

# Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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## Hurricane Laura: Recovery Efforts Continue One Week After Category 4 Storm

For communities in Louisiana and Texas impacted by Hurricane Laura, the recovery process is still a long road ahead. **Sparklight** said it has restored service to 97% of customers within 6 days of the storm, but it will likely take longer for those hit hardest. That includes the Lake Charles, LA, area served by **Suddenlink** and **Vyve Broadband**.

Suddenlink has experienced network damage and power outages continue to impact service for many customers. Vyve Broadband anticipates getting about 1/3 of plant online this weekend, with 80% fully functional by the end of the month. With power outages a problem, temporary fiber drops are getting cut by power crews who mistake them for dead lines, explained Vyve marketing svp *Diane Quennoz*. Vyve has brought in crews from out-of-state, and COO *Andy Parrott* has been on the ground helping the entire week.

“From a plant perspective, the headends were all spared. From that standpoint, we’re very fortunate,” Quennoz said. However, most of Vyve’s employees in the area have endured significant damage to their homes. Suddenlink, Sparklight and Vyve all have employee relief funds set up to help associates impacted by natural disasters with a company match in place. Vyve has taken over an American Legion, providing meals three times a day for employees. It’s also helping find generators for employees (water plus hot temperatures and no AC can bring mold). Suddenlink owner Altice USA is donating \$50K to the Community Foundation of Southwestern Louisiana and is providing \$100K in free advertising to the Red Cross. Sparklight, part of the Cable One family, has pledged \$15K to the Red Cross to support residents in affected areas.

Suddenlink has set up several WiFi connectivity zones for residents to access free wireless internet in several impacted areas, including Alexandria, LA, and Natchitoches, LA. For the hard-hit Lake Charles area, its working to set up free WiFi as soon as possible. Nearly 50% of Sparklight’s customers in east TX and LA markets were impacted by Laura. Restoration efforts continue as the company maps fiber breaks and repairs impacted plant and equipment. “After ensuring our associates and their families were safe, our primary focus has been on restoring service to our customers as quickly as possible, because we understand how critical connectivity is in times like these. Our teams will continue to work alongside our neighbors and first responders in Louisiana and Texas to restore our communi-

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# A Golden Ticket to the Gigafactory

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This episode of Dzubanium explores the role 10G could play in improving manufacturing efficiency at the Gigafactory, the challenges of building a smart factory, how IoT is helping predict future maintenance issues, and the value 10G will bring to smart factories of the future.

From the virtual studio of SCTE•ISBE (the Society of Cable Telecommunications Engineers).

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ties and help our friends and families get back on their feet,” Sparklight pres/CEO *Julie Laulis* said in a statement.

**Frontier Drops Some RSNs:** Frontier has dropped some of the **Fox Sports RSNs** now owned by **Sinclair**, including **Fox Sports Southwest** and **Fox Sports Sun**, as well as Yankees RSN **YES Network**. The move comes after the provider removed **MLB Network**, **AXSTV** and **HDNET Movies** in April. It dropped NY RSN **SNY** last year. Frontier filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganization earlier this year and is targeting exiting the process in early 2021.

**Cogeco Not Accepting Altice Offer:** **Cogeco Inc** and **Cogeco Communications** said Wednesday evening that the independent members of their boards had rejected **Altice USA's** \$7.8bln offer for all outstanding Cogeco shares in order to acquire **Atlantic Broadband**. The rejection followed meetings of both boards and discussions with members of the Audet family that hold 69% of all voting rights of Cogeco Inc.

**Rogers Picks Up Cable Cable:** It doesn't look like a deal that would give **Rogers' Cogeco's** systems is imminent, but the Canadian operator did score a victory on the M&A front. Rogers will acquire family-owned **Cable Cable**, which provides Internet, video, and home phone services to more than 6K residents and businesses across the City of Kawartha Lakes Region. **Piercy Consulting Inc.** served as financial advisor to Cable Cable on this transaction.

**Pole Position:** **NCTA** got plenty of back-up from cable operators on its petition asking the **FCC** to clarify that in areas with no access to broadband, utility pole owners are required to share in the cost of pole replacements. Utilities agree that replacement costs should be shared by the pole owner and attachers when there are legitimate, preexisting safety conditions, but argue that the FCC is clear that utilities are not responsible for sharing costs when they are incurred solely in order to provide capacity on the pole to accommodate a new pole attachment request. “The NCTA Petition presents itself as offering a solution to the challenges of broadband deployment in rural America, yet notably does not address the fact that, typically, the number of attaching entities on the pole in these areas is fewer than three and most of the wireless requests have been for small cell deployments in urban areas,” said a joint filing from **Edison Electric Institute**, **National Rural Electric Coop** and **Utilities Technology Council**. The groups warned that if NCTA's proposal is granted, it “would create a significant disincentive for utilities to voluntarily accommodate access through pole replacements.” NCTA is also seeking expedited consideration for complaints regarding pole access disputes in unserved areas. **Charter** told the FCC that for one of its recent large rural expansion projects, approximately one out of every 12 poles required replacement, driving roughly one-quarter of the total costs of construction and significantly impacting both the cost and schedule of the project. “Because of the low population density in rural areas, the costs of these replacement poles are spread over

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a relatively small number of potential subscribers, making the financial viability of such projects (i.e., whether they are likely to yield a positive return) highly sensitive to construction expenses,” Charter said in comments due this week to the Commission. **ACA Connects** joined the chorus, detailing numerous examples of what it believes are unjust replacement charges, including where one of its members was charged to replace a 75-year-old, failing pole.

**Price Drop for the Max:** From Sept 4-25, new and retuning customers who sign up for **HBO Max** will be able to do so at a discounted rate of \$11.99/month for 12 months. That’s down from the streamer’s \$14.99/month launch price.

**MCTV Asks for C-band Deadline Stay:** Ohio-based operator **MCTV** is the latest to file a request for stay and/or waiver of the **FCC**’s Sept 14 deadline for electing to receive the lump-sum payments tied to the C-band spectrum transition. MCTV’s ask is in response to the FCC International Bureau’s Aug 3 public notice denying all requests for holders of receive-only site registrations to add additional antennas to their registered sites. The bureau said that when the FCC opened the earth station filing window in 2018, several filers registered earth station sites to ensure interference protection but did not take the time to register each individual antenna. Those filers also argued they were never told that only those antennas that were included on a registration would be eligible to be classified as incumbent earth station sites. Because of the Bureau’s ruling, not all of MCTV’s antennas were included on the list of antennas eligible for reimbursement during the C-band transition. “MCTV, and each operator that has been denied the right to add existing earth stations to registered and eligible sites, will, as tacitly admitted by the FCC, suffer an unconstitutional taking if they are not permitted to add their antennas to the final list,” MCTV said.

**Distribution:** **VIZIO** got a little cheesier, with **Altice USA**-owned news net **Cheddar** launching on its Smart TV platform. The live channel is available for free on VIZIO sets.

**Honors:** **SCTE-ISBE** and the **SCTE Foundation** announced Thursday that a campaign by “Friends of Wilt” raised \$40K for this year’s *Wilt Hildenbrand Jr* memorial scholarships and Rising Leader award. That matches the initial donation made last year by the **YAS Foundation** that led to the creation of the honors. Friends of Wilt donors include the *Dolan Family*, *Mike LaJoie*, *James Blackley*, *Rouzbeh Yassini*, *Yvette Kanouff*, *Mark Hess*, *Pragash Pillai*, *Joe Godas* and *Kathy Davis*. This year’s Rising Leader award, which recognizes a cable telecommunications star under the age of 40, is being presented to **Charter** senior manager, software development *Kerry Zinger*. The \$20K Wilt J Hildenbrand Jr scholarship will be shared by five students from STEM School Highlands Ranch: *Corbin Baird*, *Katie Butler*, *Dylan Homesley*, *Aedin Elise Sarff* and *Ben Vigil*.

**At the Commission:** The **FCC**’s Wireline Competition Bureau has again extended its waivers of the Rural Health Care and E-Rate program gift rules, this time through Dec 31. The Commission also waived the Rural Health Care program deadline for responding to information requests from the Universal Service Administrative Company through Dec 31. In addition, the FCC directed the Universal Service Administrative Company to offer a 30-day extension to E-Rate program participants impacted by the pandemic that request an extension to respond to certain information requests. -- The FCC closed the 2.5GHz Rural Tribal Priority Window Wednesday, and **Public Knowledge** is already asking the Commission to open another. The Commission’s Wireless Telecommunications Bureau decided on July 31 to extend the window’s deadline by 30 days due to the ongoing pandemic, but a number of Tribal leaders had asked for an 180-day extension. “For Tribes, closing the window before the end of the pandemic is a slap in the face that will prevent their communities from accessing the vital connections they need to engage in daily life,” Public Knowledge senior policy counsel *Jenna Leventoff* said in a statement. “If the FCC truly wants to improve Tribal connectivity, it must provide Tribes with a new Rural Tribal Priority Window so that they can get the spectrum they need to connect.”

**Programming:** **BET**, in partnership with **Entertainment Tonight**, will air a primetime special honoring the life of *Chadwick Boseman*. “BET and ET Present Chadwick Boseman: Life and Legacy” will premiere Sunday at 9pm on BET.

-- **Peacock** is expanding its kids programming with a *Curious George* collection. The streamer is releasing original film “*Curious George: Go West, Go Wild*” Tuesday. It will also add three *Curious George* movies, two seasonal TV specials and the first nine seasons of the “*Curious George*” series on Sept 20. -- **INSP** is celebrating the anniversaries of four classic Western series with marathons through the month of September. A “*Guns Smoke*” marathon will begin at 7am ET Monday, and “*Bonanza*” fans will have their time starting at 11am ET on Sept 12. The best episodes of “*The Big Valley*” will air Sept 19 from 11am ET and a “*Daniel Boone*” anniversary marathon will come Sept 26 at 11am ET.

**People:** *Rafael Gomez* is joining **AMC Networks** as head, business affairs for the company’s Entertainment Group. He’ll replace *Scott Stein*, who is being elevated to a new role as executive business director of the expanding “*The Walking Dead*” universe. Gomez most recently served as the svp, business affairs for Peacock at **NBCU**.

# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

## History Continues to Serve as 9/11 Archivist

Since the first anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, **History** has provided thoughtful documentaries tackling that dark, sad day in American history from multiple angles. This year, there are plenty of heavy current events for viewers to cope with, but the network is still committed to remembering that fatal day. "As archivists of history, the network is dedicated to honor the stories from that day and never lose sight of how it changed this world forever. We've found that whatever is going on in the world, the audience is always interested in taking the day to reflect back on the tragic events of 2001," History evp, gm *Eli Lehrer* told **CFX**. "We hope our annual programming serves as a part of historical record to communicate with future generations what it was like to live through 9/11." This year's lineup includes two new one-hour documentaries, "9/11: The Final Minutes of Flight 93" and "9/11: The Pentagon," offering unique perspectives of the events that took place on United Flight 93 and at the Pentagon (premieres at 8pm and 9pm, Sept 11). It may seem like a challenge to find new ways to contextualize what happened after 19 years, but "due to the significant lead-up and catastrophic aftermath, sadly, I don't know that we'll ever run out of subjects," Lehrer said. "This year, we're concentrating on a more unfamiliar series of events at the Pentagon and using the newest material released from United 93 to shine a fresh light on that story." History also has an original, eight-part podcast with **WNYC**, "Blindspot: The Road to 9/11" to focus on the lead-up to 9/11 and builds on its 2017 limited series "The Road to 9/11" (debuts Sept 9). While the Flight 93 special was completed prior to the pandemic, the Pentagon doc was just beginning production when lockdown orders hit. "The producers did an incredible job pivoting and filming almost the entire project during this time in a safe and controlled way," said Lehrer. "I can confidently say the final product is seamless even though every interview was conducted remotely and without a crew present." – *Amy Maclean*

**Reviews:** "The Curious Life and Death of..." premiere, 9pm, Sunday, **Smithsonian Channel**. It's not news that TV viewers are obsessed with crime, murder and mystery. Several networks— including **ID** and **HLN**—are devoted to it, while others, such as **Epix**, making useful forays into the genre. It's a crowded field, but Smithsonian is dipping its fingers into the blood with this 6-part series that features medical historian *Dr. Lindsey Fitzharris*. The tie-in with Smithsonian's raison d'être is that several of those profiled are historic figures: *Harry Houdini*, the Titanic and the series' opener, none other than the country's most infamous butcher, *Lizzie Borden*. (Others profiled include drug lord *Pablo Escobar*, rocker *Brian Jones* and actor *Brittany Murphy*.) The question, of course, is whether or not "The Curious Life..." stands up against the series of the other networks. It does, and then some. The Borden episode shows the series' emphasis on history. For example, Fitzharris tells us it was one of the first times crime photos were taken. (They're gruesome, by the way.) Fortunately, she also informs viewers about a popular forensic technique of the time (1892): optography. Some Victorians believed an image of the murderer was on the retina of the deceased. Fascinating. – *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable P2+ Prime Rankings* (08/24/20-08/30/20)		
Mon-Sun	MC	MC
	US	US AA
	AA%	(000)
FNC	1.728	5,312
TNT	0.507	1,559
MSNBC	0.501	1,539
CNN	0.474	1,457
HGTV	0.446	1,369
TLC	0.391	1,203
TBSC	0.317	975
HALL	0.272	835
FOOD	0.264	813
USA	0.240	737
HIST	0.226	694
ID	0.225	692
DISC	0.219	672
INSP	0.205	631
LIFE	0.196	603
BRAVO	0.182	560
NBCSN	0.179	549
HMM	0.175	537
A&E	0.173	531
WEATHER	0.166	510
TVLAND	0.164	503
ESPN	0.160	493
FX	0.160	491
ADSM	0.155	478
WETV	0.152	466
NICK	0.151	463
NAN	0.150	462
GSN	0.143	440
MTV	0.135	413
APL	0.130	398
AMC	0.127	390
TRAVEL	0.110	337
FBC	0.109	336
NATGEO	0.106	326
SYFY	0.105	321
DSNY	0.101	310
COM	0.099	305
E!	0.099	304
DSJR	0.096	294
HLN	0.095	292
NKJR	0.095	291

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



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