

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## No Limits: RMCA Transforms into Media+Tech Collective

The **Rocky Mountain Cable Association** is tearing down all its boundaries. On the surface, it may look like its just-revealed **rebrand** to the **Media+Tech Collective** is the latest example of a group shedding cable from its name (see **ACA Connects, NCTA – The Internet & TV Association**, etc), but there's a bit more to it.

In addition to opening the Denver-based association up to members from companies outside traditional cable, the group is hoping to eliminate a perception that it's primarily for sales and marketing professionals. It's also ditching Rocky Mountain from its name, with membership open to anyone regardless of home base (Colorado will continue to be the group's main focus). There are signs it's already working. The new brand and mission was unveiled at a virtual event Thursday night, with more than 200 attendees—including from companies such as Colorado-based **DISH** that were previously not eligible for membership.

The organization's roots are with marketing group **CTAM**. When CTAM made the decision to discontinue local chapters in 2011, RMCA was established as a successor organization and it continued to follow CTAM rules and limit membership and sponsorship to those tied directly to cable. RMCA was open to all, but many continued to view it as tied to marketing. MTC is so serious about being welcoming that it has partnered with **Charter's** Accessibility Center of Excellence to create a

roadmap to make sure that people with disabilities have full access to all of its events.

MTC will continue to provide the Denver area a wide range of programs and events, including its holiday gala and golf tournament. It is rebranding its flagship student case study competition series, "The Cable Apprentice" as "Media+Tech Innovation Challenge."

"The last two years, the students who participated, most of them had never had cable. In trying to get students interested in participating in the case competition, the fact it was called the Cable Apprentice, they were like, 'do I want to do something with cable?'" said new MTC president *Charlotte Bockstahler*, who is a lecturer and adjunct faculty and Sport & Entertainment Advisory Council co-chair at the University of Colorado Denver. "When we switched it to Media+Tech, students' eyes lit up... It's a cool industry with a lot of people doing a lot of cool things, but the younger generation needs to understand that."

Finals for the Innovation Challenge, which draws teams of graduate students from the University of Denver's Daniels College of Business, the University of Colorado – Denver Business School and the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs College of Business, are set for March 5. But MTC is looking for guest judges and mentors from all around the country now.

Denver was once dubbed the capital of cable, with three of the largest cable companies headquartered in the area (**United Artists Communications, United Cable** and **TCI**).



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While that's changed, the city and surrounding area continues to have a large cable presence, including through **The Cable Center** as well as large Charter and **Comcast** operations. "It's still very strong here," said Bockstahler. In addition to **Starz, Kroenke Sports & Entertainment** and some smaller network group offices, "**Amazon** and **Google** are starting to have a presence here. I've noticed companies like **SpotX** and a lot of technology companies related to addressable and programmatic advertising popping up in the area," she said.

While MTC will focus on its home base of metro Denver and surrounding markets for the foreseeable future, it's structured for potential growth in the years ahead outside of the Rocky Mountain region. "We are still headquartered here, but we hope that in the long term we'll be able to expand this and have folks involved from more cities and hotspots for the industry around the country," Bockstahler said.

**C-BAND AUCTION CONCLUDES**

The C-band auction officially came to a close Friday after 97 rounds of bidding that grossed just under \$81bln, cementing its place as the highest-grossing spectrum auction held in the US. **FCC** chairman **Ajit Pai** said bidders have won all of the 5684 spectrum blocks that were up for grabs. The conclusion of the C-band auction adds an exclamation point to Pai's time as head of the Commission. Former chairman **Robert McDowell** published a farewell [post](#) to Pai Friday, recalling how he always knew that the "Kid from Kansas" would have a bright future. "Keep in mind that many of the 'best and brightest,' including US Senators and two of his FCC colleagues, said the C-band auction should either never happen or would be more suc-

cessful if it had been shaped their way. But the markets have spoken, and the C-Band auction has broken a record of success that may not be surpassed for many years," he wrote.

**FCC GIVES FRONTIER GREEN LIGHT**

**Frontier Communications** scored approval from the **FCC** for its Chapter 11 restructuring. The company has already received regulatory approvals, or favorable determinations, from 13 states. The provider said it expects to emerge from bankruptcy early this year, and when it does, it will have reduced its total outstanding indebtedness by more than \$10 billion. "We continue to await approval in just four states and are working to expedite those approvals to enable the Company to emerge from Chapter 11," Frontier president/CEO **Bernie Han** said in a statement. "Our team remains focused on our transformative strategy to strengthen our financial foundation, improve our operations and enhance our customer experience throughout the US."

**LOCAST HEADS TO MADISON**

**Locast** expanded its service area to include the Madison, Wisconsin, market Friday. Residents in the city and the surrounding rural areas will now be able to access their local TV stations using Locast's service, and the timing couldn't be better. The Green Bay Packers at home will battle against the Los Angeles Rams Saturday at 3:35pm CST on Madison's local **Fox** station, which is available on Locast.

**AT THE COMMISSION**

The **FCC** adopted a NPRM seeking comment on how to maximize efficient use of the 500MHz of mid-band spectrum available in the 12.2-12.7GHz band. The hope of the

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**C-BAND AUCTION HITS \$30MLN**  
The **FCC's** C-band auction surpassed the \$30mln mark before Friday's last bidding round ended. Bidding is scheduled to continue through Round 45, which ends at noon ET on Dec 23. The auction will



intend to get groceries a kets (37%), buying gift local retailers (23%) at their favorite businesses and friends (24%).  
*(Source: Comcast Busine*

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**WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST**

**Dark Day: Powell Describes Capitol Chaos as Unimaginable**

The world watched via television networks and broadband connections as the US Capitol was breached by president **Trump** supporters Wednesday as the House and Senat debated a move by some Republicans to overturn elction results. "This is a sad and deeply disturbing moment for r in tion," **NCTA** pres/CEO **Michael Powell** told **CFX** could not i (NBC) in rans f' wish. They remain as time. P rovi

news networks and **Twitter**. When the House and Senat went out of session as a group broke into the Capitol, **C-SPAN** continued with live coverage from its studio (**Greta Brawner** hosting) mixing in interviews with reporters inside and outside the Capitol, members of Congress, live video

**RATINGS**

**Fox News** has now officially won prime and total day for 2020, as projected. It became the first cable news net to end a year with more than 3.5mln viewers in prime. It was a pretty good year for all the news nets though. See our story. - Watching **TNT** and **TBS's**

**Retrans Agenda: Virtual MVPDs, ATSC 3.0's Role in Retransmission**

As we head into 2021, there may not have been a huge retransmission consent blackout to ring in the year (those happened a few weeks early and involved **DISH** and **AT&T**), but there's still plenty for broadcasters and MVPDs to fret about.

Although traditional MVPD subscribers declined d first half of 2020, retransmission consent revenue e major station groups increased in both the first an quarters of 2020 by nearly 20% compared to the second quarters of 2019, according to **S&P Global**. The **FCC's** newly released Communications Marke part broadcast retrans consent revenue jumped from

proceeding is to further a conversation as to whether terrestrial mobile wireless service could coexist with existing operations without causing harmful interference to incumbent licensees. The 12GHz band is currently licensed to direct broadcast satellite operators, and **DISH** and **DirectTV** use the spectrum to deliver video programming to their customers. – The FCC announced an initial set of 14 pilot projects in 11 states that have been selected for the Connected Care Pilot Program. A total of \$26.6 million will be awarded to those applicants to treat nearly half a million patients in both urban and rural parts of the country. Overall, the program will make available up to \$100 million over a three-year period for selected applicants and qualifying purchases necessary to provide connected care services.

**DOING GOOD**

**TDS** donated \$5000 to the beautification efforts in Carlsbad, New Mexico. Carlsbad mayor *Dale Janway* said the city plans to use the donation to make improvements to the upper beach area of the Lake Carlsbad Recreational Area.

**PEOPLE**

**AMC Networks** tapped *Christina Spade* to serve as evp/CFO. She succeeds *Sean Sullivan*, who stepped down in October. Spade most recently filled the same role for **ViacomCBS**, and served as CFO at **CBS** prior to the merger. She also spent more than two decades as CFO for **Showtime Networks**.

**EDITOR'S NOTE**

**Cablefax Daily** will not publish Monday because of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. Your next issue will arrive Tuesday.

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**Up Ahead**

- JAN 19-21: VIRTUAL NATPE MIAMI**
- JAN 25-28: REALSCREEN SUMMIT**
- FEB 17: FCC OPEN MEETING**
- FEB 22-23: APTS PUBLIC MEDIA SUMMIT**
- MARCH 2-3: NCTC SMARTCLICKS MARKETING & VIDEO SERIES**
- MARCH 16-20: SXSW ONLINE**

**Research**

- > Between January and November 2020, awareness of the term “5G” increased from 74% to 89% among those aged 16-74 in the US.
- > The share of those aware who are very or somewhat confident in describing 5G to someone else shows a lower relative increase from 50% to 56%.
- > 74% of consumers who would consider a new entrant or non-traditional provider for 5G phone service say they would break their existing smartphone bundle to do so. (Source: [Hub Entertainment Research](#))

**Quotable**

*“This was the plan all along. Four years ago. Four years ago, we looked at consumer behavior shifting and we made the decision to pivot Starz on the OTT business. This past quarter was an inflection point for our business. It was the first time in the history of Starz that we had more global OTT subscribers than we had global linear subscribers, and we think revenue will follow within the year. The next 24 months are going to be really exciting for our business... it’s a non-ad-supported, adult drama-based service that is really what we like to call content that people are willing to pay for. It makes us a very complementary service for all of those broad-based streaming services that are going to compete for that first SVOD in the home.”*  
 – Starz CEO Jeffrey Hirsch talking the service’s growth on **CNBC**

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