

# Cablefax Daily™

Friday — June 5, 2020

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 31 / No. 109

## Second Try: FCC Revises C-band Cost Catalog

The FCC is taking another look at the technology costs associated with relocating users of the lower 300MHz of the C-band to the upper 200MHz ahead of its December spectrum auction. The Commission's **Wireless Telecommunications Bureau** is seeking comment on its updated estimates of the relocation costs MVPDs will see as a result of the C-band repack as well as the new methods through which it has determined those costs. The FCC will also allow various earth station operators to receive lump sum payments as compensation for relocation costs. The alternative path for eligible earth station operators would be calculating the actual costs associated with the C-band transition and reporting that back to the Commission. The proposed modifications come just over a month after the FCC introduced an initial cost catalog and asked for comment on what categories were missing and if the ones that were included accounted for a substantial portion of the costs associated with the repack. Commenters pointed to a number of holes in the catalog that needed to be filled before it accurately represented the costs MVPDs would incur from the repack. **ACA Connects** proposed that the Bureau implement a lump sum amount to be offered to MVPD earth stations. **Cox Communications** asked the Commission to add additional class categories for MVPD earth stations, including MVPD small receive-only, MVPD large receive-only and MVPD large multi-bean earth stations. The WTB has added those class categories to the updated catalog. "We propose a modified list of earth station classes to more accurately reflect the types of earth stations currently operating in the contiguous United States and to account for the additional costs that MVPD earth station operators may incur during the transition," the WTB wrote in the public notice. To determine the relevant lump sum amount, the threshold question is whether the earth station is used for MVPD or non-MVPD operations. While non-MVPD earth station operators would be eligible to receive the base amounts for whatever class of earth station they operate, MVPD station operators would be able to receive the base amount as well an amount associated with any relevant technology upgrades needed to transition that station.

**Senators Want Answers on HBO Max Data Cap Exemption:** Though the 2015 net neutrality order is no longer in effect, lawmakers are keeping a close eye to ensure operators aren't creating their own internet fast lanes. Sens *Ed Markey* (D-MA), *Ron Wyden* (D-OR) and *Richard Blumenthal* (D-CT) sent a letter to **AT&T** CEO *Randall Stephenson* demanding

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details on how the company's sponsored data program works in response to reports by *The Verge* that streamer **HBO Max** is exempt from AT&T data caps. "According to recent reporting and comments from AT&T executives, your company has a policy of favoring a specific streaming service in a manner that appears to run contrary to your stated support for a free and open internet," the senators wrote. "The Trump FCC may have gutted critical net neutrality protections, but AT&T nonetheless has a responsibility to avoid any policies or practices that harm consumers and stifle competition." The senators have asked Stephenson to provide them with an explanation for the behavior by June 25.

**Still Hiring:** About a month after announcing it had hired more than 3K workers during the pandemic, **Charter** says it has now hired more than 4,500 new employees and is still looking to fill thousands of more openings in its 41-state footprint. Nearly all employees being hired are using virtual recruiting. Charter isn't alone. **Midco** is promoting that it's hiring customer care support in Sioux Falls and Fargo, offering virtual training and temporary work-from-home status. Others with help wanted signs out include **Sparklight**, which has been advertising several openings over the past couple months, including for business account execs.

**Sports Update:** The **NBA** board approved a 22-team format to finish the season with a tentative start date of July 31. The 2019-20 season was paused in early March due to the coronavirus. The season will be restarted in Orlando, contingent on an agreement with **Disney** to use Walt Disney World Resort. The 22 returning teams would be the 16 teams (eight per conference) in current playoff positions and the six teams that are six games or fewer behind the eighth seed in their respective conferences. **ABC**, **TNT** and **ESPN** currently have the broadcast rights to the league, as well as **NBA TV**. -- The **NHL** announced more details of its playoff format, following approval by the league's board of governors and the NHLPA. The qualifying round would be a best-of-five series, and all other rounds would be a best-of-seven series. **NBC Sports** currently has the broadcast rights in the US, as well as multiple RSNs. -- Tennis competitions continue internationally, with **Tennis Channel** adding live coverage from the Valencia Tennis Challenge in Spain this weekend. Beginning Friday at 10:30am, the net will show 12 total hours of the event live on air and on-demand.

**FCC Wants to Team with Energy:** The **FCC** wants to work together with the **Department of Energy** to further increase spectrum efficiency. FCC commish *Michael O'Rielly* said in a letter to Department of Energy Secretary *Dan Brouillette* that he had FCC chmn *Ajit Pai*'s support in forming an inter-agency working group for the purposes of discussing how modern building techniques affect wireless propagation and exploring various modifications to building codes that would promote spectrum efficiency.

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.

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

**The Collapse of Theatrical Windows?:** With theaters shuttering, will day-and-date releases become the new normal? **Universal Pictures** is the first out of the gate, announcing "Trolls World Tour" will be available April 10 for a rental. Other in-release movie titles are set to be available as soon as this Friday. The movies will be available on **Comcast**, **Sky** and a "broad range of on-demand partners." Titles to be made available include "The Man" and "Emma" with a suggested retail price of \$19.99 in the US.

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 set aside their retrans dispute for now so that **DISH** can resume its carriage of 10 CMG stations in New York, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, Louisiana, California, Mississippi and Idaho. No word on how long the truce will last.

# 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 service remains uninterrupted.

Wednesday — March 18, 2020 *What the Industry Reads First*

**Covering Covid-19: Content Companies Step Up Efforts**  
Programmers are shuffling schedules to respond to the coronavirus crisis. **The Weather Channel** is airing live programming at 50 minutes past the hour to share educational content. **ESPN** is airing live programming at 50 minutes past the hour to share educational content. **Pledge** is airing live programming at 50 minutes past the hour to share educational content. **Pledge** is airing live programming at 50 minutes past the hour to share educational content. **Pledge** is airing live programming at 50 minutes past the hour to share educational content.

**From the Commission:** Another 116 broadband and telephone service providers have taken the **Pai's Keep Americans Connected Pledge**, agreeing to take specific steps to keep Americans connected for 60 days. Some notable names taking the pledge include **Hotwire Communications**, **Midco**

**Lawmakers Push for National AI Cloud:** Reps *Anna Eshoo* (D-CA), *Anthony Gonzales* (R-OH) and *Mikie Sherrill* (D-NJ) introduced legislation Thursday that would establish a task force to develop a roadmap for a national artificial intelligence research resource. The National AI Research Resource Task Force Act would bring together technical experts across academia, government and industry to develop a detailed plan for how the US can build and sustain a national research cloud. Sens *Rob Portman* (R-OH) and *Martin Heinrich* (D-NM) introduced companion legislation in the Senate.

**In Support:** Five of **AMC Networks'** national nets (**AMC, IFC, WE tv, BBC America** and **Sundance TV**), in partnership with the **NAACP**, went dark for eight minutes and 46 seconds on Thursday at 3:45pm, the amount of time a Minneapolis police officer restrained *George Floyd* with a knee on his neck. The company is also giving employees \$1,000 to donate to charitable organizations that tackle issues of racial inequality. The goal is to have the donations spread among organizations that employees already work with or support, and help smaller organizations at the grassroots level. -- **NAMIC** pres/CEO *Shuanise Washington* released a statement about *George Floyd's* death, saying "This senseless tragedy reinforces the need for greater diversity and inclusion in our communities and workplaces. And it reaffirms NAMIC's mission and further strengthens our resolve and determination to keep pressing forward." She is also encouraging people to visit the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture, which launched new online portal Talking About Race, designed to help individuals, families, and communities talk about racism, racial identity, and the way these forces shape every aspect of society, from the economy to the workplace.

**Univision Launches Voter Tool:** **Univision** released its new voter analytics and media optimization tool VAMOS on Thursday, working to provide media buyers and political consultants with the opportunity to make better informed buying decisions to engage Hispanic voters. The company said the tool consolidates Univision's insights, combined with "richer data" that had only recently become available. It includes data regarding the likelihood of Hispanics to vote Democratic, Republican or to be swing voters, but also includes insights regarding partisanship, ideology and issue preference.

**Comcast Redeems Debt:** **Comcast** announced it redeemed all \$1.43bln principal amount outstanding of its 4.05% senior notes due Aug 1, 2046, at a price equal to 100% of the principal amount of the notes being redeemed plus any accrued and unpaid interest to, but not including, the redemption date.

**Element Forms Investment Committee:** **Element Acquisition Corp** created an investment committee with veterans of the media, entertainment and sports sectors. The committee will oversee a strategy aimed at acquiring and investing in companies across those industries. Members of the committee include former **EPIX** chief *Mark Greenberg* and former **HBO** pres, film programming *Steve Scheffer*.

**Ratings:** **WE tv's** "Growing Up Hip Hop" brought in season high ratings and three consecutive weeks of viewership growth. The latest episode saw 900K total viewers, a season high, and season highs among A25-54, W18-49 and 25-54. -- **Discovery Channel** and **Science Channel** ratings hit new records on Saturday with the launch of SpaceX's Crew Dragon. The live coverage of the launch on Discovery brought in more than 4.7mln total viewers, making it the No 1 non-prime telecast in the history of the net. The launch was the highest-rated telecast in the history of Science Channel, bringing in 1.31mln viewers. Combined, the nets reached 7.21mln viewers across two hours.

**Programming:** **Revolt** will air a new episode of "Revolt Black News" Thursday at 9pm, titled "Organizing Power: Taking This Sh\*t Back." The one-hour episode continues the discussion around what happens next after updates in *George Floyd's* case. -- **OWN** will air a two-night special "OWN Spotlight: Where Do We Go From Here?" that will simulcast on OWN and across all of **Discovery's** 18 other US networks on June 9 and 10 at 9pm. Guests include *Stacey Abrams, Keisha Lance Bottoms, Ava DuVernay* and more.

**People:** **WOW!** welcomed *John Regu* as CFO and *Shannon Campaign* as chief commercial officer, respectively. Regu, who will assume his role on June 29, most recently served as CFO for video management platform company **Telaria**. He fills the hole left by *Rich Fish*, who left the company on April 1. Campaign starts on June 15 and replaces *Nancy McGee*, who is retiring as chief marketing and sales officer after 25 years in the industry. Campaign has held consultancy roles with **Fox Corp** and **Discovery** and also spent time at **CenturyLink** and **AT&T**. -- **fuboTV** named *Simone Nardi* its new CFO. The exec formerly served as svp and CFO, international for **Scripps Network** and held the same title for **NBCU** international channels. -- *Dave Watson*, pres/CEO of **Comcast Cable**, was elected chmn of the board of **NCTA**. *Pat McAdaragh*, pres/CEO of **Midco**, as vice chmn; *Tom Rutledge*, chmn/CEO, **Charter Communications**, as treasurer; *Bob Bakish*, pres/CEO, **ViacomCBS**, as secretary; and *Pat Esser*, pres, **Cox Communications**, as immediate past chmn. Newly named **WarnerMedia** CEO *Jason Kilar* joined the board, replacing *John Stankey*.

# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

## '90 Day' Passport Gets Another Stamp

TLC's "90 Day Fiancé" is back—or did it ever really leave? Even during COVID-19, the popular franchise from Sharp Entertainment has rolled out new, remotely produced episodes of couples sheltering in place with "90 Day Fiancé: Self-Quarantined"—and it's been some of the most riveting pandemic content we've seen with check-ins from the cast all over the world. The show's '90 day' name comes from the premise that Americans are requesting K-1 visas for their loves, which requires a foreigner to marry his or her US citizen petitioner within 90 days of entry. On Monday at 9pm, TLC debuts "90 Day Fiancé: The Other Way," which flips the script and has six Americans traveling to other countries to be with the person they love. The sophomore season of The Other Way comes after Season 1 ranked as highest-rated freshman series on TLC since 2013 (2.31 W25-54 rating; ranking #2 in its 9pm timeslot among that demo and W18-49 and 18-34). Network brass feel pretty confident round two will see similar success. "90 Day has a special vantage point in that it's about finding love in truly unexpected places. It poses some really profound questions—can love bridge the gap across distance, religion, race, language, culture and life experience. Despite all our differences, can love win out?" said Alon Orstein, svp, production and development for TLC. "In a lot of ways, it's really emblematic of our times and that's why we feel it's resonating." This season, Americans travel to Jordan, Mexico, Ethiopia, Colombia, India and South Korea in their quests for love. Orstein believes the US citizen as a fish out of water is one factor in The Other Way's popularity. "But what also intrigued us was the opportunity to do a much deeper dive into these different countries and cultures, shedding light on the myriad of ways that they navigate love and courtships and just day to day life," he said. – Amy Maclean

**Reviews:** "Gordon Ramsay: Uncharted," Season 2 premiere, 10pm, Sunday, **Nat Geo.** In the sophomore-season debut, blue-mouthed chef Gordon Ramsay explores Tasmania, catching and diving for fish and gathering fresh ingredients. The scenery is magnificent. At the ep's end, Ramsay prepares a feast for his guides. It's a pleasure to see the chef not yelling at underlings as he's done so often elsewhere. While Ramsay's still Ramsay, he actually has a decent personality. – Notable: "The PBS Newshour" will run a special, "Race Matters: America in Crisis," June 5, 9pm ET, with contributions from correspondents Yamiche Alcindor, Aman Nawaz and special correspondent Charlayne Hunter-Gault. The Newshour special is part of a series of racism-related programs **PBS** is either re-broadcasting or debuting. Two of our favorite encores: the re-broadcast of "Twilight: Los Angeles" (Monday, 10pm ET), the one-woman show of Anna Deavere Smith that details the aftermath of the Rodney King verdict in 1992; and "Frontline: Policing the Police" (June 5, 10pm ET), where historian Jelani Cobb profiles abuses in the Newark, NJ, police department. – Seth Arenstein

Basic Cable P2+ Prime Rankings* (05/25/20-05/31/20)		
Mon-Sun	MC US	MC US AA
	AA%	(000)
FNC	1.099	3,378
CNN	0.757	2,326
MSNBC	0.653	2,006
HIST	0.471	1,446
HGTV	0.416	1,278
TLC	0.385	1,184
TBSC	0.340	1,045
HALL	0.282	867
FOOD	0.262	804
USA	0.261	801
ID	0.260	798
DISC	0.257	791
A&E	0.250	770
INSP	0.200	614
TNT	0.195	599
TVLAND	0.186	570
BRAVO	0.176	542
HMM	0.171	525
ADSM	0.163	502
AMC	0.161	496
SYFY	0.161	493
GSN	0.160	491
FX	0.158	485
LIFE	0.150	460
NAN	0.146	450
WETV	0.138	425
NICK	0.137	421
ESPN	0.136	419
MTV	0.130	398
APL	0.126	388
TRAVEL	0.122	376
NATGEO	0.120	370
BET	0.118	364
FRFM	0.116	358
PARA	0.111	341
COM	0.111	340
SCIENCE	0.111	340
NKJR	0.107	328
OXY	0.104	320
DSNY	0.103	317
DSJR	0.102	314

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

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**Publication Date: July 22, 2020**

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