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What the Industry Reads First

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Green Light: FCC Wins DC Circuit C-band Battle

The FCC won a major battle at the DC Circuit Tuesday with the court deciding not to stay the Commission's C-band auction order. The DC Circuit ruled that the appellants had not "satisfied the stringent requirements for a stay pending appeal." The companies appealing for a stay of the auction included satellite operators **ABS Global Ltd**, **Empresa Argentina de Soluciones Satelitales SA**, **Hisparmar Satélites SA** and **Hispasat SA**. At the center of the dispute is the FCC's decision to offer incentive payments to certain satellite operators that relocate to the upper 200MHz of the band on an expedited basis. **Telesat**, **SES**, **Eutelsat** and **Intelsat** all elected to choose the expedited plan. The challenging operators were deemed not eligible to receive those payments by the FCC because they provide no service within the US. But the small satellite operators believe they are deserving of those payments and argued that the election would cause them irreparable harm by "benefiting competing space station operators that are eligible for relocation and accelerated relocation payments and depriving them of spectrum access rights without compensation." They also questioned the FCC's authority to modify their spectrum access rights. "Today's ruling is great news for American consumers and US leadership in 5G," FCC chmn *Ajit Pai* said in a statement. "I am very pleased that the DC Circuit rejected this attempt by small satellite operators with no US operations in the C-band to delay our efforts to repurpose critical mid-band spectrum." The court's decision comes two weeks after the FCC denied a petition from the same group of satellite operators to stay the C-band auction and transition process pending judicial review. Similar to statements made by the DC Circuit in its ruling, the Commission ruled that the petitioners had not shown that they would suffer irreparable harm or a likelihood of success on the case's merits. "The harm that Petitioners allege is not imminent, is conjectural, and consists of economic injuries that are not severe enough to be cognizable as irreparable harm," FCC Wireless Telecommunications Bureau chief *Donald Stockdale* said in the order. The C-band war isn't quite over, however. The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau is currently seeking comment on another request for stay pending judicial review, this time from **PSSI Global Services**. It has also submitted a challenge to the DC Circuit, claiming the relocation of services will destroy satellite video distribution systems. Comments in the docket are due Thursday; reply comments are due June 30.



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Cable Center Reschedules Hall of Fame: The Cable Center's 23rd annual Cable Hall of Fame has been rescheduled for April 29, 2021. The gala will be held in NYC at the Ziegfeld Ballroom. The event was originally scheduled for April 30, but was then pushed to the fall because of the pandemic. The Cable Center said it will release more details in the coming days. The honorees to be celebrated at the event include **Baker Media** CEO *Bridget Baker*, **Charter Communications** advisor to the CEO *Jim Blackley*, **Urban One** founder/chairwoman *Cathy Hughes*, **TV One** chmn/CEO and **Urban One** CEO *Alfred Liggins III*, cable pioneer *Jeff Marcus*, **Comcast Cable** pres/CEO *Dave Watson* and **WarnerMedia News and Sports** chmn *Jeff Zucker*.

Senators Propose Fast-Tracking RDOF Buildouts: Sens *Roger Wicker* (R-MS), *Shelly Moore Capito* (R-WV) and *Marsha Blackburn* (R-TN) introduced an act Tuesday designed to incentivize winning bidders of the **FCC's** Rural Digital Opportunity Fund auction to complete their buildout obligations on a shorter timeline. The Accelerating Broadband Connectivity Act would create a fund to be used by the FCC to incentivize those bidders and require service providers who receive funds to meet a series of accelerated milestones for their RDOF deployments. **NTCA - The Rural Broadband Association**, **USTelecom** and FCC chmn *Ajit Pai* are amongst those that have endorsed the legislation.

Doing Good: Mediacom is extending its previously announced coronavirus relief initiatives through its July and August billing cycles. Specifically, it will continue offering its Connect2Compete low-cost broadband program free for 60 days to new qualifying families, pause monthly data allowances across all internet service tiers, provide complimentary access to all WiFi hotspots and extend the pricing of its Access Internet 60 service to new customers at \$19.99/month for 12 months. In addition, starting with the September billing cycle and continuing through the end of 2020, Mediacom will provide up to 100GB of additional free data to any broadband customer who exceeds the monthly data allowance. "As we look ahead to the start of the 2020-21 school year and the reopening of more and more businesses, we hope today's announcement will bring some comfort to our customers as they work towards transitioning back to normal," Mediacom evp, operations *John Pascarelli* said in a statement.

At the Commission: The **FCC** is making good on its promise to investigate the nationwide **T-Mobile** outage that occurred on June 15. The Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau opened a public docket Tuesday and is seeking comment on the impact of the outages from the perspective of public safety entities, state and local governments and individual or enterprise consumers. Among other things, the Commission wants an estimate of how many calls, including 911 calls, failed and how the outage affected businesses like hospitals. Comments are due

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RESUMES

July 8. -- FCC chmn *Ajit Pai* circulated draft rules that would establish 988 as the new nationwide suicide prevention hotline number. The rules, if adopted by the Commission at its July 16 open meeting, would require all phone service providers to begin directing all 988 calls to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline by July 16, 2022.

Baseball Coming Back: We may soon have baseball on our TVs again, as **MLB** clubs voted unanimously to move ahead with the 2020 season under the terms of their March agreement with the Players Association. Commissioner *Rob Manfred* will decide how many games are played, and the hope is for players to report to training camp by July 1. As of Tuesday, it looks like MLB is targeting a 60 game season to begin around July 24.

NextGen TV Launches in Nashville: Five of Nashville's local affiliates are some of the first in the country to begin broadcasting with NextGen TV, powered by ATSC 3.0. Participating stations include those owned by **Sinclair**, **Nexstar**, **Nashville Broadcasting** and **EW Scripps Company**. WTVF (CBS), WKRN-TV (ABC), WZTV (FOX), WUXP-TV (MyNet) and WNAB (CW) have all cooperated to make sure all existing programming remains available to all viewers, regardless of how they receive their television service.

SCTE Scholarship: The **SCTE Foundation** named *Rachael Markinson*, a **Charter** network operations center manager in Texas, the 2020 recipient of the Catherine Oakes Memorial Leadership Scholarship for Women. She was awarded a grant of \$3.5K to attend the **WICT** EDS: Executive Leadership Presence workshop later this year.

Distribution: **Disney+** is launching in eight more European markets on Sept 15. The streamer will be available in Portugal, Belgium, Finland, Iceland, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden and Denmark. -- **NBCUniversal's** streamer **Peacock** will be available on **Google** platforms and devices (including Android, Android TV and Chromecast) at its widespread launch on July 15. The company is offering Peacock Premium free to those users for three months, until Oct 15, 2020. Once the promotion ends, the streamer will be available for \$4.99 a month, or consumers can upgrade to an ad-free version for \$5 more per month. There is also a free tier with around 7.5K hours of content.

Ratings: **Fox News** once again was the most watched net in all of cable across total day and primetime for the week. The net pulled in 3.798mln viewers in prime, followed by **MSNBC** with 2.022mln and **CNN** with 1.665mln. In total day, Fox saw 1.766mln viewers, MSNBC had 1.205mln and CNN reached 1.068mln. -- The virtual ESPYs pulled in 482K viewers across **ESPN** and **ESPN2**. The show aired on the cable nets instead of **ABC** on Sunday for the first time in five years. The 2019 ESPYs saw 3.9mln viewers. -- **INSP's** world premiere of "The Warrant" earned the second highest ratings for any movie from INSP Films. The June 20 premiere averaged a .512HH rating.

Doing Good: **AT&T** and **CNN** are collaborating on a program to support student expression and teach writing and journalism skills. "Youth Voices Collective" is part of a \$1mln contribution to literacy groups. The program will provide instruction and publishing opportunities to thousands of students across the US, with opportunities to learn from CNN journalists.

Programming: *Mike Rowe* is returning to **Discovery Channel** in a new four-episode series "Dirty Jobs: Rowe'd Trip." The part reunion, part special, part road-trip series premieres July 7 at 9pm. -- **Nickelodeon** is bringing back "Nick News" for a series of specials, beginning with "Kids, Race and Unity" hosted by *Alicia Keys* on June 29 at 7pm. -- **HBO** Europe's "PATRIA" will premiere Sept 27 in the US and in Latin America on Sept 30. New episodes will be released weekly in the US across **HBO**, **HBO Now**, **HBO Go** and **HBO Max**. The series was originally supposed to debut in May. -- **Netflix** picked up "#blackAF" for Season 2. The *Kenya Barris* comedy first premiered April 17 and stars Barris as a fictional version of himself. The streamer also ordered a sixth season of "Lucifer," which it said will be the series' last. However, Netflix also said that about Season 5, so stay tuned... -- **CuriosityStream** partnered up with production company **Doclights** to bring 50 original natural history documentaries to its SVOD and pay TV services worldwide in 2020. The first 10 titles will debut on the service July 2. -- **Disney Channel** ordered a third season of animated comedy "Amphibia" ahead of the Season 2 premiere on July 11 at 8:20pm. -- **WarnerMedia** and **iHeartRadio** struck a deal to co-produce a slate of companion podcasts for **HBO Max's** upcoming slate of legacy and original shows. The first podcasts will go alongside "Search Party" and "Raised by Wolves." -- Speaking of podcasts, **Court TV** announced its first serialized podcast series. "Murder and the Mendez Brothers: A Court TV Mystery" premiered Tuesday, with new installments available every week for six weeks.

People: **Sprint** veteran *Ivo Rook* is now serving as svp of IoT for **T-Mobile**. He was previously svp of IoT and product development for **Sprint**. The news was first reported by *Light Reading*.