

Cablefax Daily™

Wednesday — April 1, 2020

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 31 / No. 063

Just Like Us: FCC Unites During COVID-19 Crisis

Like other Americans, the **FCC** has had to adjust to the new normal brought on by the coronavirus pandemic. That meant voting ahead of time on the items listed in the agenda for Tuesday's open meeting held by teleconference. The meeting primarily consisted of short comments from each commissioner on the Commission's efforts to keep people connected during the crisis. Commish *Michael O'Rielly* said during a virtual press call that it has been a struggle to find time for meetings with his fellow commissioners as they, like many others, try to juggle completing their daily tasks with taking care of their children. Still, he was happy with the format of Tuesday's meeting and remained confident that the Commission could continue working effectively from home. There have been adjustments, and the Commission has also had to deal with loss with one **FCC** contractor to the coronavirus. No further details were provided as to the person's identity and it is currently being determined how many members of FCC staff that person had contact with in the days ahead of their passing. There was still room for some good news to be discussed in the meeting. Commish *Brendan Carr* said the FCC has been in constant contact with ISPs and third party application providers alike in an effort to monitor network traffic. Thus far, the surge in traffic he has seen is "well within the capacity of the US networks." The situation has also, for now, dissolved the rancor that existed between the Democratic and Republican commissioners with all five items on the agenda being unanimously approved. But that peace may not last long with the Democrats feeling that the FCC is not doing enough to support the majority of American workers and children that have been forced to stay home for the foreseeable future. Commissioner *Jessica Rosenworcel* said the Commission has the authority to extend the Keep Americas Connected pledge so that those with prepaid wireless plans are covered as well and that it should extend lifelines to all those who are newly in need. Commissioner *Geoffrey Starks* said during his remarks that he believes the FCC needs to enact a stimulus to bolster the economy, and that its efforts should start with \$8bln the FCC has allocated to bringing communication services to low-income and rural communities. "Our long-standing digital divide has morphed into a monstrous new COVID-19 divide. The time to expand the reach of E-Rate is now," Starks said. It has not yet been decided whether the FCC's April meeting will be held via teleconference as well, but chmn *Ajit Pai* said the agenda will be described in a blog post to be posted in a few days. While the FCC has had

THE FAXIES

RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE IN PR & MARKETING

Your hard work is done – and now it's time for you and your team to get recognized!

Honoring those people, shows, and networks who excel in PR, digital content, marketing, advertising, social media and audience engagement.

BEST PRICE DEADLINE: April 24



Submit your entries now to take advantage of the best price available.

www.TheFAXIES.com

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

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.

Amy Maclean, Editorial Director, amaclean@accessintel.com or 301.354.1760

Sara Winegardner at swinegardner@cablefax.com or 301.354.1701

Mollie Cahillane at mcahillane@cablefax.com or 212.621.4951

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 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 \$150 match-up between the Lakers and Bucks.

Comcast Boosts Internet Essentials: **Comcast** is responding to the Covid-19 crisis by increasing the speeds of its low-income Internet Essentials service. New customers can sign up for 60 days of service at no cost. 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**

Cablefax Daily (ISSN 1069-6644) is published daily by Access Intelligence, LLC ● www.cablefax.com ● 301.354.2101 ● Editorial Director: Amy Maclean, 301.354.1760, amaclean@accessintel.com ● Publisher: Michael Grebb, 323.380.6263, mgrebb@accessintel.com ● Senior Editor: Sara Winegardner, 301.354.1701, swinegardner@accessintel.com ● Associate Editor: Mollie Cahillane, 212.621.4951, mcahillane@accessintel.com ● Acct. Exec: Olivia Murray, 301.354.2010, omurray@accessintel.com ● Director of Marketing: Kate Schaeffer, kschaeffer@accessintel.com ● Prod. Mgr: Joann Fato, jfato@accessintel.com ● Kerry Smith, Divisional President, Marketing & Media Group, ksmith@accessintel.com ● Group Subs or Subscription Questions, Client Services: 301.354.2101, clientservices@accessintel.com ● Annual subscription price: \$1,749.00/year ● Access Intelligence, LLC, 9211 Corporate Blvd., 4th Floor, Rockville, MD 20850

to push back the CBRS auction, O’Rielly reiterated that he does not believe the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund auction or the C-band auction coming later this year will be impacted. Moreover, he’s optimistic that an item laying out a plan to open the 6GHz band for spectrum sharing will be included in the agenda.

Commission Actions: The **FCC** unanimously voted ahead of its open meeting Tuesday to adopt an NPRM that would modernize digital transmission systems rules to facilitate the use of ATSC 3.0, also known as Next Gen TV. Those digital transmission systems can permit broadcast signals to serve hard-to-reach viewers, improve indoor and mobile reception and more efficiently use TV spectrum. The Commission is now seeking comment on potential impacts to other spectrum users including TV translators and low-power TV stations and to what extent the proposed changes would be appropriate for stations broadcasting in ATSC 1.0. Broadcasters including **TEGNA** and **Nexstar** have committed to rolling out the standard to the top 40 markets by the end of 2020. -- The FCC also issued a waiver allowing competitive eligible telecom carriers to use their high-cost legacy support in the service areas of any affiliated eligible telecom carrier in order to respond to the COVID-19 epidemic. Commission rules require all legacy high-cost support to be used in a particular service area, but that will now be waived until June 30. -- The Commission adopted new rules requiring carriers to implement STIR/SHAKEN technical standards for caller ID authentication and an NPRM to take public comment on expanding the mandate to cover intermediate voice service providers.

USDA Working on Broadband Funds: The **US Dept of Agriculture** has extended the deadline to apply for round two of its Reconnect Pilot Program until April 15, citing the COVID-19 national emergency. The program provides loans and grants for the costs of construction, improvement or acquisition of facilities and equipment needed to provide broadband service in eligible rural areas. As for additional broadband money given to the USDA through the CARES Act, the Department expects to make an announcement soon regarding plans for the stimulus funding. The act includes \$100mIn for additional grants under the RUS’s broadband deployment pilot program, originally created in 2018 with \$600 million in funding. It also includes \$25mIn to be added to the budget for RUS Distance Learning, Telemedicine and Broad-band Program. On Monday, **FCC** chmn **Ajit Pai** circulated a plan to the other commissioners on how to spend the \$200mIn the agency is receiving for telehealth funding.

NFL Expands Playoffs: The NFL owners voted to expand the playoffs to 14 teams for the 2020 season, which will add postseason games to **Nickelodeon** and to **NBCU’s** upcoming streamer **Peacock**. The expansion will add two wildcard games, with one broadcast on **CBS** and streamed on **CBS All Access**, and a separately-produced broadcast on Nickelodeon geared toward a younger audience. The second game will air **NBC** and **Telemundo**, and streamed on Peacock.

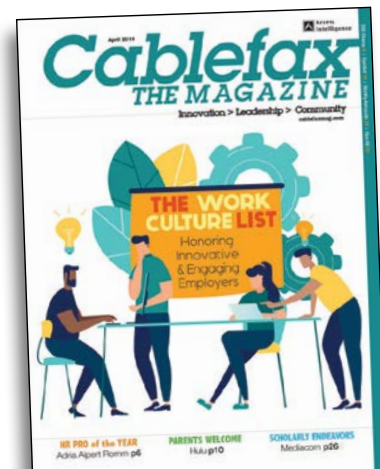
The
**WORK
CULTURE
List**

PRESENTED BY CABLEFAX
www.CFXworkculture.com

Congratulate the
**WORK CULTURE LIST
HONOREES**

**Recognize Innovative & Engaging Employers
who are making work more than a job.**

Being part of this new tradition is the best way to inspire your team,
recognize excellence and reach the leaders whose decisions will determine
the future and shape the workplace environment for years to come.



Advertising Deadline: April 8 | Publication Date: April 22

Contact: Olivia Murray at omurray@accessintel.com or 301.354.2010

NCTA Launches Internet Dashboard: As [promised](#), NCTA debuted a tool Tuesday designed to allow the public and policymakers to track growth in internet traffic during the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 internet [dashboard](#) gives weekly data on how cable broadband networks are performing and also shows growth and performance for both upstream and downstream traffic on a national and a state-by-state basis. Companies currently reporting include: **Charter, Comcast, Cox, GCI** and **Midco**, and others will be added in the coming weeks. NCTA reports that overall its participating members have seen about a 20% uptick in downstream growth since March 1, with upstream peak growth averaging 27.7%. On a weekly basis for the week of March 21, downstream is up 4.3% and upstream is up 7.3%.

Doing Good: Sunday night's broadcast of the **Fox/iHeart** special "Fox Presents the iHeart Living Room Concert for America" raised nearly \$8mln for **Feeding America** and **First Responders Children's Foundation**. **YouTube**, which also donated in support of the cause, is now streaming the concert through Wednesday at 10pm. -- **AT&T Business** partnered with **VitalTech** to offer 60 days of free telehealth services to business customers, including hospitals supporting their physicians and patients through the VitalCare platform. AT&T will provide secure connectivity and data analytics.

Fox Announces Risk of Material Adverse Effect: **Fox Corp** became the latest media company to state that COVID-19 will likely impact its business. The company said the outbreak "could have a material adverse effect on the Company's business, financial condition or results of operations over the near to medium term," in an **SEC** filing. The company noted that while Fox News' ratings are strong, "sports events for which the company has broadcast rights have been cancelled or postponed" and production has been suspended.

Verizon Enhances Pay for Essential Employees: **Verizon** is now offering enhanced pay for its essential on-site employees who must go into the field to serve customers, maintain networks or work in stores. Eligible retail employees will receive an increase in their base hourly rate, and network, logistics and real estate employees will receive an enhancement on top of their regular base wages.

SCTE-ISBE Starts New Working Groups: **SCTE-ISBE** launched an initiative Tuesday designed to bring together leaders from diverse backgrounds to better prepare for future challenges and crises in the next era of connectivity. Called the Explorer initiative, the program will initially encompass seven new SCTE-ISBE Standards working groups addressing areas like telemedicine, AI and smart cities.

Coronavirus Programming: **Comcast** made nearly 2K hours of programming and thousands of titles available for free to Xfinity video customers to give children and parents easy access to educational content, sorted by grade level. The collection is part of a joint effort with **Common Sense Media**, and a subset of the education connection is available on Xfinity Flex and across devices via the Xfinity Stream app and website. -- **Spectrum News Networks** have seen double-digit viewership growth and have adapted programming to provide relevant coverage on the coronavirus for local communities. **Spectrum News NY1** added a daily one-hour call-in show "One New York," and **Spectrum News 13** and **Bay News 9** in Florida aired an hour-long special "Coronavirus: Unmasked." **Spectrum News 1** in Southern CA added a 9pm newscast and increased its daily COVID-19 updates to include reports every half hour. Additionally, Spectrum Networks opened its paywalls for 60 days to provide non-Spectrum customers free access to live streams of its linear channels.

Ratings: **Fox News** had its highest-rated quarter in network history across total day and primetime. In total day it averaged 1.9mln viewers, up 38%. **CNN** and **MSNBC** also saw growth in total day in the quarter, with MSNBC up 1% to 1.095mln and CNN up 26% to 901K. In primetime, Fox News averaged 3.4mln viewers, followed by MSNBC with 1.928mln and CNN with 1.427mln. -- **Disney+**'s "The Mandalorian" is the No 1 digital original in all seven markets where the streamer launched March 24, according to research from **Parrot Analytics**. In Germany, the series was 43.21x more in-demand than the average TV series, and was the most in-demand series overall in the country. In the UK it was 34.95x more in-demand than the average series, and number five overall most in-demand.

Programming: **ESPN** and **Netflix** are moving up the premiere of docuseries "The Last Dance." The 10-part series on **Michael Jordan** and the Chicago Bulls 1998 season will now premiere April 19, and air in the US on Sunday nights over five weeks. It will be available outside the US on Netflix. -- **Fox Sports** is amping up its esports lineup, adding World of Outlaws iRacing from the virtual Dirt Track at Charlotte on Wednesday at 8pm on **FS1**. Fox Sports is also teaming up with **WWE** for a massive slate of programming, including the net's first-ever PPV of "Wrestlemania" on the Fox Sports App. The event takes place over two nights on Saturday and Sunday at 7pm. Fox Sports will also present 22 hours of WWE content to air on Tuesday nights this spring, beginning with "Royal Rumble 2020" Tuesday at 7pm on FS1.

Editor's Note: **Cablefax** is now accepting entries for our annual [Faxies Awards](#), celebrating excellence across all areas of marketing and PR. Enter by April 24 for the best pricing option.