

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Hot Water: Some Programmers Upset Over T-Mobile's TVision Packages

Not everyone is thrilled with **T-Mobile's** new live-TV service TVision. **Discovery** pres/CEO *David Zaslav* raised concerns during the company's 3Q earnings, while there are rumblings from other programmers, including **NBCU** and **ViacomCBS**.

Zaslav said he was "very surprised" with how T-Mobile is rebundling channels. "Particularly because we have a clear agreement where our networks are required to be carried on all their basic tiers and OTT offerings," he said. "Let's just characterize it this way: we're in active discussions with them to quickly resolve that issue. We don't believe they have a right to do what they're doing right now, and it's very clear to them and they're focused on it." T-Mobile's core package costs \$40/month, but its TVision Vibe offering only costs \$10/month and features much of Discovery's profile, including **TLC**, **HGTV** and the flagship **Discovery**.

T-Mobile doesn't appear to be phased. CEO *Mike Sievert* said during the company's earnings call Thursday that it is complying with all of its media contracts, though it's open to evolving TVision.

"We're working with them. We're open-minded. Some would like to see changes, and if those changes are great for customers and help us continue to smash customer pain points, we're open-minded," he said. "This is the very beginning, early innings. This is a business that isn't really a business. It's an uncarrier move. We're in it for the long haul. We're doing

it to delight customers, and we're doing it to set up a home broadband business, which is going to be where a big piece of the profit pool is." Sievert said it was important to have TVision in place so it's ready for its 5G home broadband launch.

While NBCU hasn't said anything publicly yet, T-Mobile and the programmer are in discussions. A source close to NBCU said T-Mobile has been notified that its current offering is a breach of contract, and the programmer is exploring options. The issue seems to be whether **NBC** and **Telemundo** stations are available to TVision subscribers in their DMAs. The \$10/month Vibe package includes no broadcast channels.

ViacomCBS has similar concerns to Discovery, centered around how their networks are packaged on T-Mobile's platform, a source familiar with the matter said. T-Mobile is reportedly aware of ViacomCBS' position.

Zaslav's comments came as Discovery is getting ready to unveil its own pay-TV service featuring its channel lineups. The company revealed today that we'll learn a lot more about Discovery's upcoming DTC service in early December. Set to launch in 2021, Discovery is heavily leaning into DTC.

"We're going to go into real detail, we're going to do an extensive discussion with full disclosure, how globally we think we can attack it, who's helping us," said Zaslav. "The whole company's been focused on this... I think one of the keys is getting partners to help. So, we've very quietly over the last year working aggressively in getting all of our stuff together and we're quite close."

## CFX Cablefax PROGRAM AWARDS

RECOGNIZING OUTSTANDING NICHE CONTENT ON EVERY PLATFORM

Cablefax's Program Awards is continuing its long tradition of honoring the best programming in a particular content niche, regardless of where the content originated or how consumers watch it.

Enter Today at [www.CablefaxProgramAwards.com](http://www.CablefaxProgramAwards.com)

QUESTIONS: Mary-Lou French at [mfrench@accessintel.com](mailto:mfrench@accessintel.com)

First Deadline: Nov. 30  
Final Deadline: Dec. 11 (late fees apply)

## Shorts Animals/Nature

African American Reality Competition Music/Musical Live Event Coverage Food Competition Remote Production Live Virtual Event News Children's PSA Awards Local Late Night Game Show Social Justice Documentary Limited Series

Home Sports Home Trailers Sci-Fi Lifestyle Horror/Suspense LGBTQ+ Focused Religious

Family-Friendly Home Instructional Competition

Pets Drama Comedy

Travel Educational Reality

**CNN WINS DAYS 2 OF VOTE COUNT**

Like sands through the hour glass, so is the vote count of the 2020 election... And Americans are glued to their TVs. **CNN** overtook Election Night winner **Fox News** on Day 2, with Wednesday's coverage marking the **WarnerMedia** net's second most-watched day in its 40-year history (#1 goes to 2016 Election Day). CNN's 7.1mln total viewers in prime Wednesday put it ahead of Fox News (6.3mln), **MSNBC** (4.81mln) as well as **ABC**, **Fox** and **NBC**. CNN also led Fox in 25-54s (3.2mln vs 1.9mln) and 18-34s (1.01mln vs 479K). CNN Digital broke all records on Wednesday, with 116mln global unique users, making it the biggest day in history for CNN. Fox News Digital also had record day of engagement. Compared to the day after the election four years prior, unique devices increased by 189%, video starts saw a 162% rise, page views were up 249%, and time spent was up 310%, according to Adobe Analytics and Apple News.

**DISCOVERY POSTS PROFIT**

**Discovery**'s 3Q20 numbers beat expectations, posting a 15% net income to \$300mln, despite total revenues dropping 4% and ad sales decreasing 8% in the US and 9% internationally. Total revenues of \$2.561mln decreased 4% YOY. US networks revenue dipped 4% YOY to \$1.659mln, while distribution fees increased 2% driven by contractual rate increases. Discovery pres/CEO *David Zaslav* pointed to the success of **TLC** particularly, as the No 1 ad-supported cable net in prime among women and the No 2 among P25-54 and 18-49. On Sunday and Monday nights this quarter, TLC was the No 1 net among all women, thanks to the "90-Day Fiance" franchise.

**LIBERTY'S MAFFEI ON REGULATION**

As the votes continue to be tallied in the presidential election, **Liberty Media** CEO *Greg Maffei* doesn't sound too concerned about how the outcome will impact cable. "I suspect anything that looks like the current regime is probably pretty good for cable. Cable has done, in my judgment, an excellent job supplying broadband connectivity during the pandemic and admirably increased capacity and the number of lines and handled the growth in upstream and downstream traffic very well," he said during **Liberty Broadband's** 3Q earnings call Thursday. "Note that during the prior [*Obama*] administration, which at various times had control of the legislative and executive branch, **Charter** was able to operate very well equally under a Title II regulation. I remain optimistic." The media exec doesn't see a change in power having much impact on acquisitions in the space either. "Realistically, there's not that much M&A for Charter to do. There's only a couple of large-scale cable companies which are not in **Comcast** or Charter. I think most of those would still be substantially small enough that I wouldn't anticipate there would be enormous antitrust issues given the regional nature of the business, but that remains to be seen," he said.

**LIBERTY BROADBAND ON CHARTER CAP, GCI**

**Liberty Broadband** is having discussions with **Charter** over a cap that keeps its equity ownership in the operator from rising above certain limits. CEO *Greg Maffei* said he's optimistic they'll be productive. The company isn't interested in selling Charter shares, but if it came down to a forced

# Harnessing the Power of Local News Webinar

Thursday, Nov. 12 | 2pm ET

PRESENTED BY:  
**CYNOPSIS**

SPONSORED BY:  
**NY NEW YORK  
INTERCONNECT**

**REGISTER FOR FREE** [www.cynopsis.com/webinars](http://www.cynopsis.com/webinars)

Cablefax Daily (ISSN 1069-6644) is published daily by Access Intelligence, LLC | [www.cablefax.com](http://www.cablefax.com) | 301.354.2101 | Editorial Director: Amy Maclean, 301.354.1760, [amaclean@accessintel.com](mailto:amaclean@accessintel.com) | Publisher, Cablefax and Cynopsis: Robbie Caploe, 917.974.0640, [rcaploe@accessintel.com](mailto:rcaploe@accessintel.com) | Senior Editor: Sara Winegardner, 301.354.1701, [swinegardner@accessintel.com](mailto:swinegardner@accessintel.com) | Assoc Editor: Mollie Cahillane, 212.621.4951, [mcahillane@accessintel.com](mailto:mcahillane@accessintel.com) | VP, Sales: Mike Farina, 203.218.6480, [mfarina@accessintel.com](mailto:mfarina@accessintel.com) | Exec Director, Strategic Partnerships: Albert Nassour, 917.545.3129, [anassour@accessintel.com](mailto:anassour@accessintel.com) | Dir of Marketing: Kate Schaeffer, [kschaeffer@accessintel.com](mailto:kschaeffer@accessintel.com) | Prod. Mgr: Joann Fato, [jfato@accessintel.com](mailto:jfato@accessintel.com) | Kerry Smith, Divisional President, Marketing & Media Group, [ksmith@accessintel.com](mailto:ksmith@accessintel.com) | Group Subs/Subscription Questions, Client Services: 301.354.2101, [clientservices@accessintel.com](mailto:clientservices@accessintel.com) | Annual subscription price: \$1,749.00/year | Access Intelligence, LLC, 9211 Corporate Blvd., 4th Floor, Rockville, MD 20850

divestiture, he said it wouldn't be horrible because Liberty Broadband's tax rate would still be good. The formula for that cap is complicated because, well, it's Liberty. The bottom line is Liberty Broadband doesn't think it has exceeded the cap and it has exercised its preemptive right to buy some 35K shares of Charter Class A common stock for \$14.9mln during the first nine months of 2020. An August SEC filing put Liberty Broadband's equity ownership of Charter at 24.4% on a fully diluted basis. As for Liberty Broadband's plan to merge with **GCI Liberty**, the combo was approved by the **FCC** on Oct 23. It should become final on Dec 2 if there aren't any applicable challenges. The two are still waiting on Alaska regulatory approval, and a shareholder vote on the combination is slated for Dec 15. GCI Liberty posted 3Q revenue of \$246.9mln and adjusted OIBDA of \$75.3mln.

### MEDIACOM ROCKS 3Q OIBDA

A pandemic and hurricanes can't take **Mediacom** down. The company saw adjusted OIBDA growth of 15.4% in 3Q to an industry-leading \$228.9mln, marking its best quarterly performance in its 25-year history. It was driven in large part by record broadband adds of 29K. Revenues were up 5.5% YOY to \$538.6mln. Mediacom expects to generate at least \$525mln of FCF in 2020, an all-time high. "Looking longer term, with CBRS spectrum rights acquired in the recent **FCC** auction, we are excited about the opportunity to provide fixed wireless broadband to hundreds of thousands of unserved or underserved households in close proximity to our existing footprint beginning in the second half of 2021, furthering our deliberate transition to a data-centric business model," chmn/CEO *Rocco Commisso* said in a statement. Video losses declined by 13K in the quarter, while phone fell by 3K. The company continues to reduce debt, trimming \$427mln since Sept 2019, bringing net debt to \$1.857.5bln with a net leverage ratio of 2.03x.

### BIG LAYOFFS AT ESPN

**ESPN** began a significant amount of layoffs Thursday, cutting approximately 300 roles and declining to fill 200 open positions. Those 500 jobs represent about 10% of the company's domestic workforce. In a memo obtained by **Cablefax**, ESPN pres *Jimmy Pitaro* called the layoffs an "inflection point" for the company. "Prior to the pandemic, we had been deeply engaged in strategizing how best to position ESPN for future success amidst tremendous disruption in how fans consume sports," he wrote. "The pandemic's significant impact on our business clearly accelerated those forward-looking discussions." Citing short-term steps like exec and talent salary reductions, furloughs and budget cuts as an attempt to navigate COVID, he said it is now time to make hard choices. "However, building a successful future in a changing world means facing hard choices. Making informed decisions about how and where we need to go—and, as always, in the most efficient way possible—is by far the most challenging job of any leadership team," he wrote. "And, while it must be done looking through a business lens, it also must be done with

great respect and genuine concern for people." ESPN did not say how many of the layoffs would come from its Bristol, CT, headquarters, which has about 4K employees on its campus.

### FCC CONNECTED CARE PILOT READY TO GO

The window for the **FCC's** Connected Care Pilot Program opens Friday at noon ET and will remain open through Dec 7, 11:59pm ET. The program, spearheaded by commish *Brendan Carr*, will provide up to \$100mln from the Universal Service Fund over a three-year period to support the provision of connected care services, such as patient broadband access and healthcare broadband data connections.

### MUST CARRY COMPLAINT MOOT

The **FCC** Media Bureau dismissed **Minority Television Project's** petition for reconsideration of a must-carry complaint that centered on how it was mailed. In 2018, the Bureau denied Minority Television's complaint against **DISH**, which said it wasn't required to carry its KMTP channel because its election notice was not sent via certified mail. The KMTP owner asked the Bureau to reconsider, but the Bureau said this week it was moot because of the FCC's changes to must-carry and retrans election notification. Broadcast stations are now required to make their carriage elections by uploading those elections to their online public files. In the case of new or changed elections, notices must be sent now via email vs certified mail. The Bureau also said there's no longer a controversy because the must-carry election cycle the dispute was in has now passed. KMTP filed a must-carry request by the Oct 1 due date for the new cycle, and DISH will begin carrying it in January.

### RATINGS

Two **Netflix** originals cracked the **Nielsen** Top 10 streaming list for the week of Oct 5-11. In the spirit of Halloween, "The Haunting of Bly Manor" and the *Adam Sandler* film "Hubie Halloween" were the top two and three pieces of content streamed. **Pop TV's** "Schitt's Creek" helmed the top of the list once again, with nearly 1.5bln minutes of viewing, its biggest accumulation to date.

### PROGRAMMING

**ESPN** is expanding coverage of the Masters tournament, kicking off with new **ESPN+** shows on Tuesday and Wednesday during the week of Nov 9-15. ESPN will televise live play of the first and second rounds of the tournament from 1:5:30pm on Thursday and Friday Nov 12-13, with additional live streams on ESPN+. – **HGTV** picked up "Flip or Flop" for Season 10, ordering 15 new episodes set to premiere in late 2021.

### PEOPLE

**NAB** added seven new members to its board. The new members include *Artie Altman* of **Katz Media Group**; *Jan Goldstein* of **Gray Television**; *Brian Lawlor* of **E.W. Scripps Company**; *DeDe Lea* of **ViacomCBS**; *Wendy McMahon* of **ABC Owned Television Stations Group**; *Ralph Oakley* of **Quincy Media**; and *Gayle Troberman* of **iHeartMedia**.

# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

## WHAT HAPPENED TO RYAN SINGLETON?

African American-focused **Bounce** is the latest network to jump into true crime, premiering its first-ever investigative docuseries this month, “Dying to be Famous: The Ryan Singleton Mystery.” The series, which debuted on Nov 1 with new eps premiering Sundays at 9pm, tells the story of a 24-year-old aspiring model who in 2013 headed to Hollywood with two friends and ended up dead in the Mojave Desert with all his organs missing. Not only has no one ever been charged in Singleton’s death, the cause and manner of death is listed as undetermined. “Ryan’s story is mysterious, fascinating, heartbreaking and all true. It takes viewers on an edge-of-your-seat journey through Ryan’s life, tragic death and the aftermath,” said *David Hudson*, evp, original programming and production for Katz Networks. Singleton and his friends considered themselves to be the “Black Entourage.” As aspiring filmmakers, their own self-shot footage is featured in the series. Viewers see a handsome, affable Singleton, who at one point declares to the camera with a 1000-watt smile, “I want to keep living, and I don’t want to die. I definitely don’t want to do that.” Through interviews with Singleton’s family and friends, *Dying to Be Famous* tries to fill in some of the missing gaps for the young man’s last days. “We are pleased that we brought a stellar investigative team together—one of whom is a former LAPD detective best known for investigating the murders of *Tupac Shakur* and *Biggie Smalls*—that shed new light on Ryan’s case and helped bring closure for his family,” Hudson said. The six-part series is from Winnipeg-based **Farpoint Films**, which filmed some parts of the show during the pandemic—including dramatic re-enactments in Manitoba. While this is multicast network Bounce’s first foray into true crime, it may not be its last. “Consumer interest in the real-life drama of true-crime programming is at an all-time high and it’s a genre that is equally popular among African Americans, especially women, who make up a large percentage of our viewing audience,” Hudson said. – *Amy Maclean*

*Reviews:* If you are a traditionalist, there’s only one James Bond: Sir *Sean Connery*, who passed Oct. 31, aged 90. In tribute, **BBC America** runs a trio of classic Bond films tomorrow (Nov. 6), starring Sir Sean as the understated, unflappable secret agent 007. Each film has its moments beyond Connery’s consistent performance. In “Dr. No” (3:30pm), the initial filmic version of the *Ian Fleming* novels, watch for *Ursula Andress* as the deadly, beautiful Honey Ryder (some of the women’s names in these films should prompt the type of disclaimer **Disney +** is adding to its archive). It’s also the inspiration for *Mike Myers’* Dr. Evil spoof. In “From Russia with Love” (6pm) the draw is *Lotte Lenya* as Rosa Klebb, who has her kicks (you’ll see). It’s hard to forget *Gert Fröbe* as Goldfinger in the eponymous “Goldfinger” (8:30pm). Nice of BBC America, though, to be diverse with its Bond retrospective, not assuming everyone sees 007 films without Connery as espionage sacrilege. Accordingly, later this month, as Thanksgiving fades (Nov. 29), the network re-runs all three classics and adds “The Spy Who Loved Me,” with *Roger Moore*, ‘GoldenEye,’ with *Pierce Brosnan*, both of whom were rather stiff Bonds and the most rugged Bond, *Daniel Craig*, in the excellent “Casino Royale.” Let the comparisons begin and continue into December. – *Seth Arenstein*

BASIC CABLE		
P2+ PRIME RANKINGS*		
(10/26/20-11/01/20)		
MON-SUN	MC	MC
	US	US AA
	AA%	(000)
FNC	1.635	5,034
MSNBC	0.791	2,436
ESPN	0.699	2,154
CNN	0.635	1,954
HALL	0.456	1,405
HGTV	0.348	1,073
TLC	0.293	902
FOOD	0.278	856
TBSC	0.269	829
DISC	0.264	814
USA	0.240	738
HMM	0.227	700
ID	0.212	652
INSP	0.205	631
TNT	0.202	623
FRFM	0.199	612
LIFE	0.191	589
TVLAND	0.170	523
HIST	0.164	504
A&E	0.153	472
AMC	0.152	468
TRAVEL	0.145	446
WETV	0.144	443
ADSM	0.143	442
FX	0.138	424
BRAVO	0.134	412
APL	0.128	393
NFL	0.127	391
NICK	0.125	385
NAN	0.119	367
GSN	0.117	360
SYFY	0.114	351
BET	0.110	340
E!	0.106	327
NATGEO	0.100	307
OXY	0.092	283
COM	0.091	279
DSJR	0.087	268
PARA	0.086	266
CRN	0.083	256
NKJR	0.081	250

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

SCTE•ISBE  
**CABLE-TEC EXPO®**  
 VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE » OCTOBER 12-15 2020

IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES...

**DON'T MISS A THING! VIEW ALL ON-DEMAND CONTENT FROM THE CABLE-TEC EXPO® 2020 VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE! EXPLORE NOW! >>**