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What the Industry Reads First

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The Impact: Operators Ready to Celebrate Energy 2020 Successes

It's been six years since SCTE announced its Energy 2020 campaign aimed at reducing power consumption, and operators are gearing up to share the fruits of their efforts with the industry at-large.

Rogers Communications and **Cox Communications** will show off the energy reductions they've achieved using those standards at this year's SCTE-ISBE Cable-Tec Expo. Rogers senior guideline specialist, network facilities *John Dolan* told **CFX** that the largest transformation brought about by the Energy 2020 program has been in the company's facilities and operations divisions.

"With facilities, there is awareness that optimizing cooling will not only significantly reduce operating costs, often up to 30% or more, but also provide a 'cushion' that results in capital avoidance or delay in spending," Dolan said. "Since the program's inception over time, operations has become better prepared to evaluate cooling issues that occur within facilities, resulting in faster problem resolution."

Rogers' primary project has been exploring cooling optimization and virtualization at its billing center. "As is often the case, the older rooms provide the biggest challenge. They often lack proper air flow management and did not have effective equipment and cooling equipment layouts," Dolan said. Thus far, Rogers has seen 27%, 40% and 49% energy savings respectively in the three rooms that were a part of the project.

Over at Cox, the operator has been working to implement energy-saving measures at its critical facilities. The most challenging aspect of the project thus far has been education. "Whether it's breaking through some calcified or even erroneous, but well-meaning ideas about temperature setpoints, or simply training technicians what to do, or not to do, differently," said *Mike Glaser*, Cox critical facilities engineer IV.

Cox is also examining new battery technologies and optimization, but Glaser is particularly excited about the results the company will be able to see through continued energy efficiency improvement of its existing resources. "This is generally 'low-hanging fruit' that promises to yield a good return for a minimal expenditure," Glaser said. "New battery technologies also hold promise in the long run, but a few things still need to be worked out in the short term."

Energy 2020 is ending this year in name only. Glaser said the SCTE-ISBE Standards' Energy Management Subcom-

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mittee will continue similar efforts into the future, but the brand and mission will be adjusted to reflect advancements in technology, energy and sustainability. Dolan added that the subcommittee will be working to help ensure cable's road to 10G is energy efficient and reliable. To hear more from these operators on their work and the impact of Energy 2020, tune in to the Energy 2020 session at the [SCTE-ISBE Cable-Tec Expo](#) on Oct 14 at 2pm ET.

FCC Meeting Dispatch: FCC chmn *Ajit Pai* would not confirm whether or not he will be leaving the Commission before the end of the year when asked during a press conference Wednesday. "I have made no decisions and I do not have any announcements one way or the other to make at this time," Pai said. The newser followed an FCC meeting riddled with technical difficulties. While the commissioners were voting on an item to expand the use of 50MHz of spectrum in the 4.9GHz band, which was ultimately approved, *Jessica Rosenworcel's* screen froze. She cited a relatable issue: too much demand being placed on her home broadband network. "We have problems in the house with multiple kids going to online school and a spouse who is working as well," Rosenworcel said. Those looking to view the Commission's webcast of their virtual meeting were also experiencing technical difficulties, and Pai later had to temporarily stop the meeting to try and fix the issues. The Commission was still able to move through the items on the agenda, adopting changes to the Commission's rules concerning notices that cable operators must provide to subscribers and local franchise authorities about service and rate changes. When service changes occur due to retransmission consent or program carriage negotiations that fail within 30 days of a contract, cable operators must now provide notice to subscribers "as soon as possible" rather than 30 days in advance. Commish *Michael O'Rielly* was also able to address his coming departure from the Commission. His term will end when his successor is confirmed or in January, and he used his opening statement to tell his supporters that he has come to terms with the end of his service. "While there's been some speculation over whether I would return to the Commission under certain circumstances, I do not seek for anyone to pursue my continued service at the Commission beyond my current term, which will conclude at its appropriate point sometime later this year," O'Rielly said.

The First Debate: The first debate between *Donald Trump* and *Joe Biden* pulled in nearly 65mln viewers across cable and broadcast. **Fox News** saw 17.812mln total viewers, which Fox said is the highest-rated presidential commission debate in cable news history. Runner-up **ABC** netted 12.620mln viewers, while **CNN** had 8.287mln and **MSNBC** with 7.189mln. After Tuesday's raucous presidential debate, speculation began about the second meet-up, a townhall format that will be moderated by **C-SPAN's Steve Scully** on Oct 15. But if you're looking for Scully to weigh

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- David Atman, President, Lindsay Broadband

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in on how he'll minimize the interruptions or what he thought of the first debate moderated by **Fox News'** *Chris Wallace*, you're out of luck. When he accepted the offer to moderate, the longtime C-SPANer decided not to do any pre-debate interviews about his preparation or the debate. Given the heat at Tuesday's debate, some wondered if Scully—who *John Oliver* named “The Most Patient Man on Television” for his stoic demeanor while hosting call-in show “Washington Journal”—is ready to wrangle Trump and Biden. It'll apparently be with some new ground rules, with the Debate Commission announcing Wednesday it will make changes to the format to ensure a more orderly discussion. In an [interview](#) with the *NY Times*, Wallace said he never imagined the evening would go “off the tracks” the way it did. His advice to Scully and **NBC News'** *Kristen Welker*, who will take the third debate: “If either man goes down this road, I hope you'll be quicker to realize what's going on than I was. I didn't have that advance warning.” Meanwhile, Fox News Media CEO *Suzanne Scott* and pres *Jay Wallace* issued a company-wide memo congratulating Wallace and the debate team. “We are extremely proud of [Wallace's] professionalism, skill and fortitude in a unique situation while doing everything possible to hold both candidates accountable,” they wrote.

Indy Show Day 2: The second day of **ACA Connects** and **NCTC's** virtual Independent Show was all about politics and policy, with **FCC** commissioner *Jessica Rosenworcel* calling for programs at a large scale to help address the digital divide. She wants the FCC to look at expanding E-rate so it could be used for things such as loaning out WiFi hotspots or routers to students. “This homework gap is going to become an educational gap and a long-term opportunity gap,” the Democratic commish said in an interview with ACA Connects chmn *Patty Boyers*. Rosenworcel once again lamented the lack of accurate broadband mapping. “I think it's kind of a mistake what the FCC is doing right now. One week before the election, we're going to give out 80% of our broadband funds for the next decade in the Connect America Fund's next iteration called RDOF—the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund,” she said. “I understand a need for short-term stimulus to some areas without, but I think giving away that much when we know our maps are so flawed is really a problem.” – Day 2 saw *Ron Brownstein*, who has regular columns in the *Atlantic* and CNN.com, weigh in on the first presidential debate, calling it a “disgrace” and saying it left him “wanting to take a shower.” He gave Biden the advantage in the election, but said the lead is not insurmountable for Trump. Rep *Mike Doyle* (D-PA) was interviewed by ACA Connects pres/CEO *Matt Polka*. He lauded NCTC and ACA Connects members for their work during the pandemic, but said, “we all have to step up and do more because there are too many people around the country who are still struggling.” He complained that the FCC hasn't monitored what has happened since the voluntary Keep Americans Connected pledges expired. Doyle warned that it's hard to imagine much getting done if the presidential election or control of the Senate is still being contested during the lameduck session. “On the other hand, if we have a decisive shift in power and the results are decisive, both sides might be willing to clear the decks and break some of the gridlock that has paralyzed Washington,” he said.

YouTube TV Dropping Fox RSNs: YouTube TV customers are set to lose 19 **Sinclair-owned Fox RSNs** on Thursday with the two unable to agree on a carriage renewal. YouTube TV and Sinclair negotiated an extension in late February that kept the 19 nets on through the end of MLB regular play. At the time, YouTube TV dropped **YES Network, Fox Sports West** and **Fox Sports Prime Ticket** and some subs who once received the 19 RSNs were no longer zoned to get them. “To bring you 85+ channels, we periodically renegotiate contracts with content owners. In February, we announced we had negotiated an extension with Sinclair to continue providing FOX Regional Sports Networks (RSNs) through the end of MLB, NHL and NBA seasons,” YouTube TV said on Twitter. Now that the regular seasons are over, “that extension is expiring.” Members will also no longer have access to library recordings from the Fox RSNs. “This was a difficult decision made after months of negotiations. We hope we can bring Fox RSNs back in the future.” Sinclair confirmed the pending drop on Wednesday. “While we are disappointed that YouTube will discontinue carriage of the RSNs, we remain in discussions in an effort to find a mutually acceptable path to returning the RSNs to YouTube TV,” said *Barry Faber*, Sinclair's pres of distribution & network relations. Impacted networks include **Fox Sports Arizona, Fox Sports Ohio, Fox Sports Southwest** and **Fox Sports San Diego**.

New Chromecast: **Google** announced a new Chromecast that features the Google TV interface. After seven years on the market, the Chromecast will now have a remote control for the first time. The “Chromecast with Google TV” is now available, and costs \$49.99. There's also a **Netflix** button on the remote sitting right next to the **YouTube** button. The company is offering a deal for the new product and six months of discounted Netflix bundled together for \$89.99.

People: **Comcast** named *Elaine Barden* vp, business development for the company's West Division, heading up business development and infrastructure expansion in 13 states. She spent the past two years serving as vp of business development & strategic initiatives for Comcast's California region.

Think about that for a minute...

It's All About Marketing

Commentary by Steve Effros

Why is it that we've gotten into the mindset that "more" and "faster" are always better? I think in the case of broadband delivery to the home, we may find that in fact some consumers are losing out because policy makers, "public" advocates, and yes, our own marketing departments have taken up that mantra and are actually not looking very closely at the implications or unintended consequences.



I suspect the best example of this syndrome is the constant focus on broadband speed. Now before I get into the weeds on all this, let me say that of course a certain amount of speed is necessary. I've just gone through a process at my house of testing new streaming devices on a "smart" television. I'm on a very good cable/broadband system. But with the increased demand for a constant stream of data to support 4K and HDR video it faces a challenge. Meshed WiFi doesn't cut it. A direct Ethernet connection to a DOCSIS 3.1 modem works like a charm.

But we're only talking about 15 or 20Mbps. Why is the industry playing along with the pressure from the government, Google, the "consumer" groups and the like to build more and more bandwidth in order to provide speeds to the home that are hundreds of times more than that? Sure, there will be more devices using the home infrastructure as we go along, and yes, maybe we'll even get video at 8K rather than 4k despite the fact that ophthalmologists tell us the eye can't discern the difference in most instances.

Even then, however, we're not really talking about 1Gig, let alone 10Gig service, yet that's what's on the table right now. That's what has just been demonstrated by a local cable operator, and the "1 Gig Fiber"

PR push by Google was all about leveraging the industry into a position where that sort of infrastructure upgrade was expected by consumers and politicians alike. And we're doing it.

But at the end of the day, almost all of this is about marketing. The industry has found that although we know those excessive bandwidth demands are very unlikely to ever be seen or needed in most homes, it sure does sell! And the policy makers and consumer groups can claim victory by constantly pushing for a bigger, faster "pipe." And, of course, Google just wants folks to use that pipe as much as possible because that's the way they make their money.

The indirect results, however, should be of concern. What we know about the "digital divide" is that in most cases it's not a question of access, it's a question of use. Those who don't have high speed connections say the reason is either cost, or because they don't see the benefit. The cost equation is what we need to look at.

It should be obvious that if we keep having to rebuild the "superhighway" larger and larger we're going to have to spend lots of money to do it. The result: higher prices for the service. So this demand for "faster" and "more" is directly related to the inability of some to get the benefits of broadband! The direct opposite of what the advocates of "more is better" seem to seek.

There are other ways to solve the issue of the future need for bandwidth. They start with making the users, particularly the software code writers, be a little more concerned about efficiency. More on all this next week. It's important.

Steve

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(Steve Effros was President of CATA for 23 years and is now an advisor and consultant to the cable industry. His views do not necessarily reflect the views of Cablefax.)



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