

Cablefax Daily™

Monday — July 22, 2019

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 30 / No. 138

Retrans Tussle: Not Much Movement Ahead of CBS-AT&T/DirecTV Deadline

With CBS' contract with AT&T/DirecTV set to expire in the wee hours of Saturday morning, much of Friday was spent prognosticating over the likelihood of a blackout that would take down CBS O&Os in 14 cities. With AT&T already in a noisy spat that has hundreds of Nexstar stations off its lineup (not to mention smaller blackouts with Northwest Broadcasting and several independent station groups), some argue that CBS has the leg up. However, with several weeks to go before NFL and SEC football, others are betting that AT&T's in a good spot. Both sides have had plenty of time to prepare, with the expiring deal lasting seven years, according to sources. AT&T's preparations for the 2am ET deadline include directing consumers to free app Locast, which streams broadcast signals in 9 of the 14 CBS markets. Is the nonprofit prepared for a possible influx of users? Founder David Goodfriend doesn't sound worried. "Locast has received a lot of positive feedback from consumers, thanks to our outstanding technical team and their efforts over the past year-and-a-half to refine and improve our technology. Locast is available to the public and ready to serve," he told Cablefax. A blackout would also include CW stations in some markets, as well as cable nets Smithsonian Channel and CBS Sports Net for DirecTV and U-verse users. Virtual MVPD offering DirecTV Now also would be impacted and since broadcast carriage on the streaming app is via the CBS national stream, all subscribers would lose their CBS affiliate. As usual, money is the main sticking point, but there's a bit more at stake here, including availability of past CBS episodes and the broadcaster's \$5.99/month SVOD service CBS All Access (\$9.99/month for no ads). "It's become clear to us that CBS is intent on blacking out any home that chooses to receive cable or satellite service to up-sell CBS All Access subscriptions," AT&T said in a statement Friday. "CBS has said publicly that between 2018 and the end of this year it will significantly increase prices on roughly 75% of any homes that opt to receive their content via cable or satellite. CBS has also said publicly that it priced All Access that much higher to capitalize on customers it can capture from cable, satellite or other means of distribution." CBS hasn't had a blackout since 2017, when it went off of DISH for three days around Thanksgiving. There was some noise about a possible blackout with Charter last year, but a multi-year deal was reached without any blackouts. With Reps Anna Eshoo (D-CA) and Steve Scalise (R-LA) about to introduce legislation aimed at preventing

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blackouts, this standoff is being watched closely. **American TV Alliance**, a group backed by MVPDs such as AT&T, Verizon and Charter as well as association **ACA Connects**, said a CBS blackout will break the annual blackout record of 213 set in 2017. The group has launched a new ad campaign urging Congress to reform video marketplace laws. It's running on digital platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter.

Comments Wanted on New C-Band Plans: The FCC issued a notice Friday seeking comments on a C-Band reallocation proposal recently submitted by **ACA Connects**, **Charter** and the **Competitive Carriers Association**. It also wants input on recent filings from **AT&T** as well as a collective filing from **Wireless Internet Service Providers Association (WISPA)**, **Google**, and **Microsoft**. Comments are due Aug 7, with replies due Aug 14. The Charter-backed plan would free up 370Mhz of spectrum using an FCC-driven auction that would award new terrestrial licenses. It also contains a plan to transition certain fixed satellite service earth station operators to fiber, with the FCC specifically asking for comments on mandatory relocation and repacking requirements that would use fiber delivery (potentially redundant fiber delivery) but maintain the C-band delivery of MVPD video programming via non-urban "super" head-ends. The FCC's also seeking comment on AT&T's proposal to divide the 3.7-4.2 GHz band into three segments: (1) a largely unrestricted mobile terrestrial 5G segment in the bottom of the band ("Unrestricted Licenses"); (2) "Adjacent Licenses" in the middle of the band that would have to coordinate with or mitigate impact on Fixed Satellite Service; and (3) remaining Fixed Satellite Service spectrum in the top of the band. Lastly, the FCC wants feedback on a study filed this week by the WISPA group that suggests exclusion zones of about 10 kilometers are sufficient to protect most fixed satellite service earth stations from harmful interference caused by properly-engineered co-channel point-to-multipoint broadband systems.

DISH Hires Telstra Veteran as CTO: Kannan Alagappan has joined **DISH** as the company's svp/CTO. He'll lead DISH Technologies, a group that sets the company's overall technology strategy, oversees software and hardware engineering initiatives and manages broadcast and satellite operations. It's a familiar role for Alagappan, who previously served as CTO/head of technology for Australian telecom powerhouse **Telstra**. He has also worked as a technology consultant for DISH, **T-Mobile** and **Comcast**.

Comcast Outfits Chicago Apartments with Smart Home Devices: Xfinity Communities teamed up with Chicago-based rental and commercial property management company **Kass Management Services** on the first commercial deployment of the former's Smart Communities platform. The deployment occurred at two Kass-operated multifamily rental properties, where a total of 50 units were outfitted with smart devices able to be controlled through the Xfinity Communities app.

Corporate Licenses

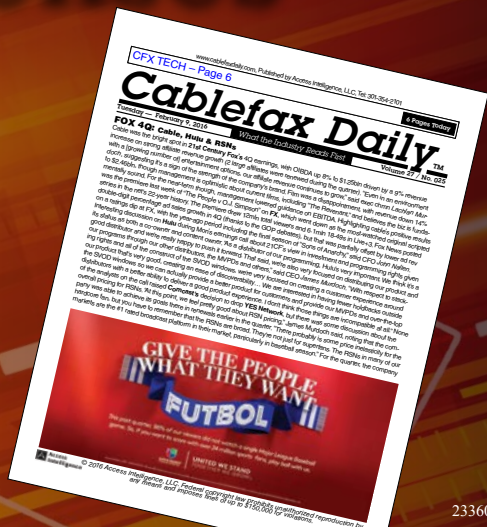
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Ratings: Thursday's opening round coverage of The 148th Open on **Golf Channel** was the highest-rated since 2015. The coverage averaged a .84 overnight rating for the eight-hour telecast (up 6% YOY), peaking with a 1.0 rating from 11:15-11:45am.

People: **Comcast** svp, HR for Comcast Advertising **Robert "Sandy" Gunn** joined the board for **C2HR**. -- **Jamie Susskind** is stepping down as **FCC** commish **Brendan Carr's** chief of staff and legal advisor after two years in the position. **Joseph Calascione** is joining Carr's office on detail as acting legal advisor in Susskind's place. Before joining Carr's office, Susskind served in senior roles on Capitol Hill, including as chief counsel to Sen **Deb Fischer** (R-NE), and spent six years in the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau.

Obituary: **Robert Stengel** passed away on July 4 following a long battle with pancreatic cancer. He had served as an svp with **MediaOne (Continental Cablevision)** and was formerly a principal at media consulting firm **Continental Consulting**. When he first joined the cable industry more than four decades ago, he served as vp, public affairs for **NCTA**. He moved to Boston in 1980, joining Continental where he oversaw the overall content strategy and played an important role in the launch of **Food Network, E!** and **Outdoor Life**. Stengel was a veteran of the Vietnam War, serving in the US Army Security Agency from 1965 to 1969.

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Up Ahead

July 23-28: CTAM Portion of the [Television Critics Association Press Tour](#), L.A.

July 24-26: [NAMIC Leadership Seminar](#); Chicago

July 28-31: [The Independent Show](#); Chicago

Aug 1: [FCC Open Meeting](#); Washington, DC

Aug 5-7 [CableLabs Summer Conference](#); Keystone, CO

Research

> 85% of respondents say they are very or somewhat satisfied with their jobs while 32% have seriously considered quitting their job in the last 3 months.

> 35% of workers, spanning all age groups, single out finding meaning at work as the most important factor in overall workplace happiness, while 20% say it's "being well paid"

> 52% of unsatisfied workers say their companies aren't spending enough on new technology, while only 31% of satisfied workers say the same.

> 51% of workers say they have someone at work they consider to be a mentor.

(Source: [CNBC @Work Survey](#))

Quotable

"It's such an honor to be nominated with so many of my friends—I am truly grateful to the Academy for recognizing the hard work of my entire staff. It is always a group effort and any day I can order celebratory cake to be delivered to the office is a good day. See you in LA!"

-- **Comedian/ep Samantha Bee** reacting to "Full Frontal with Samantha Bee"'s Emmy noms for Writing – Variety Series and Variety Talk Series

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