

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Carriage Watch: A Few NCTC Members Bidding AMC Nets Adieu

The deadline for **NCTC** members to opt-in to the co-op's renewal deal with **AMC Networks** is Friday. Almost all of the co-op's members are on board, but a handful of **NCTC**'s smaller operator members have publicly notified customers that they are dropping the suite of AMCN channels.

"We value all of our distribution partners and appreciate the ability to bring our popular and critically acclaimed content to viewers and fans through these longstanding and mutually beneficial relationships," AMC Networks said in a statement. "We are currently looking forward to the premiere of an extended final season of 'The Walking Dead' in August, the continuing expansion of The Walking Dead universe with new shows and returning series like 'Better Call Saul', 'Killing Eve,' 'Doctor Who', the best nature programming in the world and other highly anticipated new series."

Conway, which services the town of Conway, Arkansas, told customers they would lose **AMC, BBC America, BBC World News, IFC, Sundance** and **We TV** effective June 10. "There are several things we considered when making our decision—rate, programming viewership, and the movement to direct-to-consumer options from programmers. We also know there are several other big negotiations coming later this year and we have to look at what the market can bear with our rates. Currently 97% of our rate is going directly to programming costs. That is not a sustainable model," Conway

CMO *Crystal Kemp* told **CFX**.

MCTV informed its sub base in the Massillon, Ohio, area that it would remove the channel June 11, and decrease the monthly rate for basic cable service by \$2, effective July 1. "After a thorough review of costs, viewership and availability of similar programming on our lineup and on numerous streaming platforms, the decision was made to no longer carry AMC Networks," MCTV said, directing customers to AMCN's streaming service **AMC+**.

In a blog post announcing plans to drop the AMC Networks, **TDS** took issue with AMC+, which retails for \$8.99 month on platforms like **Roku** and **Amazon Prime Channels** (MVPDs such as **Comcast** and **DISH** offer it for \$6.99/month). "TDS does not agree with AMC's decision to move valued content from live TV distribution to distribution exclusively on their streaming service. Asking cable subscribers to pay more while the AMC Network carves out highly valued content and delivers less to cable subscribers is not fair or reasonable," TDS wrote.

While **Discovery** has moved some new episodes of linear shows to its streaming service **Discovery+**, AMC Networks hasn't taken that approach to-date. It has given some shows early windows on the SVOD before their linear premiere and it does have original content on the SVOD. In the case of AMC+ original series "Gangs of London," the programmer actually ended up debuting the first season of the crime series on linear after its run on the streamer. AMC+ was born out of an earlier experimentation in streaming called AMC Premiere



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THE POWER OF ART

THANK YOU

to The FAXIES for acknowledging Ovation TV's arts advocacy platform Stand For The Arts, and our commitment to making art accessible for all

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that was developed with Comcast as an ad-free way to watch AMC programming.

TDS svp, corporate affairs *Drew Petersen* said the NCTC-AMCN deal doesn't provide the operator with the flexibility to package the programmer's channels in a way that creates value for its customers "given the network's decision to air valued programming" exclusively on AMC+. "If AMC comes back to NCTC members that no longer carry the Network's channels and offers lower rates or more flexible package options, creating value for consumers in this new environment of streaming services, TDS would review the terms and relaunch the network," he said.

SINCLAIR RAISING FUNDS FOR SPORTS STREAMER

Sinclair is raising more than \$250 million for a streaming service that would house **MLB, NBA** and **NHL** games, according to a *New York Post* report. It is working with investment bank **LionTree** on the effort, and is reportedly telling investors that it plans to charge \$23/month to fans who want to stream in-market games. Sinclair hopes to launch the service at the start of the 2022 baseball season.

2021 CABLE TV PIONEERS REVEALED

Cablefax editorial director *Amy Maclean* normally finds herself covering the induction of each year's class of **Cable TV Pioneers** as a member of the media. This year, she counts herself among those to be honored at the organization's 55th Annual Induction in October. She joins the rest of this year's class, which includes *Mark Adams* from **Cox Communications**; *Michael Adams* from **Broadband Semantics**; *Richard Amell* of **Bright House Networks**; *Peter Barton* (posthumous); **Cable One's** *Patricia Baughman*; **Comcast NBCUniversal's** *Tracy Baumgartner*, *Sherita Caesar*, *Dale Elifrits* and *Filemon Lopez*; *Jack Caparrell* from **Service Electric**; *Kristin Dolan* from **605**; **Vmware, Inc's** *Diego M Gastaldi*; *John Higginbotham* from **ACA Connects**; **Astound Broadband's** *Jim Holanda*; *Richard Kirsche* of **Kirsche Consulting**; *Chris Lammers* from **CableLabs**; **Crown Media Network's** *Wonya Lucas*; *Jim McCauley* at **DB Communications**; *Tom McMillin* of **Nevis Advisors**; **INSP's** *John Roos*; *Robert Scanlon* from **Shelter Cove, LLC**; **California Oregon Broadcasting Inc's** *Patricia Smullin* and *R Thomas Umstead* from **Broadcasting + Cable** and **Multichannel News**. The induction will be held October 11 in Atlanta in conjunction with the **SCTE Cable-Tec Expo**.

CONGRESS INTRODUCES MORE BIG TECH BILLS

Sens *John Thune* (R-SD), *Richard Blumenthal* (D-CT), *Jerry Moran* (R-KS), *Marsha Blackburn* (R-TN), *Brian Schatz* (D-HI) and *Mark Warner* (D-VA) reintroduced legislation that would require large-scale internet platforms that collect data from more than

1 million users and gross more than \$50 million/year to allow users to view content that has not been curated as a result of a secret algorithm. The Filter Bubble Transparency Act would aim to make it easier for internet platform users to understand the potential manipulation that exists with secret algorithms. Should the legislation be signed into law, users of those platforms would have the option of viewing a personalized timeline based on collected data and the platform's algorithm or a version that was not influenced by user data. – Sen *Roger Wicker* (R-MS) introduced a bill Thursday that would establish baseline protections to prohibit Big Tech from engaging in anti-competitive practices that limit or

Cablefax Executive Round Up

As America opens up more, what are you seeing in terms of ad spending?



Keith Bowen
Chief Revenue Officer
a4 Advertising

"As the country begins to return to some semblance of normalcy, we are seeing an acceleration of ad spend across our local, regional and national lines of business. Our advertising partners are actively welcoming their customers back to their pre-pandemic lives."



James Rooke
General Manager
Effectv

"As America reopens, we're starting to see a bounce back from categories that were hit hardest during the pandemic, for example the travel, entertainment and dining sectors. At the same time, we're seeing continued strength in sectors that showed growth during the pandemic, for example health & wellness, telecommunications and home improvement. However, what's most interesting is how the pandemic has accelerated a shift towards more audience-based, multi-screen campaigns. This is a reflection of how the pandemic shone a light on the importance of leveraging data to enable marketers to continue to find and deliver their target audiences against the backdrop of dramatically shifting viewing behaviors and programming schedules. We expect this shift to continue to accelerate over the next year, which in turn will move the industry to an impression based model and away from traditional measurement currencies."



David Solomon
CEO
Viamedia

"One of the more interesting trends we have noticed coming out of the pandemic is a much more diverse media mix. While the world was locked down, we saw non-traditional categories emerge with advertising campaigns [that] leverage both cable/ streaming inventory along with digital elements to maximize reach to a captive audience who were safe at home, but looking for entertainment. Thankfully, these new categories have now become regular advertisers."

control consumers' speech. The Promoting Rights and Online Speech Protections to Ensure Every Consumer is Heard Act would block large internet platforms from taking actions against users based on racial, sexual, religious, partisan or ethnic grounds. It would also preserve consumers' ability to access lawful content and services that do not interfere with an internet platform's functionality or pose a data privacy or security risk to a user.

ACA CONNECTS PROPOSES BROADBAND BUDGET

ACA Connects has some ideas on how federal funding could be used to put a major dent in the digital divide. In a new report done in collaboration with consulting firm **Cartesian**, ACAC believes that with a budget of \$61-118 billion, the federal government could make gigabit broadband available to all locations with less than 100Mbps down/20 Mbps up service not included in the **FCC's** RDOF Phase I program. Those dollars would also substantially increase broadband adoption for up to half of the 33 million Lifeline-eligible households over five years by offering them a \$50/month subsidy. ACAC estimated that there are 12 million households, including 8.2 million in partially served census blocks, do not have access to 25/3 Mbps broadband while approximately 30 million do not subscribe to fixed broadband that is available. Financials proved to be a primary reason behind why someone would not subscribe to a broadband service, with 36% of non-subscribing households earning less than \$20,000 a year.

NBCU TO PRESENT OLYMPICS IN 4K

NBCUniversal is providing live coverage of the NBC broadcast network's Olympics primetime show in 4K across certain markets. Live competition coverage off all Tokyo Olympic programming on **GOLF Channel** and the **Olympic Channel** will be made available in 4K HDR throughout the Games. NBC's primetime coverage of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies will also be presented in 4K HDR. The Tokyo Olympics will take place from July 23-August 8.

FAXIES 2021 WINNERS

Cablefax celebrated the 2021 **FAXIES** finalists during a virtual celebration Thursday that revealed the first, second and third place winners in a host of PR & Marketing categories. Big winners include **ESPN**, which took home PR Team of the Year as well as **a4 advertising**, winner of the Sales Team of the Year award. *Jason Nealis*, vp of engineering and operations at **RCN**, was named Innovator of the Year. In thanking his team, Nealis noted the majority of his colleagues have been with him for more than 20 years. "I don't want to name them because a lot of you will try to steal them," he quipped. "But without a doubt, they are family to me." *Naomi Bulochnikov-Paul*, svp of **ABC Entertainment**, received the first place PR Exec of the Year win. She said she's been keeping up with FAXIES since her early days as an assistant at **MTV**. "Now to be included is such an honor," she said. "A huge, massive shout-out to my amazing team at ABC—my village. Thank you guys so much for making me look good always." **Ovation TV's** "Stand for the Arts" won first place in the category of Social Good Campaign. **SCTE's** Cable-Tec Expo 2020 took home the gold in Tradeshow Marketing B2B, and **TLC's**

Jennifer Jakowicz was named Marketer of the Year. Kudos to **Beachfront's** *Alex Felser* who won an Oculus VR headset courtesy of **NCTI**, which snagged the FAXIE for VR/Augmented Reality Marketing for its NCTI Master Technician Virtual Hall of Fame. Check out the full list of FAXIES winners at TheFaxies.com.

NBCU, TARGET PARTNER ON FILM SERIES

NBCUniversal and **Target** partnered with producer *Will Packer* to present a film series highlighting three rising Black filmmakers and their work. The "Scene in Color" film series kicks off Thursday at 9pm ET during commercial times on **Bravo**, **SYFY** and **USA**; across digital properties including the **NBC One app**, **Rotten Tomatoes** and **Fandango Movieclips**; and on **Peacock**. Short films created by *Addison Wright*, *Ewurakua Dawson-Amoah* and *Kristian King* will air and be available to stream, and the films will be accompanied by an appearance by the filmmaker to discuss their work. In addition, NBCU is providing all three creators blind script deals to work with NBCU execs and they will receive mentorship from Packer.

SPORTS EMMYS

The 42nd Annual Sports Emmy Awards were streamed on the program's websites and Emmy apps Tuesday. **TNT** took home seven wins, leading the pack. **ESPN** followed with six awards while **FS1** snagged five. More women were nominated in sports personality categories than ever before, and the occasion was marked with a roundtable featuring most of the nominated female sportscasters. Additionally, ESPN anchor *Elle Duncan* announced a grant to historically black colleges and universities honoring an HBCU student studying for a career in sports journalism. The grant is administered by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

CARRIAGE

Allen Media Group and **Frndly TV** announced a broader distribution partnership Thursday. As part of the agreement, **The Weather Channel** will extend its carriage agreement with the vMVPD. Frndly TV customers can also enjoy **Recipe.TV** and streaming service **Local Now**. The new offerings will be available to all Frndly TV users by the end of June. – Germany-based international broadcaster **Deutsche Welle's** world news content is available to stream on **Haystack News**. – 24/7 classic anime streaming channel **RetroCrush** is now on **Peacock**. Its parent company, **Digital Media Rights**, also announced plans to expand the offering of RetroCrush content streaming on Peacock in the coming months.

PROGRAMMING

Documentary "End of the Line: The Women of Standing Rock" airs on **Fuse** June 25 at 9pm ET. The film showcases Indigenous women who risked their lives to protect their land against the Dakota Access oil pipeline construction and launches on the 145th anniversary of the Sioux victory at the Battle of Little Big Horn. – **AMC** is launching a series of specials on the journey of The Walking Dead universe's most celebrated characters. The series "The Walking Dead: Origins" streams exclusively on **AMC+** each Thursday from July 15 to Aug 5.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

Let's Get 'Physical'

Apple TV+ is taking us all back to the 1980s on June 18 with the premiere of "Physical." But behind the big hair and the colorful leggings is something more dark. Sheila Rubin (*Rose Byrne*) is a tortured housewife struggling with personal demons about her self-image. What helps her cope with those thoughts? Well, aerobics, of course. The passion escalates until she's ready to start her own business, but she still has plenty of barriers to conquer as a woman trying to find her own worth. "This is really following sort of a feminist from that time and discovering her real source of empowerment is to have financial independence, to have economic independence and so on and so forth, but she has no agency and she has no way to do that," Byrne said during a **TCA** panel. Sheila's inner monologue is featured throughout the show, and her hatred for both herself and those around her is a character all its own. No matter how beautiful she may seem to others, the way that she views herself colors everything about how she sees the world. "There is no exclusive person, there is no rule of who or who doesn't feel like this, or has personal demons, no matter who you are or what you look like or where you're from," Byrne said. "I think that's a big part of what Sheila is dealing with and what the show deals with really beautifully." Creator/showrunner *Annie Weisman* said it was important to her to explore that divide that exists between the external image many women feel forced to put forth and the many thoughts they keep to themselves. "There's so many internalized feelings of self-hatred. And it's not about what you see in the mirror, but it's about what you've absorbed from the culture, from your family and from your experience," Weisman said. "That's a lot of what we're exploring in the show is that divide." – *Sara Winegardner*

REVIEWS

"Bar Rescue," season premiere, 10pm, Sunday, **Paramount**. There's no in-between with *Jon Taffer*, the loud, overbearing host of "Bar Rescue." With the subtlety of chef *Gordon Ramsay*, Taffer overhauls failing bars, often fighting fiercely with their owners—some of whom summoned him. Taffer started his 'bar storming' antics in July 2011. This season's first episode, on Sunday, is number 200 for the series, which employs hidden cameras to observe bar employees in their natural habitat. As we said, there's no in-between, you either love Taffer for his tough-love tactics or despise his brutish ways. Either way, this Sunday's "Bar Rescue" is worth a look. It's 200 eps after all. Taffer attempts to resuscitate a family-owned Las Vegas bar during the pandemic. A wrinkle is the couple who run the bar don't own it. Technically their college-age daughter does (she had the best credit in the family). During COVID-19 she's home from Stanford University and her parents have racked up \$80,000 in debt, in her name. They've also been evicted from their home. Taffer is going need a lot of help. – "Hacks," streaming on **HBO Max**. This short series' short eps, with *Jean Smart* as a *Joan Rivers*-like stand-up comedian with plenty of issues, offer a good escape from the pandemic. For a great contrast, catch Smart in HBO's "Mare of Easttown." – *Seth Arenstein*

BASIC CABLE P2+ PRIME RANKINGS* (05/31/21-06/06/21)		
MON-SUN	MC US AA%	MC US AA (000)
TNT	0.760	2,340
FNC	0.631	1,943
MSNBC	0.409	1,261
HGTV	0.406	1,250
ESPN	0.367	1,132
TBSC	0.303	934
HALL	0.264	814
TLC	0.262	807
DISC	0.254	782
HIST	0.251	774
CNN	0.247	762
INSP	0.243	749
FOOD	0.225	693
USA	0.213	656
ID	0.192	592
NBCSN	0.189	581
TVLAND	0.168	517
LIFE	0.164	504
A&E	0.154	475
FX	0.145	448
GSN	0.144	443
BRAVO	0.140	430
HMM	0.138	426
PARA	0.133	409
NAN	0.128	395
WETV	0.125	384
ADSM	0.123	379
ESPN2	0.122	377
AMC	0.118	363
APL	0.116	356
TUDN	0.114	351
TRAVEL	0.111	341
BET	0.108	334
NATGEO	0.104	320

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