

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Red Carpet Ready: BET's Connie Orlando Talks NAACP Image Awards

BET is welcoming the NAACP Image Awards to the net for the first time. The 51st annual awards show honors people of color in TV, music, literature and film, as well as individuals and groups who promote social justice through creative endeavors (This year, Netflix leads the television category nominations with 30). The Image Awards aired on TV One for the past five years, with BET taking it over the same year it celebrates its 40th anniversary. Cablefax chatted with Connie Orlando, BET's evp of specials, music programming & music strategy, about the Image Awards and what it means for BET. The telecast airs live Saturday at 8pm ET. **What does it mean for BET to be the home of the NAACP Image Awards?** We are so honored and privileged to be able to acknowledge contributions of talent. It's complementary to our other tent poles, because it expands the honors and the celebrations and the acknowledgement. We are super excited and we look forward to celebrating all these contributions this month. **How can we expect the awards show to change from years past, if it will?** It's always been a great show, and we want to continue the celebration that they've [NAACP] built over the past 50 years. From an audience perspective, we're looking to expand the reach of their programming, and we want to expand the presence of the show to our international markets such as France and Africa. We always strive to create moments, and we look forward to infusing a little BET personality into the overall show. **How involved is BET in the awards themselves? What's the partnership with NAACP like?** We work very closely with the NAACP team in the planning of the show. We're like co-producers. And working with the NAACP is like working with family. We also have the pleasure of working with BET veterans like Reggie Hudlin and Byron Phillips, they're returning as executive producers. It's like working with family, and I think we're all striving for the same goal to make an amazing show. **The awards coincide with BET's 40th anniversary. Got anything special planned?** We're going to do a year long rollout. You'll see a ton of programming for our 40th over the next few months. We'll do a special acknowledgement during the BET Awards, but we're looking at this whole year as a celebratory year for us, and it also happens to be the 20th anniversary of the BET Awards. **The BET Awards are such a tent pole event for the network. Is there a symbiotic relationship there?** There's such value in both shows. The BET Awards is heavy on music, with the Image Awards we get to expand our celebration of our community by adding more categories. We haven't been able to cover—literature, television, and really acting. Having both just makes us stronger as

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- SCTE•ISBE's President and CEO, Mark Dzuban



Space is selling quickly! Contact Olivia Murray at omurray@accessintel.com or 301.354.2010

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a network and it makes us well rounded in celebrating the black experience. **What do you think are the importance of the awards for the black community and Black History Month?** Black History Month is the one month that the world is dedicated to honoring the black community, but we do it 365 days a year. I think it's always important to honor and celebrate, and we love celebrating excellence and showing our community that we've come a long way and we're not going anywhere. I think overall, it's a celebration. We're over the moon excited. I think it's important, the Image Awards, BET, we were all birthed at a time where there was no platform to celebrate and honor excellence for black Americans. It feels wonderful, and I hope we're always bringing to our community that we see you. I'm super excited, I believe the other teams are super excited, and we're looking forward to doing a great show.

Marquee Sports Net Steps Up to Bat: Marquee Sports Network was ready to go live at 1pm CT Saturday (Feb 22), but at our deadline it sounded like the Cubs RSN would debut without Comcast on board as a launch partner. "We're in discussions with Marquee and there's plenty of time between now and Opening Day," a Comcast spokesperson told CFX. The Cubbies open the 2020 season on March 26 against the Brewers, with the home opener on March 30 against the Pirates. AT&T, Charter, Hulu, Mediacom and RCN are among those carrying the net, a jv between the Cubs and Sinclair. Full list [here](#) (note, Charter will make the net available in the coming weeks). The RSN will open Saturday with "Marquee Debut," a one-hour special that previews future programming and includes a tribute to former broadcast partner WGN. Then it's on to Marquee's first live broadcast, a spring training game against the Oakland Athletics in Mesa, AZ. Following the game, the net will air an MLB Network-produced documentary on Cubs legend Ernie Banks. Marquee Sports Network will feature 28 Cubs spring training games and at least 145 regular season games.

Report – Fox Eyeing Tubi: Fox Corp is reportedly discussing a deal valued at \$500mln+ for AVOD Tubi, the WSJ reported Friday, citing people familiar with the matter. Viacom, which bought Pluto TV last year for \$340mln, reportedly also looked at Tubi. The WSJ reported in December that Comcast was in exclusive talks to acquire Xumo. Fox declined to comment at press time, while Tubi couldn't be reached immediately. Meanwhile, the WSJ also reported Friday that Comcast's NBCU is in advanced talks to buy Walmart's streaming video service Vudu.

Quigley Heading WarnerMedia Content Acquisition: WarnerMedia is integrating the content acquisitions team across the company's linear networks and DTC business under evp, content acquisitions Michael Quigley. As part of the reorg, Jonathan Melber has been named svp, content acquisition for HBO Max while Royce Battleman will serve as svp, content acquisition, primarily responsible for HBO, Cinemax, TNT, TBS and truTV. Rounding out the team are Valerie Meraz, who will report to Battleman, as well as Chris Grunden and Leslie Cohen, who will add film acquisitions

Cablefax: March What's happening...

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ACA Connects Summit

Cablefax will cover this annual gathering in Washington, DC, where small- and medium sized operators make their voices heard in the halls of Congress and beyond.

State Legislature Round-up

A look at what's happening at the state regulatory level

Cablefax: The Magazine – March Issue The Work Culture List

Cablefax's newest magazine shines a spotlight on companies for their work on continuing education, D&I, employee benefits and more.

Awards

Top Ops
Nomination
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Events

ACA Connects Summit
March 17
Washington DC

for HBO Max to their current HBO responsibilities. **Turner** exec *Liz Bannan Atcheson* will continue working on acquisitions for HBO Max.

Programming: **YES Network** is leaning further into soccer, televising 26 NYC Football Club matches this season, its most ever. Programming kicks off with the squad's season opener on March 1 at 12:30pm against Columbus, OH. All matches televised will also be streamed live on the **Fox Sports GO** app. -- "Yellowstone" co-creator *Taylor Sheridan* signed an overall production and development deal with **ViacomCBS** entertainment and youth brands. The pact covers multiple projects being developed with **101 Studios**, including a first season of "Mayor of Kingston" for **Paramount Network**. Paramount also renewed *Yellowstone* for Season 4.

People: **Discovery** promoted *Scott Lewers* to evp, multiplatform programming, factual & head of content, **Science**, following *Marc Etkind's* exit earlier in the week. Lewers spent the past two years serving as evp, multiplatform content, live production, digital and research teams across Discovery, Science and **Animal Planet**. -- The **Alliance for Women in Media** and its Foundation added some folks to the 2020 board. New to the seats are **ESPN's Katina Arnold**, **TVB's Abby Auerbach**, **Walter Kaitz Foundation** exec dir *Michelle Ray*, **Center for Talent Innovation's Sandra Rice**, and **Entercom's Esther Mireya Tejada**.

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Up Ahead

- March 5-6:** [MFM CFO Summit](#), Ft Lauderdale
- March 6:** [Rocky Mountain Cable Association Cable Apprentice 2020](#); Greenwood Village, CO
- March 10:** [FSF 12th Annual Telecom Policy Conference](#); DC
- March 17-19:** [ACA Connects Summit](#); DC
- April 2-5:** [Adaptive Spirit](#); Vail, CO

Research

- > Global mobile connection speeds will more than triple in the next four years.
- > By 2023, 27.4% of WLAN Endpoints will be equipped with Wi-Fi 6
- > The average broadband speed will double, reaching speeds of 100Mbps for 39% of all broadband connections, while WiFi connection speeds will more than triple.

(Source: [Cisco 2020 Annual Internet Report](#))

Quotable

"It is fair to say that I might tell them that they will be well, but otherwise, that doesn't sound like me ... contingent compensations conversations with anyone, that's beyond my scope... I have people to do that, they wouldn't come to me," – **Fox Entertainment chief Charlie Collier** testifying in court Wednesday, and quoted by [Deadline](#), over how much money "The Walking Dead" exec producers would make off the AMC series. Collier was pres, gm of AMC until he joined Fox in late 2018. Executive producers, including Robert Kirkman and Gale Anne Hurd, have sued claiming they've been shortchanged profits for the long-running series.

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