

ACA Connects Guest Column - p5

# Cablefax Daily™

Friday — March 20, 2020

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 31 / No. 055

## On the Frontlines: Companies Facing Covid-19 Confirmations

As more testing takes place in the US, video and internet providers are coming to terms with what to do when a worker is diagnosed with Covid-19, as well as how to handle remote working and much more. **Altice USA** had an employee in its Bronx Soundview office diagnosed with the virus Wednesday. This is not an office where employees physically interact with customers. "We immediately engaged the Department of Health and made the decision to close the entire facility in an abundance of caution. In coordination with the DOH, we engaged a specialized cleaning service to deep clean and disinfect the Soundview building," an **Altice** spokesperson said. "All employees left the facility and our HR teams have been speaking with everyone individually to provide support and those who were in contact with the individual have been asked to self-quarantine for 14 days." On Tuesday, **Comcast** had a technician in Fairfield, NJ, test positive for Covid-19 and is in the hospital receiving treatment. "He is a long-time and valued colleague, and our hearts go out to his family at this challenging time. We have notified the customers and employees who may have had direct contact with him before he became ill to encourage them to contact their health care provider or local public health department if they feel ill," Comcast said. "The health and well-being of our employees and our customers is our top priority, we are following CDC guidelines and have already taken the appropriate steps to protect our employee's health. We are also working closely with local Public Health Department." As providers continue to make house visits, safety out in the community is imperative. "Over the past several weeks, our techs have received additional training on best practices for staying healthy while in the field," **DISH** told **CFX**. "They are always asked to stay home if they are sick. And, if our techs find themselves encountering someone who is showing symptoms of illness, they are instructed to remove themselves from that situation." **Mediacom** and other MVPDs said they are asking customers with a scheduled in-home appointment to identify if anyone in the home is experiencing flu-like symptoms or may have developed medical issues related to the virus. In these cases, they are taking steps to avoid going inside while trying to solve the problem from outside the home and in some cases, re-scheduling. Altice USA said it's reminding customers of the digital service solutions available to them—online care, online account management, etc. **Charter** said technicians are still making service calls, with the company continually educating staff on best practices and regular disinfection of trucks and equipment.

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**Space is selling quickly! Contact Olivia Murray at [omurray@accessintel.com](mailto:omurray@accessintel.com) or 301.354.2010**

**The Collapse of Theatrical Windows?:** With theaters shuttering, will day-and-date releases become common? **Universal Pictures** is the first out of the gate, announcing "Trolls World Tour" will be available April 10 for an on demand, 48-hour rental. Other in-release movie titles are

**Comcast, Sky** and  
"Man" and "Emma,"

Tuesday — March 17, 2020

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 31 / No. 050

### For Now: Providers Set Aside Disputes During Coronavirus Outbreak

As they face the common enemy that is the coronavirus pandemic, **Cox Media Group** and **DISH** have agreed to set aside their retrans dispute for now so that DISH can resume its carriage of 10 CMG stations in markets in New York, Oregon, Washington, and Arizona.

### Covering Covid-19: Content Companies Step Up Efforts

Programmers are shuffling schedules to respond to the coronavirus crisis. **The Weather Channel** began dedicating time during each hour of live programming at 50 minutes past the hour to share educational content aimed at children staying home due to school closures. Topics include why thunder happens, how rainbows form and how to stay safe in severe weather. Newsrooms are continuing to deal with confirmed cases of the virus, with **CNN NYC** staffers informing an employee has tested positive for the virus but is in very good health. **CBS, ABC,** and **NBC** are

We are so proud of our industry and the many ways companies are responding to the pandemic. Free internet, fresh content, employee safety and much more.

The Cablefax Editorial Team is reporting on vital industry updates every day. We want to hear from you so please reach out to share your news and stories.

**Content. Community. Daily.**

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# Cablefax Daily™

Friday — March 13, 2020

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 31 / No. 050

### New Normal: Companies Roll Out Contingency Plans in Face of Covid-19

With a growing number of students and employees working from home, it's mission critical for the nation's broadband providers during the Covid-19 pandemic. Operators big and small are up-ending their day-to-day operations to ensure

#### From the Commission:

Another 116 broadband and telephone service providers have taken up **FCC Chairman Ajit Pai's Keep Americans Connected Pledge**, agreeing to take specific steps to keep Americans connected for the next 60 days. Some notable names taking the pledge include **Hotwire Communications, Midco** and **Verizon**. Companies that have now taken the pledge will not terminate service to any residential or small business customer due to their inability to pay bills due to disruption from the coronavirus pandemic. **Verizon** will also offer a 15/2 Mbps service to qualified low-income households for \$9.95/month. It's a match-up between the Lakers and Bucks.

#### Comcast Boosts Internet Essentials:

**Comcast** is responding to the Covid-19 crisis by increasing speeds of its low-income Internet Essentials service. New customers can sign up for 60 days of service. The service is normally available to qualified low-income households for \$9.95/month. It's a

Monday — March 16, 2020

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 31

### Still Connected: ISPs Sign on to FCC Coronavirus Pledge

After a number of conference calls held Thursday by **FCC** chair **Ajit Pai**, broadband and telephone service companies are announcing that they will not terminate the service of any customer unable to pay their bills for the next 60 days due to disruptions caused by the coronavirus. **Pai** asked those on the calls to take up the **Keep Americans Connected**

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**Navigating Remote Work:** Companies are taking different approaches to remote work. On Thursday, **Charter** revised a policy restricting working from home that had garnered [some criticism](#). “We will provide the option to work remotely to employees we believe can remain productive outside the office without endangering our obligation to provide critical service. These steps will enable our employees to continue providing essential communications services to 29 million customers, including institutions like hospitals, first responders and government facilities, which help flatten the curve and protect the country,” a spokesperson said. “We are developing and implementing increased social distancing plans in our call centers and operations facilities.” Charter also announced that it will begin providing an additional three weeks paid time off to be used for any Covid-19-related personal need. **Cox** closed its 6,000-person HQ campus in Atlanta beginning Wednesday of last week, with only a few folks still there whose jobs require it, such as building security. That closure involved moving a couple hundred network operations center employees remote for the first time ever. **Altice USA** has implemented a remote work program across its entire footprint until further notice for employees whose roles can be performed remotely. “For those roles who are unable to work remotely, we are reviewing shift programs and demonstrating flexibility as much as possible without impacting our core operations,” a rep said, noting that where it isn’t feasible, the company’s focusing on social distancing, frequent cleaning and aggressively sourcing to backfill its supply of wipes, gloves, soap and hand sanitizer. **DISH** said it’s significantly reduced on-site headcount by encouraging remote work where possible. **Mediacom** has moved a number of office locations to A and B shift work weeks to create more spacing. When the A shift is in the office, the B shift will work from home, and vice versa. “Employees in critical operational roles have enacted business continuity plans so that we can keep operating should one of our offices be impacted by the virus,” a Mediacom spokesperson said. “In addition, over the past several years, we have invested and built redundant networks that are monitored 24x7 to minimize service disruptions, and make sure our network stays operational through a disaster or national emergency.” **Comcast** said it’s asked every employee that is able to work from home, to do so. In addition, it has been transitioning thousands of customer service representatives across the country to work from home.

**O’Rielly Rides Again:** President Trump nominated Republican **FCC** commish *Michael O’Rielly* for another term Wednesday evening. The Senate will have to approve his nomination. O’Rielly received a number of congrats, including from fellow commissioners and industry associations. “As we face the monumental challenges currently confronting our nation, it is gratifying to watch the private and public sectors pulling together to rise to the occasion. Our work at the Commission persists, meeting the needs of the millions of American businesses, workers, families, and students facing unique communications needs and issues,” O’Rielly said in a statement.

**TRAILBLAZING**

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**Groups Seek CCPA Delay:** The **4As**, The Assn of National Advertisers, California Cable & Telecommunications Association and dozens of other groups have asked the state Attorney General to delay enforcement of the California Consumer Privacy Act due to the disruption around Covid-19 and the uncertainty in regard to the law's rulemaking. They want the July 1 compliance deadline pushed to Jan 2, 2021. "We believe consumer privacy is an important value that deserves meaningful protections in the marketplace. However, we are concerned that given current events and the presently unfinished status of the regulations implementing the CCPA, businesses will not have the operational capacity or time to bring their systems into compliance," said a letter signed by more than 30 California and national trade associations.

**Netflix Says No HD for Europe:** Netflix is limiting streaming quality on its service for the next 30 days for European users in an effort to reduce the strain placed on ISPs during the coronavirus pandemic. "We estimate that this will reduce Netflix traffic on European networks by around 25% while also ensuring a good quality service for our members," a Netflix spokesperson said in a statement. EU internal market and services commissioner and former France Telecom CEO *Thierry Breton* called for platforms to lower streaming quality after having a phone call with Netflix CEO *Reed Hastings*. "Teleworking & streaming help a lot but infrastructures might be in strain. To secure Internet access for all, let's #SwitchToStandard definition when HD is not necessary," Breton tweeted Wednesday. As of now, there are no plans to establish a similar restriction in the US or other regions.

**From the Commission:** The FCC's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau extended the deadline for certain licensees in the 3650-3700MHz band to transition their existing Part 90 operations to the Citizens Broadband Radio Service. Those Part 90 operations are used to provide high-speed broadband, utility communications and other essential wireless services. Part 90 licensees that would have been required to transition before Oct 17 will not have until that date to complete their transitions. This will not affect the timing of the previously-scheduled June 25 auction of priority access licensees in the 3.5GHz band. -- An additional 205 broadband and phone service providers have signed *chnm Ajit Pai's* Keep Americans Connected Pledge. New companies include **Armstrong**, **NewWave** and **Service Electric Cablevision**.

**Gordon Smith Talks Coronavirus:** The **NAB Show**, originally scheduled for April in Vegas, had only been canceled once in the organization's history, in the last year of World War II. In an interview for **C-SPAN's** "The Communicator's" series, NAB CEO *Gordon Smith* said the organization is still figuring out the economic impact of scrapping the show. "This has certainly had an impact on us, and to do the thing that is the interest of the health of our exhibitors, our attendees, our participants, we had to cancel that show this year, and that is a great injury for lots of reasons," Smith said. He highlighted the importance of broadcasting during a national emergency and the necessity of avoiding service interruptions. "Whenever there's a national emergency, broadcasters don't want to see service interruptions of any kind, and hopefully our friends on the cable and satellite side as well will kind of stand down until we get this behind us and avoid service interruptions if at all possible," he said. "That's our history of doing that, and I have no reason to believe that won't continue."

**Broadband Usage Skyrockets With Telework:** With plenty of folks being told to work from home, broadband consumption has risen by more than 41% and overall usage in March is on track to set a new usage record. According to **OpenVault's** latest research, subscribers' average usage during the 9am-5pm window has risen to 6.3GB, a 41.4% increase from January's figure of 4.4GB. Overall daily usage has grown from 12.19GB to 15.46GB, a 26.8% increase.

**Distribution:** **Hulu** has finally arrived on **Comcast's Xfinity Flex** platform and will soon be added to **X1** as well. For now, customers will only be able to access Hulu's on-demand offering and will not have access to **Hulu + Live TV**. Comcast said Hulu will also soon be integrated with the Xfinity voice remote.

**Programming:** **Tennis Channel** is introducing a daily, three-hour edition of "Tennis Channel Live" while professional tennis tours are on hold. Beginning March 23 at 12pm, the show will serve as a central tennis news and conversation platform in a general talk-show format. -- "Conan" is coming back to **TBS** beginning March 30. Episodes will have been shot remotely on an iPhone without an audience, and guests will be filmed via Skype. "The quality of my work will not go down because technically that's not possible," said *Conan O'Brien*. -- **TBS** is presenting a daily digital series "Beeing At Home with Samantha Bee!" to help viewers stay sane during the quarantine. Bee has relocated to a woodshed to teach everyone how to chop their own wood for warmth while practicing social distancing. -- **UP Faith and Family** is offering free streaming for families staying in due to coronavirus. The streamer is offering a specially curated collection of titles at no charge on [upfaithandfamily.com/uplift](http://upfaithandfamily.com/uplift).

**People:** **AMC Networks** is adding to its senior leadership team. The company named *Dan McDermott* pres, original programming and co-pres of **AMC Studios**. He was most recently head of the **Lionsgate** and **BBC Studios** scripted TV partnership. *David Beck* was tapped evp and head of programming strategy and business operations. He comes over from **WarnerMedia**, where he served as evp of strategy and operations.

## GUEST COLUMNIST

### Now More Than Ever, It's About Customers and Communities

By Matthew M. Polka

ACA Connects President and CEO

Perhaps all of our calendars, whether digital or paper, had the month of March filled by mid-February with travel, calls, and meetings. At ACA Connects, we were planning the last details of our annual DC Summit.

Then, Covid-19 hit and instantly changed all those plans for everyone.

As soon as we saw the scope and potential impact of the coronavirus, ACA Connects moved quickly to shift our focus from a three-day Summit to an immediate assessment of our members' needs.

First, we agreed to postpone the Summit. Then, with our Board of Directors, we determined what information, resources and counsel our members would require.

In addition, our team monitored responses from national, state and local leaders who have worked to produce positive contributions in a non-partisan fashion.

These are not normal times. Schools, businesses, bars and restaurants are closing for weeks at a time. Our favorite sports are on hiatus until further notice. In all of this, we can see first-hand the pivotal role broadband has in each of our communities. Reliable, fast Internet access is a game changer for so many small and medium-sized communities, and we are proud to deliver this service across the country at this urgent time.

We are also honored to work with Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai, who recently produced the "Keep Americans Connected" pledge. We were honored that Chairman Pai addressed ACA Connects members during our March 17 webinar on his three-part pledge, among other issues. I am pleased to report that dozens of ACA Connects members have



Matt Polka

embraced the Pai pledge, which states:

- (1.) No termination of service to any residential or small business customers because of their inability to pay their bills due to the disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic;
- (2.) Waive any late fees that any residential or small business customers incur because of their economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic; and
- (3.) Open Wi-Fi hotspots to any American who needs them.

Our association's platforms are an essential information source for our members. The [www.ACACnects.org](http://www.ACACnects.org) website is a "go-to" resource, featuring facts, news and updates concerning our members' activities in all 50 states related to the coronavirus outbreak and so much more.

We are pleased to announce that we have added a coronavirus page to [ACACnects.org](http://ACACnects.org) to include news, official guidance and summaries of what ISPs are doing around the country. The link is here: <https://acaconnects.org/covid-19/>.

Small businesses have long been the economic engine for Main Street. We understand the bond we have with our communities and are proud to report that our members have showcased their leadership across the country in effort to keep everyone connected.

ACA Connects members are in position to keep the country data-strong at a time when all eyes are focused on broadband providers. It's not an exaggeration to say that never have so many depended on the smooth functioning of broadband networks built by ACA Connects members. I know our members are up to the challenge.

When we get beyond this current crisis, I believe we will all be able to look back and say, "We did this together. We kept America connected and communicating in good ways that helped us all."

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

## Taking Things 'One Day at a Time'

Fans were outraged when **Netflix** canceled beloved sitcom "One Day at a Time" in March 2019, not long after it released the show's third season. But rather than let the show die, they made #SaveODAAT trend worldwide on **Twitter** within a few hours of the cancellation news. **Pop TV** took notice in June and brought the show back to life. "We make the show for the fans so to see how hard they fought to keep it going and that it worked feels like a miracle," executive producer *Gloria Calderón Kellett* told **CFX**. The fourth season premieres Tuesday at 9:30pm, and the episode will be simul-cast across **TV Land** and **Logo**. Kellett and fellow executive producer *Mike Royce* said the move to Pop has been seamless. Sure, there are a few commercial breaks and fans will need to adjust to a slightly shorter show. But otherwise, Kellett and Royce said viewers will see the same Alvarez family navigating similar storylines to the ones familiar on Netflix. With the move comes an opportunity to gain a slew of new followers. For the time being, One Day at a Time will air behind all-new episodes of the final season of Pop hit "Schitt's Creek," and Kellett and Royce are encouraging Schitt's Creek fans to give their show a chance. While the Schitt family and the Alvarez clan are quite different, the shows are both about family and love. For the new viewers they hope to see on Pop, the pair tweaked Season 4's opening to ensure anyone could enjoy it. "We are excited for new eyeballs and think the new way in will get everyone up to speed quickly so they can strap in and enjoy the season!" the pair said via email. So if you're sitting at home practicing social distancing and need a good laugh, Pop is a good place to go. "We are so happy to put a little kindness and love and laughter into the world, especially right now," Royce said. – *Sara Winegardner*

**Reviews:** "Behind Her Faith," streaming from Thursday, **UMC**. There's little chance that *Jay Ellis* and *Paula Bryant-Ellis* knew their faith-based interview series would begin streaming at a time when many viewers are looking inward for answers about life and death. So, it is with this interesting look at different female actors discussing their faith. For the most part the visual is simple: the actor is seated with a nondescript background. *Essence Atkins* traces her faith to when she hears the voice of God. This story comes not long after she discusses an audition for "The Cosby Show." She notes, by the way, that *Bill Cosby* never interacted with her inappropriately. A great change from Atkins is the next 20-minute installment, with the outlandish and hilarious *Niecy Nash*. Her path to faith happened when she was 5 year, watching TV with her grandmother, and *Lola Falana* came on the screen. -- **Notable, Not Reviewed:** "Pandemic: COVID-19," premiere, 10pm, Wednesday, **Discovery** and **Science Channel**. On the theory that viewers haven't seen enough about coronavirus yet, Discovery and Science will delve into the history of the pandemic, breaking down this earth-shattering incident it into its basic elements. For example, how did the virus transfer from an animal to a human? What occurred in Wuhan, China, and how did the virus make its way around the world? – *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable P2+ Prime Rankings* (03/09/20-03/15/20)		
Mon-Sun	MC US	MC US AA
	AA%	(000)
FNC	1.154	3,546
CNN	0.881	2,707
MSNBC	0.683	2,100
TBSC	0.383	1,178
HGTV	0.366	1,124
TLC	0.340	1,044
A&E	0.340	1,044
HIST	0.333	1,025
DISC	0.323	993
FOOD	0.295	908
USA	0.264	812
TNT	0.261	801
HALL	0.252	775
ESPN	0.216	665
INSP	0.216	662
ID	0.214	656
BRAVO	0.212	652
AMC	0.203	625
NICK	0.187	575
TVLAND	0.178	546
ADSM	0.161	495
FX	0.158	485
NAN	0.157	482
LIFE	0.150	461
HBO	0.148	455
HMM	0.146	448
GSN	0.138	425
CRN	0.134	413
WETV	0.127	389
SYFY	0.125	385
MTV	0.123	376
DSNY	0.119	366
FRFM	0.117	361
DSJR	0.117	360
COM	0.117	359
BET	0.117	358
NKJR	0.116	356
VH1	0.115	354
TRAVEL	0.113	348
PARA	0.110	339
OXY	0.108	331

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

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