an executive team headed by *Gail Berman*. New additions to the team include *Hend Baghdady* as evp, development and production; *Susan Lierle* as svp, business & legal affairs; *Jeff Nemon* as svp, drama development; *Alana Romoff* as vp, development; *Matthew Chadwick* as vp, alternative programming and production and *Eduardo Lopez-Mendez* as manager, business and legal affairs. Under Berman's leadership, SIDECAR will develop scripted and unscripted projects for both Fox and third-party platforms. Fox Entertainment will retain ownership of all series originating under the SIDECAR banner.

Ratings: Numbers continued to climb in June for **ESPN**, led by continued upward studio show trends. In June, the net grew its audience average 12% YOY during the daily 7am-7pm window, contributing to a 24-hour YOY 5% increase overall to 518K viewers. In primetime, the net averaged just over 1mln viewers, best among M18-49 and M25-54. June was the fourth consecutive month of YOY growth for "Get Up" (21%) and "SportsCenter" (9%). -- Final soccer ratings are in, and the US victory over the Netherlands pulled in 14.271mln **Fox Sports** viewers. It is the most-watched English-language match since the USA's 5-2 victory over Japan in 2015, which pulled 25.4mln viewers on Fox. The match is up 22% over the 2018 men's final. Sunday's final was 4% higher than the 2011 final, the last time the World Cup was played in a European time zone. On the streaming platforms, the match became the most-streamed FIFA Women's World Cup in history, up 402% over the same match in 2015 with an average minute audience of 289K.

Programming: **Paramount Pictures** is releasing another installment of its "I Am" docuseries. "I Am Patrick Swayze" will premiere in the actor's home state at the San Antonio Film Festival on August 2 before airing on **Paramount Network** on Swayze's birthday, August 18, at 9pm ET. -- **VH1**'s "Love & Hip Hop: Hollywood" will premiere for its newest season on August 5 at 8pm. -- We'll stop talking about soccer soon, but not quite yet. Following the US-WNT's World Cup victory on Sunday, **ESPN** announced it will broadcast 14 **National Women's Soccer League** games this season on **ESPNEWS** and **ESPN2**, beginning with Portland vs Orlando on July 14. Each playoff game and the NWSL Championship will air on ESPN2. In other ESPN news, the net will televise the New Leagues Cup, a tournament between **Major League Soccer** and **Liga MX teams**. The seven-match tournament begins with quarterfinals on July 23 and ends with the final on Sept 18. The matches will air across ESPN, ESPN2 and **ESPN+**.

People: **AMC Networks** promoted two key execs in its non-fiction and alternative programming group. *Marco Bresaz* was upped to svp, non-fiction and alternative programming and *Kelly Nash* is now vp, non-fiction and alternative programming. -- **Thrillist** named *Megan Kirsch* as its new chief content officer. She comes over from **Vice Media**, where she served as svp of creative and marketing.