

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Hello Internet: Comcast Revenues Soar with Broadband as Core Offering

More folks cut the cord and ran from **Comcast's** video offering, but we're far from the days where that would signal a negative quarter for a cable operator. The company reported an addition of 309K net customer relationships in 3Q19, while losing 238K video customers. Broadband continued to boom for Comcast in the quarter, which included the announcement that it would be making Xfinity Flex available to all internet-only customers for free. The company added 379K high-speed customers, helping contribute to Comcast's 21.2% increase in revenue to \$26.8bln. Revenue specifically on the cable communications side increased 4% to \$14.6bln, again thanks to broadband growth. Turning to wireless, Xfinity Mobile saw 204K net adds. And while that comes in above expectations, **Lightshed Partners** said it has only become more clear that the wireless business will only ever play a supporting role to Comcast's new star of the show, residential broadband. "It was only a few years ago that investors feared Comcast and other cable operators would become major disruptors to the wireless industry, destroying margins and spiking industry churn," Lightshed said in a note. "It's no longer 'too early' to draw conclusions. They aren't." It's still unclear as to when Comcast will break-even on its wireless business. It previously said it could do so at the 2mln wireless sub mark, which it should reach next quarter. Comcast was also asked about whether it would participate in the **FCC's** upcoming spectrum auctions, to which Comcast Cable pres/CEO *Dave Watson* said the company is "actively looking at models that may work in terms of leveraging our infrastructure." On the **NBCU** side, it's all hands on deck as the company ramps up to the launch of Peacock. But if there's one thing the leadership team wants you to know, it's that it's not trying to make a **Netflix** clone. "I think the most important thing to think about as you're thinking about Peacock and its role inside NBCU and broader Comcast is we're not doing the same strategy that Netflix and people chasing Netflix have adopted," NBCU CEO/senior EVP *Steve Burke* said. "We're primarily working with the existing ecosystem and doing a lot of AVOD activity, and what that's going to do... is cut the investment pretty substantially because I think we're going to get to cruising altitude much more quickly than a subscription service." Burke made it clear that it will continue selling its content to other companies as well, and that it wouldn't be "taking all of our movies off of premium platforms." Comcast NBCU



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plans to launch Peacock in April, but will keep its marketing and more specifics surrounding the service pretty quiet until a month or two ahead of launch for competitive reasons. It is planning to take advantage of services like 4K HDR-capable streaming device Xfinity Flex to get more eyeballs on Peacock. "Flex is a huge opportunity for Peacock, and Peacock will be front and center on Flex," Burke said. "I think it's not only an opportunity for Peacock, but it's a great opportunity for Flex to be able to give a lot of great NBC programming... to people at no additional charge to a broadband sub or a cable sub."

Congress Moves Towards C-band Public Auction: Bipartisan members of **House Commerce** are making their stand on C-band, introducing a bill that would require cleared spectrum to be distributed via public auction. Introduced by Reps *Mike Doyle* (D-PA), *Doris Matsui* (D-CA), *Bill Johnson* (R-OH) and *Greg Gianforte* (R-MN), the Clearing Broad Airwaves for New Deployment Act would require that auction put up for grabs no less than 200MHz and no more than 300 MHz of C-band spectrum. It also includes provisions that would ensure incumbent C-band users would be protected. "Wireless spectrum is a valuable, strategic public asset, and taxpayers should be compensated for its use," Gianforte said. "The proceeds from the public auction can be used for critical priorities, including expanding reliable broadband service to bridge the digital divide." The bill's introduction comes ahead of the House Communications subcommittee hearing Tuesday on the C-band and has been applauded by **Public Knowledge**. "The bill presents the fastest, most legally sound way for the Commission to repurpose a significant portion of the C-band to support speedy deployment of next-generation wireless networks," PK policy director *Phillip Berenbroick* said.

Markey Asks Commission to Say Nay on Charter Competition Petition: Ahead of Friday's **FCC** open meeting, Sen *Ed Markey* (D-MA) sent a letter to the Commission in regards to its review of **Charter Communications'** petition claiming that **DirecTV Now** (now dubbed AT&T TV NOW) provides effective competition to Charter in Massachusetts and Hawaii. Should the FCC approve the petition Friday, Charter would no longer be subject to rate regulations, a move that Markey says will particularly harm consumers that subscribe to Charter's basic tier offering. "Research shows that basic service tier cable rates are 50% higher in unregulated communities than they are in regulated communities, and Charter has explicitly stated that if the Commission grants its petition, the company plans to almost double the rate paid by consumers that subscribe to the basic service tier in some communities," Markey wrote to FCC chairman *Ajit Pai*.

WOW! Expands Ohio Service: WOW! expanded into Parma, OH, now making services available to nearly 200K

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potential customers across the state. Parma residents have access to the company's 1 Gig internet speeds as well as WOW!'s Whole-Home WiFi solution. Since 2017 the company has expanded into 14 communities across the state.

Apple TV Comes to Amazon Devices: With **Apple TV+** launching Nov 1, **Apple** is rolling out its Apple TV app to a wide range of **Amazon Fire TV** devices. It's now available in more than 60 countries on Fire TV Stick and Fire TV Stick 4. In the US, UK Germany, France, Italy, Spain and India it's available on Fire TV Stick 2nd Gen and Fire TV Stick 4K. In more than 50 other countries it launched on Fire TV Basic Edition. Amazon says Apple TV is coming "soon" to first and second-gen Fire TV Cube devices, the third-gen Fire TV, the **Toshiba** and Insignia Fire TV Edition Smart TVs and the **Nebula Soundbar**. It's not compatible with the first and second gen Fire TVs and the first-gen Fire TV Stick. Apple has been rolling out the app to other platforms ahead of the streamer's launch, becoming available on **Roku** last month.

Comcast Exec Files LGBTQ Discrimination Suit: Comcast svp, government affairs *Klayton Fennell* filed a suit alleging that he has faced discrimination due to his sexual orientation, according to an *NBC News* report. Fennell claimed that he did not receive equal pay, was looked over for promotions and called derogatory names by at least one colleague. Comcast has denied the claims, saying that at no time in Fennell's 18-year career has he been subject to wrongful treatment. "Klay has worked at Comcast for more than 18 years, and we promoted him to the job of Senior Vice President more than four years ago, one of our highest roles in our Cable division," Comcast said in a statement. "We also have supported him for many years and provided a platform for him to have a positive influence on LGBTQ initiatives both inside the company and in the communities we serve." Comcast scored a 90 on the **Human Rights Campaign's** 2019 Corporate Equality Index and has an employee resource group dedicated to members of the LGBTQ community.

Qualcomm Launches 5G Investment Fund: **Qualcomm** announced it's launching the Qualcomm Ventures 5G Ecosystem Fund to invest an aggregate of \$200mln in companies working to build up 5G. The fund will invest in startups developing new and innovative 5G use cases, driving 5G network transformation and expanding 5G enterprise markets. The company says the fund is designed to help accelerate 5G innovation beyond the smartphone and drive 5G adoption.

Cisco Finds IT Ready for AI: **Cisco** asked more than 2K IT leaders how they plan to prioritize investment, and maximizing businesses value came in as IT's number one priority, with 40% of leaders naming it. Almost 50% of network strategists believe increasing the use of analytics and AI will help enable the ideal network. Only 18% of IT leaders see lack of maturity as an obstacle to network modernization, and 72% of respondents plan to achieve AI-enabled predictive insights or prescriptive remediation within the next two years.

Sling Expands Android Availability: **Sling TV** extended its in-browser player support to Chrome on all **Android** mobile devices. While previously available on desktop Chrome, Sling users on Android mobile devices can now get to content quickly without downloading an app.

Programming: "The Brady Bunch's" *Maureen McCormick* and star of "Windy City Rehab" *Alison Victoria* will co-host **HGTV's** special "White House Christmas 2019." The net will announce the premiere date in early December. -- **A&E** is premiering "Court Cam" on Dec 5 at 9pm. The eight episode series will show viewers an in-depth examination of stunning courtroom moments caught on camera. -- Upcoming mobile-only streamer **Quibi** announced a partnership with digital media brand **The Dodo** for a daily original animal series.

CTIA Introduces Wireless Repair Certification Course: **CTIA** launched its Wireless Industry Service Excellence Technician Certification Program. The course is designed to educate repair techs on everything from smartphone device disassembly and reassembly to diagnostics and the handling of current lithium-ion batteries. Technicians must renew their certification annually to remain current on advances in the aftercare of wireless consumer devices.

People: **MTV Studios** signed overall content deals with creators *Lashan Browning*, *Adam Gonzalez* and *Tiffany Lea Williams*. Browning currently serves as showrunner for **VH1's** "Love & Hip Hop Atlanta" and "Cartel Crew." Gonzalez has an existing relationship with **VH1** and **MTV**, running "Teyana and Iman" and "America's Next Top Model." Williams is behind **MTV's** "Are You The One?" and oversaw the "Teen Mom" franchise expansion. -- Former **New England Sports Network** anchor *Kacie McDonnell* is joining **Fox Nation** as a lifestyle and sports host. She'll make her debut at the Fox Nation Patriot Awards on Nov 6.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

Tackling the Issues with PBS' 'Independent Lens'

For 20 years, "Independent Lens" on PBS has served as the home for documentaries from independent filmmakers, receiving 19 Emmy nods and 16 Peabody awards for its spotlights on the most controversial topics of our time. That's not about to change as the series enters its 18th season. "This season on Independent Lens, our filmmakers take us to their hometowns and into communities across the world to learn more about the issues that divide us and the ideals and beliefs that bring us together," said Independent Lens executive producer *Lois Vossen*. "I'm a firm believer that we can't understand where we are right now without looking at the past and how we got here, so this season features documentaries that illuminate a piece of history or put current events in a greater historical context, showing us why these experiences are relevant today." First up this time around is "Made in Boise" (premieres Monday at 10pm), an investigation into the controversy surrounding surrogacy around the world. Surrogacy is legal but not federally regulated in the US, so laws vary widely from state to state. Compared to the rest, Idaho and California have largely been seen as friendly to surrogacy. On the other end of the spectrum, Michigan imposes a prison sentence of up to five years and a \$50K fine for any commercial surrogacy, while Louisiana blocks surrogacy for everyone except married, heterosexual couples. The rest of the season focuses on equally challenging issues. "Always in Season" centers on grassroots efforts to acknowledge victims of lynching, while "Bedlam" takes a deep dive into the culture surrounding mental illness in the US. "The quality of work and the urgency of these stories have never been stronger, and we're delighted to support our filmmakers throughout their journey, help them make even more compelling documentaries, and bring their work to public television," Vossen said. — *Sara Winegardner*

Reviews: "Frontline: Fire in Paradise," 10pm, Tuesday, **PBS**. Our guess is that when director/producer *Jane McMullen* assembled this excellent short film about last November's Camp Fire, she probably had no idea it would run as another fire was ravaging CA. At press time, the Kincade Fire has destroyed 10,000 acres in Sonoma County. On the other hand, devastating forest fires are not unexpected. A scientist interviewed in this film says that man-made climate change has accelerated the number of forest fires in CA. High winds moved Camp quickly; it consumed the equivalent of 80 football fields/minute, traveling nearly 8 miles per hour at its outset. Starting around 6 am, Camp by noon had destroyed the mountain town of Paradise. Though Paradise had a decent crisis-response plan, Camp overwhelmed it. Filmmaker McMullen has done a masterful job. She allows Paradise residents to tell their stories and reminisce about some of the 85 people who didn't survive. The doc flows like a horror film, except, of course, Camp was real. -- "The Misery Index," 10pm, Tuesday, **TBS**. A fun escape as contestants try to guess how psychiatrists will rate certain miserable experiences. Not intended for children, but perfect for childish adults seeking to tune out the world's miseries. The crew from "Impractical Jokers" joins host *Jameela Jamil* for the hilarity. — *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable P2+ Prime Rankings* (10/14/19-10/20/19)		
Mon-Sun	MC US	MC US AA (000)
ESPN	0.919	2,824
FS1	0.912	2,803
FNC	0.847	2,602
CNN	0.646	1,986
MSNBC	0.567	1,743
TLC	0.357	1,099
HGTV	0.323	993
TBSC	0.308	946
A&E	0.300	922
HALL	0.290	891
DISC	0.274	843
USA	0.264	811
HIST	0.247	758
ID	0.238	732
FOOD	0.237	729
ADSM	0.211	650
AMC	0.206	633
LIFE	0.200	614
TNT	0.189	581
TVLAND	0.181	558
DSNY	0.174	534
FRFM	0.171	527
HMM	0.169	520
INSP	0.162	497
BRAVO	0.156	479
NFL	0.144	442
VH1	0.144	441
FX	0.143	441
NATGEO	0.143	439
NKJR	0.140	431
NICK	0.139	428
CRN	0.131	402
GSN	0.128	392
WETV	0.127	389
DSJR	0.126	387
TRAVEL	0.121	372
PARA	0.121	370
NAN	0.118	362
MTV	0.118	362
SYFY	0.117	361
HBO	0.115	355

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

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