

# Cablefax Daily™

Tuesday — July 14, 2020

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 31 / No. 134

## All In: Charter Signals RDOF Auction Participation

**Charter** is officially participating in the **FCC's** Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Phase I auction, notifying regulators in an 8-K Monday that it will join others hoping to receive a portion of the \$16bln in government subsidies that's up for grabs. The company's interest in the auction isn't much of a shock. Charter executives have previously identified it as an area of interest, and the company has already been active in FCC proceedings leading up to the auction. In April, it filed a petition asking the Commission to remove 2400 census blocks in rural NY from the list of locales eligible for RDOF funding, citing buildout requirements related to its acquisition of **Time Warner Cable**. That petition was approved. Now, it's moving forward with filing a short-form application. The deadline to do so is this Wednesday, and that will also mark the start of a quiet period during which Charter and other applicants will not be able to make any comments regarding the RDOF auction. The quiet period will end on the deadline for winning bidders to file their long-form applications with the Commission, which Charter estimates will come in early 2021. The Phase I auction, scheduled to begin on Oct 22, will target more than 6mln homes and businesses in census blocks that are entirely unserved by voice and broadband with download speeds of at least 25Mbps. **New Street Research** is estimating that Charter will target approximately 2.5mln homes in the eligible census blocks, focusing on states where they already have a presence and on census blocks that are contiguous with existing systems. "Charter should get at least 67% penetration in these markets over time (70% market share assuming long-term broadband penetration of 95%). This would amount to 2MM subs—roughly half the size of **Altice**," New Street said in a note. "We estimate that the Company could spend \$6bln in incremental capex to pass and connect the 2.5MM homes over the next 8 years." **MoffettNathanson** sees Charter participating in the auction as a great move strategically and one that will pay off financially in the future. "If Charter had decided not to bid to serve these edge communities, well... someone else would have. It's hard to imagine a scenario where it would be better to have a competitor lurking at the edge of one's network than it would be to serve these communities oneself," MoffettNathanson wrote in a note. Charter's participation could also have an impact on the efforts of **CenturyLink** and **Frontier Communications**, both of which have indicated they plan to participate in the RDOF auction. Charter overlaps more than 40% of Frontier's

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# Telehealth in the Virtual Age

*Presented by Cablefax*

**Virtual Conference — August 13th, 2020**

[www.TelehealthAge.com](http://www.TelehealthAge.com)

In this online virtual event, Cablefax will assemble panels of experts to assess key opportunities for the cable & broadband sector as advances in telehealth intersect with changing patient behavior. What in-home products and services will consumers demand—and what new business relationships will emerge as the multi-billion-dollar healthcare sector looks for partners with strong relationships with customers in their homes? How will the next generation of broadband services improve connections between patients and doctors amid this more socially distanced and safety-conscious world? And where are the major opportunities for revenue growth and new lines of business?

## Recent Cablefax Daily Telehealth Coverage

# Cablefax Daily™

Monday — April 13, 2020

*What the Industry Reads First*

Volume 31 / No. 071

### **Connected Care: Interest High in Federal Telehealth Dollars**

It's only been a week since the **FCC** approved plans to dole out \$200m in telehealth funding allocated through the CARES Act, but the requests to spend the money are already flowing in. The agency said it will open a portal for appli-

Monday — May 18, 2020

*What the Industry Reads First*

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### **5 Questions: Talking Telehealth with the GM of Cox's Trapollo**

When Cox Communications purchased connected health firm Trapollo in 2017, it knew there was a future for remote health monitoring. What it couldn't have predicted was how the COVID-19 pandemic would accelerate adoption of these virtual medical services that take place over the internet. "The technical capabilities have enabled for a number of years. But for a host of other reasons, telehealth wasn't fully accepted. Now with COVID-19, we've condensed what we thought would take five more years of development and it's now happening in five weeks."

Wednesday — May 27, 2020

*What the Industry Reads First*

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### **New Path: Startup Brings Telehealth Directly to the TV**

You likely have encountered a shortage on toilet paper and disinfectant wipes during the COVID-19 pandemic, perhaps less noticed has been a shortage in laptops, Chromebooks and tablets as much of the world moves to work (and school) from home status. **Google** was struggling recently to find enough laptops and devices for new employees, **CNBC** reported. Schools have reported similar issues as they move to online learning. "Here's a big aha that many don't understand. As soon as the schools closed, school systems or parents essentially went out and bought laptops and tablets."

For sponsorship opportunities please contact Olivia Murray / [omurray@accessintel.com](mailto:omurray@accessintel.com)

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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

footprint and 18% of CenturyLink's. Frontier has also been eyeing the RDOF auction as an opportunity to bolster its assets after filing for bankruptcy "They have existing infrastructure, customer relationships, and local know-how they can leverage, so they won't just be rolling over," MoffettNathanson said. "However, the addition of a very sophisticated, well-capitalized aggressive participant like Charter will clearly make it more challenging for incumbents to come out of the process with big wins in hand."

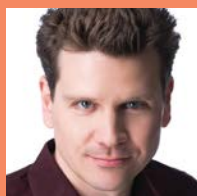
**Nielsen Flip-Flops:** Nielsen reversed course on an earlier decision, announcing the company will integrate out-of-home audiences into the national TV currency this fall as originally planned. Last week, Nielsen said it would be delaying the tool, and faced pushback from major clients. **ViacomCBS** had called the decision "unacceptable and unjustifiable," and the **VAB** accused Nielsen of "blindsiding" the industry. "We regret any disruption we may have caused you, your customers and the market this week. Going forward, we are committed to ensuring a more complete, inclusive, and transparent process as the currency evolves with changing consumer behavior," Nielsen CEO and chief diversity officer *David Kenny* said in a letter to clients. Nielsen said it originally delayed the integration due to concerns about consumer behavior, and not the Nielsen methodology. "After speaking with many clients and learning more about your specific agreements for the upcoming season, it became clear that we had misunderstood the extent to which upfront deals have already been agreed to using out-of-home metrics," said Kenny. "Given the circumstances, we recognize that a delay would cause greater disruption to the industry than maintaining our original plan."

**Comcast COVID Management:** Comcast saw internet traffic spike as much as 60% in some markets throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, causing Xfinity to deploy a combination of technologies to support its customers. The company deployed an AI-based platform, nicknamed Octave, that checked over 4K telemetry data points repeatedly to manage and repair more than 50mln modems across the network every 20 minutes. The tech is programmed to detect when modems aren't using all available bandwidth as efficiently as possible, and it automatically adjusts them to deliver increases in speed and capacity. The Smart Network Platform NetIQ tool uses machine learning to scan its core network continuously in order to detect problems before they affect customers. Comcast said the tool reduced the amount of time to detect a service-impacting issue from 90 minutes to less than five. Comcast is also working to move from hardware to virtual, cloud-based architecture to deliver a faster and more reliable service.

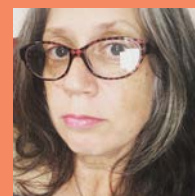
**New Face at BNC:** Black News Channel named *Princell Hair* as its new pres, CEO. He's replacing the former

# Cablefax

## Join Us for Virtual Happy Hours with the Editors



Kick back and join Cablefax's editors on Friday afternoons with your favorite beverage.



We'll chat about the news of the week, what we're binge watching and anything else on your mind. (casual & off-the-record)

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*\*Note: We are using the Lifesize Platform*

network CEO and co-founder *Bob Brillante*, who departed in April. Co-founder *J.C. Watts* has been serving as interim CEO. He will return to his role as chmn. Hair will begin in his new role immediately. Hair most recently was svp, gm of **NBC Sports Boston**, and previously held the title of svp, news and talent for the NBC Sports Group. He has also served **CNN's** evp, gm.

**Resilient Wireline Providers:** The COVID-19 pandemic increased overall satisfaction with business wireline providers across all segments, according to a study from **J.D. Power**. **AT&T** ranked highest in all six factors for both large enterprise and small/medium business. For large enterprises, AT&T earned a score of 878 based on a 1,000-point scale. **Verizon** followed with 854, then **CenturyLink**, **Comcast Business** and **Spectrum Business**. For small-medium business, AT&T was on top, followed by Verizon and CenturyLink. In the very small business segment, Verizon came out on top, followed by Comcast Business, AT&T, Spectrum Business, **Cox Business**, CenturyLink and **Frontier Business**.

**NASCAR Rival:** Four big players in auto racing are starting a new racing circuit, a potential rival to **NASCAR**. Hall of famers *Ray Evernham* and *Tony Stewart*, alongside agent *Sandy Montag* and former NASCAR COO *George Pyne*, are launching the Superstar Racing Experience (**SRX**), starting next summer. The new circuit already has a TV deal with **CBS**, carrying the Saturday night races in primetime for multiple years. The new circuit is reminiscent of the IROC Series, where the best drivers raced one another in equally prepared cars. The SRX plans a six-race, short-track series with fields of 12 drivers. The TV strategy will fit the races into two-hour primetime slots, unlike NASCAR which can go up to four hours.

**At the Commission:** The **FCC** announced Monday that the broadcast post-incentive auction transition had successfully reached the deadline established for stations to move off their pre-auction channel assignments. The milestone signals that all of the low-band airwaves sold in the auction are now available for wireless mobile broadband services, including 5G. **NAB** pres/CEO *Gordon Smith* applauded the broadcast TV industry for its efforts to meet the deadline, but said there's still plenty of work to be done. "To meet FCC deadlines, many stations have been required to operate on temporary facilities that do not serve all station viewers," Smith said. "NAB will continue to work with the FCC to ensure that these stations are made whole, and that affected viewers regain access to their local channels." -- Maryland-based **Bloosurf** is the first broadband provider to complete its Connect America Fund Phase II auction buildout, according to the **FCC**. The buildout, which was completed more than five years ahead of schedule and brought broadband to more than 5K homes in Maryland and Delaware, was validated as complete by the **Universal Service Administrative Company**. "I've seen firsthand the positive impact that the funds provided through the Connect America Fund Phase II auction are having across the nation—including in Delaware itself, where I visited with Bloosurf in rural Seaford in early 2019," FCC chmn *Ajit Pai* said in a statement. "I look forward to additional providers satisfying their broadband deployment requirements in the months and years to come."

**Schwartz Out at Audible:** Former **Pop TV** pres *Brad Schwartz* has left **Audible** after one month with the company. Amazon's audiobook company announced on June 11 that Schwartz would be joining its ranks as chief content officer in an effort to bolster its lineup of originals. According to a *Bloomberg* report, employees began having concerns about Schwartz after becoming aware of a sexual harassment lawsuit filed against Pop Media Group in 2018. Schwartz was not a defendant in the lawsuit, which was dismissed, but it claimed that he played a role in fostering a hostile work environment for women.

**Camp Time:** **Comcast's** Xfinity is opening "Camp Tonsafun," a free, virtual camp hosted by counselors from the **NBCUniversal** family. On Xfinity X1 and Xfinity Flex, campers can watch video lessons and activities across arts, sports, cooking, experiments and adventures aimed for kids ages 5-12. Customers will be able to say "summer camp" in the voice remote, and activities include things like learning to animate a minion, tie-dye parties with stylists, "pancake time traveling" with *Chef Milo* from **Universal Kids** and "Jurassic World" themed magic tricks.

**Ratings:** **HGTV's** "Property Brothers: Forever Home" delivered its highest-rated season ever in P25-54, W25-54 and M25-54. The season pulled in more than 23mln total viewers.

**Programming:** **HBO Max** acquired the rights to the **CNN** Original Series docuseries "Ravi Patel's Pursuit of Happiness," premiering Aug 27. The four-part series follows *Ravi Patel* as he travels the world. -- **NBC** is expanding its "Today" show to streaming, launching a 24/7 channel on **Peacock** Wednesday. "Today All Day" will have a mix of original video and broadcast programming, with an emphasis on lifestyle coverage.