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What the Industry Reads First

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More Time: FCC Extends C-band Election Deadline By Two Weeks

The FCC's **Wireless Telecommunications Bureau** decided Thursday to extend the deadline for incumbent earth station operators to elect the lump sum reimbursement for C-band transition costs by 14 days. That pushes the deadline to Sept 14. The decision is a response to a request by the **Society of Broadcast Engineers**. SBE said that in order for an earth station operator to decide whether to elect to take the lump sum payment, it would have to gather extensive information about its operations, perform analyses and secure internal corporate approvals. Those attempting to gather that information have faced additional challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Bureau has yet to rule on a petition from **ACA Connects** to stay the Aug 31 deadline for lump sum elections, but the association hasn't received much support thus far. ACAC is seeking the stay because of a Bureau decision to exclude the cost of integrated receiver/decoders [IRDs] from the final cost catalog for C-band relocation expenses. **Discovery, Fox Corp, Disney, ViacomCBS** and **NAB** filed a joint opposition, arguing that ACA Connects was in the wrong for fighting against the Bureau's decision because the IRD costs should only be a concern for satellite operators and programmers. "For those programming services for which capacity will be maintained (at least in part) through deployment of advanced compression, the satellite operator and programmer will work together to ensure a timely transition to the new compression standard," the content companies said. "In connection with this process, programmers and satellite companies—not MVPDs—will direct virtually every stage of the compression upgrade process, from choosing the compression format and identifying the IRD and equipment needs, to ordering and configuring the appropriate equipment." Satellite operator **Telesat** also countered ACA Connects' claims that a stay wouldn't harm any of the parties involved in the C-band proceeding, arguing that knowing which earth station operators will elect to receive the payment is a key gating item in the proceeding. That's primarily because for those stations that communicate with Telesat satellites, Telesat will be responsible for the repacking. "Until lump sum elections have been made, therefore, Telesat's repacking plans are frozen in place. Finalizing equipment purchases requires knowing how much equipment will be required. Making equipment installation plans requires knowing the locations of the installations," Telesat said. The satellite operator also said the harm to the public from a stay would be real and

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substantial while ACA Connects' petition relies on hypotheticals. "It posits that absent a stay at least some MVPDs might choose to continue as satellite customers in lieu of a hypothetical choice they would have made to switch to fiber if the Commission's lump sum decision had been more to ACA's liking," Telesat said. "The courts frown on granting stays based on theoretical harm." ACA Connects did find some friends in **RCN, Grande, Wave and Astound Broadband**—all members of the association. Filing together, the operators argued that at a minimum, the Commission should at least grant a 14-day extension of the lump-sum election deadline to give the federal Court of Appeals time to consider the stay request. The content companies, however, argued that ACA Connects would be looking for help in the wrong place by heading to the courts. "A federal appellate court has jurisdiction to review a 'final order of the Federal Communications Commission,' but the Final Cost Category Public Notice is a bureau-level decision," the content companies said. "Like any party aggrieved by action taken pursuant to lawfully delegated authority, ACA Connects should look to the Commission, not the courts, for relief."

Back to School: Cox is suspending late fees and extending payment relief offerings for customers in its Connect-2Compete program who cannot pay due to pandemic-related hardships through June 30, 2021. It's the provider's latest effort to support kids learning from home during the pandemic. -- **Comcast** introduced a promotion Thursday designed to support K-12 teachers and university faculty as they prepare for the upcoming school year. Eligible staff and administrators in the Comcast footprint will receive a \$150 Visa prepaid card when they sign up for an Xfinity package. Educators can access the deal until Dec 31 by heading to www.xfinity.com/teacher.

Reelz Owner Sues over Instagram Reels: REELZ owner **Hubbard Broadcasting** has filed a suit accusing **Instagram** of infringing on its trademark with the launch of its new "Reels" feature. Hubbard said the name choice is likely to confuse consumers, noting that a *Forbes* article already mistakenly referred to "Reelz" and linked to the REELZ **Facebook** page. REELZ is available on satellite and cable channels that reach more than 50m in US viewers. There is also the OTT option REELZ NOW. Instagram Reels is Facebook's attempt to compete with **TikTok**, allowing users to create 15-second videos to share with friends.

Commenters Want More Time for Charter-TWC Review: The **FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau** has already extended the deadline for comment on **Charter's** petition to nix two **Time Warner Cable** merger conditions by 14 days, but a coalition of stakeholders is asking for more time. In a letter to the FCC Wednesday, **Entertainment Studios Networks, Free Press, INCOMPAS, Newsmax, Open Technology Institute, Public Knowledge** and **Sports Fans Coalition** said the Commission should have moved to extend the comment period by 30 days, not 14. "Only

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by doing so can the Commission ensure that all interested parties have had a full and fair opportunity to address the issues so that the Commission has a sufficient record on which to render its decision,” the filers said. “This approach is made more imperative given the procedural irregularities and other concerns that have already arisen in this proceeding.” The additional time would allow stakeholders to look more closely at the order issued by the DC Circuit upon review of several challenges to the merger conditions imposed on Charter. The commenters also said Charter recently submitted a new economic analysis that will require time to review and assess sufficiently.

DNC Ratings: Night 3 of the DNC once again went to **MSNBC**. The net averaged 6.5mln viewers from 10-11:15pm ET, topping **CNN** (5.8mln), **NBC** (2.525mln), **ABC** (2.484mln), **Fox News** (2.2mln) and **CBS** (1.989mln). CNN was the winner among 25-54s in 10-11:15pm slot, with 1.7mln in the demo. MSNBC notched 1.3mln and Fox News had 480K 25-54s. CNN also led the hour in 18-34s (533K) vs runner-up MSNBC's 271K. MSNBC's 6.5mln total viewers represented the most ever for any convention night in the 10pm hour in network history. It's also a 25% uptick over 10pm viewership for night 1 and 20% increase over night 2.

Ready for the Digital Platform Agency?: A new report whose authors include former **FCC** chmn *Tom Wheeler* proposes a “digital platform agency” equipped with new procedures as the best way to regulate platforms such as **Facebook** and **Google** in this digital era. “In the absence of federal oversight, the dominant digital companies have made their own rules and imposed them on consumers and the market. Just as industrial capitalism operated—and thrived—under public interest obligations, so should internet capitalism be grounded in public interest expectations,” said the paper published by the Harvard Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy. *Phil Verveer*, lead counsel in *US v AT&T*, and **Public Knowledge** senior adviser *Gene Kimmelman* joined Wheeler in writing the paper. Public Knowledge pioneered the concept of a digital platform agency, with the group saying this paper takes the idea to a new level.

Synacor's Inbox Grows: **Synacor** says 70 new customers have adopted its Zimbra email and collaboration service, while more than 125 existing deals were expanded in 2Q20. Customers that deployed Zimbra in the quarter included three large government customers in Africa and multiple large financial institutions, from the US to China.

Weather Channel Names CMO: *Fred Bucher* is **The Weather Channel's** new CMO/svp. He'll head the marketing, communications and research/insights organizations for Weather and streaming service **Local Now**. “Fred has a great strategic marketing mind, and his creativity and passion will be a perfect complement to our team at The Weather Channel and Local Now and help us remain ahead of the curve,” Weather Group pres *Tom O'Brien* said in a statement. Bucher most recently served as CMO/svp of **Spectrum Reach**, the ad sales division of **Charter**. He has also held senior marketing roles at **Time Warner Cable** and **ESPN**.

More Time for Tribes in 2.5GHz: **House Commerce** chmn *Frank Pallone* (D-NJ) and Communications subcmte chmn *Mike Doyle* (D-PA) sent a letter to the **FCC** Wednesday asking chmn *Ajit Pai* to give tribes more time to apply for broadband licenses in the 2.5GHz band. “Tribes have been hit particularly hard during the COVID-19 pandemic, and high-speed internet service helps governments better succeed when it comes to public health interventions,” the pair wrote. “The Rural Tribal Priority Window is one important remedy to the digital divide for Indian Country, but without more time, it will not succeed.” The FCC has already instituted a 30-day deadline extension, but tribal leaders have asked for the implementation of a 180-day extension.

On the Circuit: **NAB Show** is launching “NAB Amplify,” a year-round digital platform designed to extend the impact of the show throughout the year. It will launch in November and lest you think this is COVID response, it's been in development since 2019. The idea is to offer an interactive way to help community embers solve real problems by curating connections, educational content, networking forums while offering an online marketplace showcasing media and tech companies.

Programming: **Showtime** picked up “Moonbase 8” for six episodes. The **NASA** workplace comedy will debut this fall. -- *Miley Cyrus* is joining the lineup for **MTV's** VMAs on Aug 30. She'll perform her new single, “Midnight Sky.” The VMAs will air live with *Keke Palmer* hosting. Other performers include *Lady Gaga*, (her first VMA performance since 2013), *The Weeknd* and *Doja Cat*. -- **HGTV's** “Windy City Rehab” will premiere its new season on Sept 15 at 9pm. More than 24.5mln viewers tuned in to the show's first season.

Editor's Note: Reminder! Nominations for **Cablefax: The Magazine's** Most Powerful Women issue are due Friday at cablefaxwomen.com. In addition to our annual list of power women, there are several new categories, including the Rising Tide List—which honors women under 30 who are making big waves.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

New Movie Expands Phineas and Ferb Universe

There's 104 days of summer vacation in the world of "Phineas and Ferb," and now there's two feature-length films in the franchise. "Phineas and Ferb the Movie: Candace Against the Universe" makes its debut on **Disney+** August 28. The animated film, which takes place before the final episode of the series (2007-2015), was among the first content touted for Disney+ when the service was previewed in April 2019. The flick is a standalone sequel to the 2011 film "Phineas and Ferb the Movie: Across the 2nd Dimension," and creators/executive producers *Dan Povermire* and *Jeff "Swampy" Marsh* are thrilled to be back. "It was really nice that they came to us and said they were looking for something that could connect with the whole audience, the whole age range from the adults on down, and you guys have always done that for us," Marsh told **CFX**. "It reminded me of how gratifying it was when we started hearing from fans about Phineas and Ferb that it was bringing back family viewing." In this latest adventure, the stepbrothers set out across the galaxy to rescue older sister Candace, who has been abducted by aliens and found a utopia in a far-away planet that's free of pesky brothers. The film lets the creative duo explore a bit more of Candace's POV. In the series, Candace (voiced by *Ashley Tisdale*) spends most of her time unsuccessfully attempting to bust Phineas and Ferb for their outlandish antics. "It necessitated some different ways of writing... It took us three or four different versions before we really felt like we got something that put the audience on her side," said Povermire. "We ended up solving that problem with a song number ["Such a Beautiful Day"] that gets you to like her, but still see how crazy and obsessive she is at the same time." As for the possibility of a third movie, the pair said it would depend on how this one resonates. A good sign: the YouTube video of "Such a Beautiful Day" has already clocked more than a million views. — *Amy Maclean*

Reviews: "Love, Life & the Virus," streaming, **PBS**. We think we know the difficulties of COVID-19. The painful example of COVID-19 patients perishing alone in a hospital room, their family unable to visit them for a final farewell. The adult-children who are unable to visit their elderly parents. But unless the infection has touched us or someone we know, most of us don't think about the complications. This excellent short doc does the thinking for us. It introduces us to Zully, a 30-year-old immigrant from Guatemala, her husband Marvin and their son Junior. Zully is pregnant and, unfortunately, has the novel coronavirus. Marvin also has tested positive, ditto Junior. Somehow, medical staff help Zully beat back COVID-19 enough—she spends several weeks in a coma—to give birth. Zully spends three more weeks in the hospital—and lacking insurance—she's sent home. And here's the complication. Where do Zully and her baby go? She goes home, to Marvin and Junior. But baby Neysel is coronavirus negative. It's here we meet other do-gooders: the volunteers who've been sending meals to Marvin and Junior, and calling Marvin daily while Zully's been hospitalized. Now one of the volunteers, Aurora, must care for Zully and Marvin's premature baby in her (Aurora's) home. As we said, it's complicated. But thanks to helpful people, it works. — *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable P2+ Prime Rankings*
(08/10/20-08/16/20)

| Mon-Sun | MC | MC |
|---------|-------|-------|
| | US | US AA |
| | AA% | (000) |
| FNC | 1.070 | 3,290 |
| MSNBC | 0.663 | 2,036 |
| HGTV | 0.456 | 1,402 |
| CNN | 0.435 | 1,336 |
| TLC | 0.405 | 1,245 |
| HALL | 0.292 | 899 |
| DISC | 0.292 | 897 |
| TBSC | 0.291 | 894 |
| HIST | 0.274 | 843 |
| TNT | 0.265 | 814 |
| FOOD | 0.256 | 788 |
| ESPN | 0.229 | 703 |
| USA | 0.229 | 703 |
| ID | 0.218 | 670 |
| INSP | 0.217 | 667 |
| LIFE | 0.192 | 590 |
| TVLAND | 0.177 | 544 |
| HMM | 0.176 | 542 |
| BRAVO | 0.172 | 528 |
| A&E | 0.170 | 521 |
| ADSM | 0.155 | 476 |
| WETV | 0.148 | 456 |
| PARA | 0.146 | 449 |
| NICK | 0.145 | 446 |
| NAN | 0.142 | 437 |
| NBSCN | 0.141 | 434 |
| FX | 0.136 | 418 |
| AMC | 0.130 | 401 |
| APL | 0.130 | 399 |
| GSN | 0.130 | 398 |
| NATGEO | 0.115 | 355 |
| SYFY | 0.115 | 354 |
| TRAVEL | 0.115 | 353 |
| CRN | 0.110 | 338 |
| FRFM | 0.109 | 335 |
| HBO | 0.107 | 328 |
| DSNY | 0.100 | 307 |
| DSJR | 0.098 | 300 |
| MTV | 0.096 | 295 |
| NKJR | 0.095 | 292 |
| OWN | 0.092 | 284 |

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

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