

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Broadband Band-Aid: Crafting an Impactful Emergency Broadband Plan

The **FCC** has been given \$3.2 billion for the Emergency Broadband Benefit program, but how the program could be structured to ensure a long-term increase in internet accessibility remains a mystery. A Commission roundtable held Friday saw panelists identify three major areas of concern: participation eligibility, consumer outreach and overall competition.

Much of the conversation around the program's structure surrounded how to ensure participation from a large number of providers, not just those that are Eligible Telecommunications Carriers. Granting non-ETCs access to the multiple **Lifeline** databases intended to be utilized for the EBB and setting a singular start date for the program were set forth as easy ways to ensure participation and more options for customers.

"Since each participant is only allowed to use their benefit with one provider, I think it is especially important that they are able to access the full list of all participating providers so they can make that choice with full transparency and all the information they need," **Comcast** Internet Essentials senior director, program administration *Trinity Thorpe-Lubneuski* said.

And when it comes to actually finding the consumers and introducing them to the EBB, **National Consumer Law Center** attorney *Olivia Wein* reminded that while modern advertising has its place, there's also room for some tried-and-true community-based marketing methods.

"Keep in mind the ability to engage with a smartphone.

Can we create an easy way to get to the tools through the smartphone, or apply through the smartphone?.. We have to keep in mind meeting people where they are," she suggested. "In-language radio segments that folks can plug and play would be helpful to get the word out about the program. Social media toolkits would be helpful, PSAs and the old-school sort of bus and train ads—things you can play as posters in the community or in the agency."

Ongoing communication with program participants and eligible consumers is also critical, and a number of panelists called for transparency with the public as to how funds are being dispersed and when the EBB will come to an end.

"We think, to buffer against some of the sticker shock at the end of this program, there needs to be weekly updates in some form including a running total of the number of subscribers in the program, cumulative disbursements and estimates of when the funds may be depleted," **AT&T** director, federal regulatory *Anisa Green* said. She also encouraged to FCC to give at least a 90-day warning ahead of the projected end of the program so that consumers and carriers have a chance to prepare.

While the EBB program is only temporary, the economic challenges of those that qualify for the program likely won't end when it does. Providers, either at the time of a consumer's sign-up for the program or near the EBB's close, will need to move proactively to ensure this doesn't serve as a temporary band-aid on a more permanent problem.

"Essentially, some of these people will still need to transition,

THE FAXIES

RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE IN PR & MARKETING

Submit your entries by **March 19**

Your hard work is done – and now it's time for you and your team to get recognized!

Honoring those people, shows, and networks who excel in digital content, marketing, advertising, social media and online content.

Categories include Audience Engagement & Experience, PR & Marketing, Executives and Teams of the Year.

www.TheFAXIES.com



whether it's to Lifeline or another program. What are we doing to make sure that they actually know about those options and aren't necessarily being coerced into other programs that they might not be able to afford?" **Next Century Cities** executive director *Francella Ochillo* said. "The thing that everybody shares who is eligible for this program is low income. We know that... and we haven't changed the fact that our entire broadband structure is something that a lot of people simply cannot afford, the price of service in their area."

Identifying who the customers are that will need help is critical, and that's why **NCTA** vp/deputy general counsel *Steve Morris* said it's important for the EBB to work hand-in-hand with the initiatives cable operators have already introduced to meet the needs of low-income households.

"The experience they have had over the last year trying to identify the people who don't have broadband connections, we want to build on that and find the people who still need help," Morris said. He added that what could be a gamechanger with the EBB is that the size of the discount is so much larger than what is offered by Lifeline.

"The bigger discount opens up possibilities in terms of getting people more robust service at a really good price, or even free," Morris said. "That, I think, is going to hopefully convince people that that's a great way to try broadband."

RDOF AUCTION DEADLINE

Tuesday at 6pm ET is the deadline for long-form applicants in the **FCC's** Rural Digital Opportunity Fund to upload their letters of credit commitment and detailed technology and system design descriptions to the FCC. Calls continue for close examination of winners

of the \$9.2 billion in funding from the auction's first phase. The board of the **National Association of Regulatory Commissioners** (NARUC) has unanimously approved a resolution calling on the FCC to thoroughly vet winners. NARUC is an important player as it helps oversee the Universal Service Fund. The **National Rural Electric Cooperative Association** made a similar plea. "Our concern really hinges on the fact that a number of bidders bid into higher speed categories with technologies that have not been proven to meet those speeds," NRECA CEO *Jim Matheson* said in a recent call with reporters. He cited **SpaceX** bidding into the 100Mbps downstream/20Mbps upstream category with its satellite broadband program that's still in beta testing as well as fixed wireless providers bidding into the gigabit speed category. "All this matters even more because one of the conditions here with the RDOF is if a census block is awarded a bid, that shuts out any other federal money being spent in that census block for the next 10 years. And if a bidder doesn't live up to their promises, the people who live in that area are locked into a bad situation for the next decade. That is simply unacceptable," said Matheson.

IMPEACHMENT RATINGS

Day 3 saw **MSNBC** take first place against in total viewers (3.533 million) from noon to 5:45pm, with **CNN** in second place 3.196 million. CNN was tops among 25-54 (720,000) and 18-34s (145,000) **Fox News** finished fifth, behind **ABC** and **CBS**, in total viewers (1.231 million) and both demos.

SPECTRUM MOBILE OFFERS APPLE WATCH

Charter is offering the Apple Watch Series 6 and SE to Spectrum Mobile customers online and at its retail stores nationwide. This latest iteration includes a blood oxygen sensor and app and

Learn **FROM** and **WITH** your fellow NCTC Members!



Marketing - March 2

Video - March 3

Group Purchasing - April 13

Broadband - April 14

WWW.NCTCSMARTCLICKS.ORG

Cablefax Daily (ISSN 1069-6644) is published daily by Access Intelligence, LLC | www.cablefax.com | 301.354.2101 | Editorial Director: Amy Maclean, 301.354.1760, amaclean@accessintel.com | Publisher, Cablefax and Synopsis: Robbie Caploe, 917.974.0640, rcaploe@accessintel.com | Managing Editor: Sara Winegardner, 301.354.1701, swinegardner@accessintel.com | Executive Director, Strategic Partnerships: Albert Nassour, 917.545.3129, anassour@accessintel.com | Dir of Marketing: Kate Schaeffer, kschaef@accessintel.com | Production Manager: Joann Fato, jfato@accessintel.com | Kerry Smith, Divisional President, Marketing & Media Group, ksmith@accessintel.com | Group Subs/Subscription Questions, Client Services: 301.354.2101, clientservices@accessintel.com | Annual subscription price: \$1,799.00/year | Access Intelligence, LLC, 9211 Corporate Blvd., 4th Floor, Rockville, MD 20850

automatic handwashing detection. A \$10 per monthly Smartwatch Access plan with unlimited data will be added for each new Apple Watch activated on Spectrum Mobile. For a limited time, customers who activate an Apple Watch will receive three months of free Smartwatch Access.

PIVOTAL UPS ALTICE USA

Pivotal Research upped its year-end 2021 price target on **Altice USA** by \$1 to \$45, citing RGUs that were materially ahead of its expectations. Shares dipped 8% Thursday, a day after Altice reported 4Q results that included a modest miss on broadband subs (9,000 additions when adjusted for subscribers formerly covered by the FCC Keep America Connected Pledge and NJ executive order). Pivotal believes the decline was unwarranted, believing the company can deliver steady growth, very large cash flows and additional leveragability fueled by EBITDA growth that will likely go into continued large buybacks.

PROGRAMMING

MTV's "The Real World" is returning March 4 to kick off the relaunch of **ViacomCBS'** streaming service as **Paramount+**. The first installment will reunite the original "seven strangers" from the NY cast for "The Real World Homecoming: New York."

IN THE COURTS

Fox News' *Maria Bartiromo*, *Jeanine Pirro* and former host *Lou Dobbs* filed separate motions to dismiss the \$2.7 billion lawsuit by electronic voting company **Smartmatic**. The filings follow **Fox News Media's** earlier motion to dismiss the defamation case.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Your next issue of **Cablefax Daily** will arrive Tuesday due to President's Day. We'll keep you apprised of any breaking news at Cablefax.com.

CABLEFAX DASHBOARD

Tweet Tweet

Lionsgate Jobs @lionsgatejobs


"I am a fan of #Lionsgate because they stand for DE-A-I: Diversity, Equity, Access, Accountability, Acceptance, and Inclusion." - Mignon Clyburn

Thank you Hon. @MignonClyburn for sharing your activism and wisdom at our Conversations That Matter speaker series #BHM



Armstrong @followarmstrong

HAMLIN, WV: Armstrong has recently made a remarkable donation in support of the construction and opening of the first-ever community center to benefit all citizens of Lincoln County.



The Hamlin United Methodist Church has broken ground and is developing a large facility that will ultimately support community gatherings, host digital literacy classes, host church functions, and serve other area needs.

The new Armstrong Family Life Center is slated to open in Spring 2021 and will be celebrated with a grand ribbon-cutting event. Pictured are Hamlin United Methodist Executive Team members Tom

Up Ahead

- 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

- > Traffic on broadband networks rose by more than half and average broadband usage approached half of a terabyte at the end of 2020.
- > Per-subscriber average data usage for 4Q20 was 482.6GB/month, a 40% increase YOY.
- > At the same time, broadband providers saw subscriber increases of 6.5%, creating a net effect of 51% more broadband traffic.
- > 14.1% of subscribers now consumer more than 1TB of data per month, a 94% jump YOY.

(Source: [OpenVault](#))

Quotable

"Having the HBO brand—it's very important for subscribers and viewers. It means something to people, but it's also very meaningful to the people who work at HBO. It actually gives us all a North Star, something to shoot for, and I think that's very helpful. I'm talking about production, business affairs, publicity... We all know that to be an HBO show, it has to be special in some way. It has to be unique, it has to be different, it has to be well-produced... I do think that is helpful, that when you go into this process of making TV shows, you've got something in mind for a bar that you wanted to hit.

- HBO/HBO Max chief content officer Casey Bloys talking with Epyllion Industries about how the brand and programming strategy go hand-in-hand

Help Save Lives. Donate Blood.

Schedule at RedCrossBlood.org



American Red Cross