

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Vendor Venture: Rich Fickle on NCTC's Relationship with MobiTV

As **MobiTV's** Chapter 11 proceeding continues, questions over its future remain. From the get go, there have been concerns for NCTC members, given that 90 of the co-op's 700+ members rely on the company for IPTV services. When *Light Reading* [broke the news](#) last week that NCTC was considering a plan to help bail out the video streaming firm, it made some sense given the two have been in a partnership since 2017.

"It's a duty we have to try to help members look at alternatives and to also help if possible for the Mobi service to continue, either as a standalone company or with a capable partner, maybe an acquiring company. We're pursuing multiple angles in order to help members, and I think we've made tremendous progress," NCTC president/CEO Rich Fickle told **Cablefax** this week.

One key element being considered would be a change to MobiTV's service agreements that would cause NCTC members who use Mobi to pay more for the service. "It's a revision of the terms of carriage. We're working with members to see if they want to continue the service and would they agree to different terms than have today," Fickle said. "The main thrust is to try and find a good partner or buyer or investor in the Mobi service, but part of that is to reset the terms under which the service is provided to make it more viable."

That's different from NCTC joining in on a bid to purchase MobiTV. Bids are currently due May 7, with May 12 the date

for an auction if multiple bids are received. It's possible that there may be a group of NCTC members that are willing to pool some money to make a bid, but Fickle said NCTC would not lead that and that such talk was speculative at this point. "All the efforts we're putting in right now are really to help solidify the financial viability of the service," he said.

He stressed that NCTC's primary aim in this is to help members. "Our motivation has absolutely nothing to do with the NCTC trying to make money on it. And as a matter of fact, we don't. We actually do not make money on it," he said, saying NCTC gets a small administrative fee for some of the billing and so forth. "If you just looked at it from how much time and effort we put in this and you assigned a cost to that, we're losing money on it. But that's not the point. Our primary mission is to do things to help members be successful and we have no profit motive in the calculation here."

An internal document sent to NCTC members obtained by *Light Reading* said alternative providers reviewed by the co-op have limited experience in providing such a service on the scale of MobiTV, and warned against the risks and costs of moving to another solution. Fickle said that wasn't meant to put down others. "I think there's some really, really good companies that have developed strong platforms and have in many ways caught up to what Mobi has done, but not entirely," he said. "The issue is that to make change is always hard. And so members have to weight the costs of change, and the timing and disruption that may occur... If there was an inference

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that these companies are not good providers or not capable, that's just flat wrong, because there are several companies that are very capable in this space.

MobiTV's bankruptcy proceeding comes as Fickle prepares to step down as head of the co-op by year-end. That's not something that concerns him at all. "We've got a pretty active board. They're all members companies. They're very wise, and they've been very supportive and encouraging us to do the right thing," he said. "And I'm not disappearing next month, or the month after or even a month after that. So, there's plenty of time to work on these things and find the right paths... I wouldn't portray a dynamic where we're doing more or less by my decision to leave by the end of the year."

ROKU, NIELSEN CLOSE AVA TRANSACTION

Roku closed on its acquisition of **Nielsen's** advanced video advertising business Friday. The deal includes Nielsen's video automatic content recognition and dynamic ad insertion technologies. Additionally, Nielsen and Roku entered into a long-term strategic partnership to integrate Nielsen ad and content measurement products into Roku's platform and further push Nielsen's cross-media measurement solution.

SPOTX MARRIES AUDIENCE TARGETING, PRIVACY

SpotX revealed a new suite of custom audience data tools that will allow media owners and advertisers to target audiences using first-party, third-party or subscriber data while maintaining consumer privacy. The technology restricts any personal information signals that are passed to the buy side in a bid request. Media owners can also combine first-party data sets and match them with other data sets from advertisers or third-party data sources.

FRONTIER SET TO MOVE OUT OF CHAPTER 11

Frontier announced that the **California Public Utilities Commission** unanimously voted to approve its emergence from Chapter 11 bankruptcy. With the receipt of its final required state approval, the operator expects to emerge from Chapter 11 in the coming weeks.

READY TO RUMBLE

Wrestling fans virtually came out in droves to celebrate **WWE's** Wrestlemania 37 over the weekend. Across **YouTube**, **WWE.com** and **WWE** social media content in the week leading up to the event, 31 million hours of content was consumed by fans. Video views hit 1.1 billion and **WWE**-related content saw 115 million engagements.

AT THE COMMISSION

The **FCC** is hosting a public webinar on April 27 at 3pm to provide information on the Emergency Broadband Benefit program. The webinar will offer consumers and outreach partners an overview of the effort as well as eligibility information, enrollment procedures and details on outreach tool kit materials that have been developed to build awareness.



This Week in History



April 17, 1989: CNBC launched with its initials originally standing for "Consumer News and Business Channel." The very first show was "The Money Wheel," combining financial news with consumer stories. Check out that inaugural broadcast from the CNBC archives (<https://youtu.be/VdtNyv6ugxU>), featuring then-NBC president Bob Wright. The network evolved over the years, with its signature "Squawk Box," the first show to broadcast from the New York Stock Exchange, debuting in August 1995. In March 2013, CNBC began airing its first reality program.



DISTRIBUTION

One America News Network, a free, ad supported OTT variant of **One America News Network**, is now available in the Wichita/Hutchinson DMA on KGPT TV. This comes after its first launch as an OTA broadcaster last week in the Vegas DMA. OAN Plus is also available on **Pluto TV**, **The Roku Channel** and **Freebie TV**.

GTCR INVESTS IN POINT BROADBAND

Private equity firm **GTCR** is making a strategic investment in West Point, Georgia-based fiber provider **Point Broadband**. Terms weren't disclosed. Four-year-old Point Broadband offers fiber-to-the premise broadband to residential and business customers in select markets east of the Mississippi River and is actively expanding in near-adjacent markets. Stifel served as lead financial advisor and Houlihan Lokey served as co-financial advisor to Point Broadband. Credit Suisse and Rothschild & Co. served as financial advisors and Kirkland & Ellis LLP served as legal advisor to GTCR.

PROGRAMMING

Anime franchise “Anpanman” will premiere exclusively on **Tubi** to English and Spanish-speaking audiences. The rollout will begin with 10 movies, the first of which, “Apple Boy and Everyone’s Hope,” is available now. Other titles will include “The Adventure of Happie,” “Star Spirited Dollie,” “Purun, The Soap Bubble” and more. – **Nickelodeon** announced that Earth Day special “Nick News: Kids and the Impact of Climate Change” will include guest *John Kerry*, US special presidential envoy for climate. The show will air Saturday at 9pm. – Danish drama series “Blindness – Those Who Kill” will stream exclusively on **Acorn TV** May 10. – **Starz** gave an eight-episode series order to horror comedy series “Shining Vale.” – **HBO Max** will debut the Season 2 premiere of ballroom competition series “Legendary” May 6. – All four episodes of British miniseries “The Drowning” will be available on Sundance Now and Acorn TV on May 6.

DOING GOOD

Comcast announced plans to equip 25 different Connecticut “Lift Zones” locations, 13 of which are already open. The initiative provides free connectivity in partner community centers for the next three years. The company also partnered with Sen *Douglas McCrory* (D-CT) and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford to host a Digital Connectivity Forum on Thursday. Residents learned how to access the Internet by taking advantage of social outreach programs and community-based partnerships and about the company’s Internet Essentials program, which provides Internet for \$9.95/month to qualifying individuals and families.

PEOPLE

CommScope chief legal officer and secretary *Burk Wyatt* is retiring on June 1 after more than 25 years at the company. *Justin Choi* will succeed him as chief legal officer. Choi most recently served as evp/general counsel/secretary/chief compliance officer of **Anixter International**. – *Jason Lish* is joining **Lumen** as its chief security officer. He’s previously held security leadership roles at companies like **Alight Solutions**, **Charles Schwab Corporation** and **Honewell International**.

CABLEFAX DASHBOARD

Tweet Tweet

Smith: “Americans want to know that the vaccines are safe and effective. They simply want the facts – news stories that make recommendations based on detailed reporting, not a personal perspective. Fortunately, that is what broadcasters do best.” #WeAreBroadcasters

...@marceloclaure on the Televisa-Univision call:
- Mentions SoftBank has invested in new media like ByteDance
- Huge opp is there’s 600M Spanish speaking people globally, 1/3rd in the US/Mexico. Yet only 10% of Spanish speakers subscribe to a streamer vs 70% of English speakers
10:30 AM - Apr 14, 2021 - Twitter for iPhone

Big Tech argued that, without common carrier regulation, ISPs would use their market power over Internet platforms.
This notion seems antiquated at best.
Thoughtful piece from @FSFthinktank on how the dynamics of the #NetNeutrality debate have changed

Research

- > Just 36% of Americans responding to a CNBC survey show support for President Biden’s infrastructure proposal. Some 33% said they oppose it.
- > 87% back the proposal in the plan to fix roads and bridges, while 82% approve of increasing pay for elderly caregivers and 78% support expanding high-speed broadband.
- > 43% back the idea that corporate taxes should be raised to pay for the plan.
- > The bigger worry for 55% of the public is that the government will spend too much and drive up deficits compared with 32% who worry that the government will spend too little to support the economy.

(Source: [CNBC](#))

Up Ahead

- APRIL 12-23:** NAB AMPLIFY
- APRIL 20-22:** COLLISION CONFERENCE 2021
- APRIL 23:** CABLEFAX TOP OPS NOMINATION DEADLINE
- APRIL 29:** INTERACTIVE CASE COMPETITION FINALS
- MAY 13:** WICT ROCKY MOUNTAIN VIRTUAL WALK OF FAME

Quotable

“I learned long ago to go around expressing a preference for one chair or the other. I would only say this: I have worked with Chairwoman Rosenworcel for most of my career. When I was [FCC] chairman, I even tried to hire her to work for me. She was a wise woman and chose not to. Her career has not suffered one bit as a consequence. I have a really healthy respect for her intellect and her fair mindedness. We look forward to working with her in her acting capacity. If she should be so lucky as to be appointed by the president, we look forward to working with her then.”

– NCTA president/CEO Michael Powell on C-SPAN’s “Communicators” discussing whether Jessica Rosenworcel should be made permanent FCC chair