

Cablefax Daily™

Monday — October 12, 2020

What the Industry Reads First

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Pandemic Planning: COVID-19 Lessons Front and Center at Expo

If **Cable-Tec Expo's** virtual format this week isn't reminder enough of the COVID-19 pandemic, attendees will find the crisis information woven throughout the four-day event. From technical workshops to Monday's opening general session, Expo will dig deep on COVID's impact on the industry.

"You're going to see a lot of the technical forums that are totally revolving around COVID and how particular companies and the industry reacted to that—whether that be the network or employees. I think that's important in terms of knowledge. Part of Expo is learning," said Expo co-chair **Tom Monaghan**, **Charter's** svp, field operations. "Who knows how much longer this is going to go on? If you can take a snippet out of that and bring it back to your own company, I think there's going to be some benefit there."

Jim Shortal, senior director of business continuity for **Cox**, will join a panel featuring execs from **Comcast**, **Charter** and equipment provider **EnerSys** on Tuesday at 4pm ET, titled "Pandemic Lessons Learned from Cable Business Continuity Champions." SCTE has a Business Continuity Disaster Recovery subcommittee, which Shortal chairs. Committee members will share their joint learnings on everything from impacts to operational teams to partnerships with government agencies.

Coincidentally, Cox ran an internal business continuity series last year based on a pandemic influenza outbreak, with all its incident command teams in a room with members of state and local public health agencies. "I would say we were about 75% on. Where our assumptions didn't work is if it's a true influenza, ...anti-viral drugs would have allowed people to have lesser symptoms," Shortal said. "The other thing we would have expected better on the front end was contact tracing" to contain it a little bit longer when the first cases were coming to the US.

Looking back at the challenges COVID has presented, it required managing the surge of broadband consumption with additional capacity as well as creative thinking around customer service, particularly in the home. Charter took sell-installs from about 50% of sales at the end of last year to 90% at the end of 2Q. "It was spectacular because our customers really liked it. Our field technicians really liked it because it lessened the amount of time they had to be in the home," Monaghan said.

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“The Cable-Tec Expo Show Dailies by Cablefax are a valuable resource for keeping attendees and exhibitors informed of upcoming events, as well as clear and concise coverage of the previous day's highlights. Enlightening articles by its well-respected editors are also always a good read and round off the educational content.”

- David Atman, President, Lindsay Broadband

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Opening General Session

MONDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2020 | 11:00AM - 1:30PM EST



Tom Adams
EVP,
Charter Communications



Stephanie Mitchko-Beale
EVP, CTO,
Charter Communications



Tom Monaghan
SVP, Field Operations,
Charter Communications



Thomas Rutledge
Chairman & CEO,
Charter Communications



Ed Marchetti
SVP of Operations,
Comcast



David Watson
President & CEO,
Comcast Cable



Michael Fries
CEO & Vice Chairman,
Liberty Global



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Comcast fast-tracked all of its digital tools. “All the different initiatives around the frontline actually stopped and pivoted to rally around our frontline and the way we service our customers,” said Expo co-chair *Ed Marchetti*, svp, operations for Comcast. “All of our tools that we use had to be modified to some extent to prepare for the difference in the provisioning, activation, the way the job was built, what the technician needed to do on site.”

It’s been a long road, developing new procedures and policies, but all of these learnings have helped develop the playbook for going forward. “You think in these times that it’s all baling wire and chicken string. We have actually seen phenomenal innovation as a result of COVID-19,” said Shortal. “We took something from the drawing board to completion in the course of just a couple of weeks. That’s basically a video chat function with our customers that we call Help Lightning.” The feature allows techs to do video chats without entering the home, with customers showing them the back of a router, etc.

No one can predict what’s ahead, but all of the work over the past seven months or so are going into the strategy for the next phase. “We’re now starting to pivot back to—I don’t think we’ll ever call it BAU, but we call it BANew,” said Marchetti. “We changed the entire company going into COVID-19. Now with all the information we have available to us, medical data, local market information, tech sentiment and all of the criteria that we use, we’re now going back much more surgically than we did going into this.”

NCTA Opposes Trump EO: NCTA and several other organizations, including the **Internet Association** and **TechNet**, sent a letter on Thursday to **OMB** director *Russell Vought* and Sec of Labor *Eugene Scalia* opposing *President Trump’s* Sept 22 executive order on combating race and sex stereotyping. Trump’s EO prohibits diversity training for all federal contractors and grant recipients, and seeks to ban training materials “rooted in the pernicious and false belief that America is an irredeemably racist and sexist country; that some people, simply on account of their race or sex, are oppressors.” The associations said they would be “directly impacted by this EO’s attempts to restrict existing diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) training programs. The EO fails to acknowledge the realities of ongoing racial inequality and inequities in America and represents an unwarranted intrusion into private sector efforts to combat systemic racism.” The letter asks the federal government to immediately rescind the EO. “We simply do not agree that there is anything divisive about providing information that encourages our employees to treat all of their colleagues equally and with respect,” it reads.

Starry Partners With Microsoft in L.A.: The city of L.A. teamed up with fiber wireless provider **Starry** and **Microsoft** to deliver six months of free internet access to residents in four public housing communities across the city, providing low-cost, high-quality broadband options for nearly 3.6K units and 9K residents. After the six free months, service will



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE HONOREES!

This year more than ever, Cablefax is proud to continue our longstanding recognition of the top multi-ethnic industry executives, based on their accomplishments and influence.

In this issue, Cablefax unveils some new distinctions, including LGBTQ+ Exec of the Year, D&I Mentor of the Year, Thrivers Under 30, Trailblazers and Diversity Organization honors.

Enjoy the digital issue and also read expanded Q&A with The Leaders at www.CablefaxDiversity.com

continue for \$15/month. The partnership kicks off this month and works to accelerate the availability of Starry Connect across the country.

NM Gets TDS 1Gig: TDS is now offering 1 Gig internet speeds in Alamogordo and Ruidoso, NM, for both residential and business customers.

People: The FCC Enforcement Bureau named *Axel Rodriguez* as the Commission's field director. Since 2013, Rodriguez has served as a supervisor in the FCC's Office of Engineering and Technology lab.

Editor's Note: Reminder, your **Cablefax Daily** issues will arrive in the mornings through Thursday of this week because of **SCTE-ISBE Cable-Tec Expo** coverage.

EXHIBITOR SPOTLIGHT

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Thank you to Supervisor @SheilaKuehl, @Everyone_On, and @GetSpectrum for teaming up with us this weekend to giveaway 100 laptops to foster youth and their families to support #distancelearning during #COVID and helping them stay connected.



Up Ahead

Oct 12-15: SCTE-ISBE Cable-Tec Expo

Oct 19-29: NAB New York

Oct 27: FCC October Open Commission Meeting

Nov 12: CableLabs Mobile Summit - Convergence

Dec 4: 2020 Cable TV Pioneers Induction Ceremony

Research

➤ 31% of shoppers plan to buy more gifts for more people this year because of sheltering in place rules that will bar them from visiting friends and family.

➤ Consumers now expect to do 65% of their holiday shopping virtually. 79% of streamers will do most of their shopping online, compared to 55% of non-streamers.

➤ 31% plan to buy a gift to support working from home for either themselves or someone else.

(Source: Roku 2020 Holiday Consumer Shopping Study)

Quotable

"I don't know if you've seen 'Hamilton' the musical, but... I am now in a lot of the rooms where it happened, and I'm tired of being alone in those. I want to have more women there, I want to have more diversity in those rooms... I really do invest in that and make sure that for the rest of my career, I focus on how do we get more women, especially in tech... I think the more extraordinary women you attract, the more Black leaders you have, the more extraordinary Black talent you'll attract. That virtuous cycle is what we need to kind of feed and accelerate."

– Comcast evp/chief product and information security officer Noopur Davis during WICT's Leadership Conference

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