

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Show Business: Some Industry Live Events Returning to Calendars

Ever so slowly, businesses and associations are tiptoeing back to live events as COVID vaccinations roll out. Mobile World Congress kicks off in Barcelona later this month—a global gathering that many are watching for indications on how to pull off a large-scale event.

Within the broadband and media industry, there are much smaller, in-person events coming up in the States, starting with the **Fiber Broadband Association's Fiber Connect** in Nashville July 25-28. The decision to return to a live event was partly due to the significant investments being made in fiber right now and partly financial, with the association subsidizing approximately 70% of member companies' membership dues through the proceeds of the annual conference, according to association president/CEO *Gary Bolton*. "We held a virtual conference in December which had great attendance and strong sponsorship, but it barely broke even," he said. "Our attendees, exhibitors and sponsors provided feedback that they have had enough of virtual conferences and are anxious to get back to in-person conferences."

FBA was originally slated to hold Fiber Connect in Dallas in June, but decided in February to move it to Nashville, a locale that provided a stronger "drive-in audience." And it moved the event to the end of July to provide enough runway for corporate travel restrictions to be removed. **NCTC** and **ACA Connects** made a similar decision with their **Independent Show**, mov-

ing it to early October in Minneapolis, a city that's drivable for many members. "We knew we wanted to hold a live event as we feel it's important for our members to be able to meet face to face, especially after the past year. TIS is traditionally scheduled for July, and we felt that may be a little too early, so we decided to move the event to October. This will allow more time for people to get vaccinated and cases to decline," said *Lisa Miller*, NCTC's director of meetings and special events.

New York City has been slower to open than many other major US cities, but that doesn't mean it is off limits. **WICT** announced this week that it would hold its **Signature-Touchstones Luncheon** at the NY Marriott Marquis on October 20. "While we have rightfully taken a very cautious approach over the last year and a half to ensure we put safety first, we're thrilled to see our communities re-engage as we round the corner of this global pandemic. Since ours is a very social industry, we are particularly eager to get back to in-person events that fortify our relationships and strengthen our businesses," said WICT president/CEO *Maria Brennan*. "What better way to come together for the first time since the onset of COVID than at WICT's Signature-Touchstones Luncheon where we'll showcase the power of DEI and WICT's Women of the Year and Women to Watch." She teased that WICT has an exciting announcement planned for the event, so stay tuned.

And for those not yet ready to travel, WICT will stream the event. **SCTE** is taking a hybrid approach to its **Cable-Tec Expo** conference, slated to take place in Atlanta October 11-14, and



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The Independent Show plans to offer a live stream pass for members who can't attend. "Our main goal is for attendees to feel confident that we have taken consideration and measures to ensure the safest possible environment for the conference," said *Stacey Leech*, ACA Connects' senior director of meetings & industry affairs.

Of course, planning in the age of COVID is no easy feat. WICT organizers said guidelines are in flux, but that it's closely monitoring them and working with the venue to ensure safety. As such, capacity limits could change. FBA initially scaled back, rooms, food/beverage, exhibit space by about 30% to be conservative, but by May it began to increase projections and exhibit space. "We are currently six weeks out from the conference and we are on track for a record event," Bolton said. "We added 150 more hotel rooms last week and we just added another 100 rooms this week. Our exhibit floor is sold out and demand is continuing to increase."

ROSENWORCEL WARNS EBB PROGRAM ABUSERS

FCC acting chairwoman *Jessica Rosenworcel* told any providers that are making it difficult for consumers to sign up for the Emergency Broadband Benefit program to "knock it off" during a press conference Thursday. When asked about reports that some providers are forcing consumers to subscribe to higher-priced plans in order to receive the EBB subsidy, Rosenworcel encouraged consumers to submit complaints to the Commission so they could start establishing patterns of behavior. "We've seen millions of people enroll in the Emergency Broadband Benefit program in a very short time. I think that demonstrates very clearly that there is a need for

a broadband affordability program in the United States, and that is a useful thing to have to help households that may be struggling get online and get on the right side of the digital divide," she said. The press conference was held shortly after the Commission's June open meeting, which saw the commissioners approve a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking proposing the prohibition on the authorization of equipment that poses a national security threat. It also seeks comment on possible changes to the competitive bidding rules for auctions to better protect national security.

INDUSTRY KICKS OFF 'GO ADDRESSABLE' INITIATIVE

Distributors and TV brands came together Thursday in support of an industry initiative to accelerate efforts to make it easier for advertisers to incorporate addressable TV into their campaigns. Participants in the "Go Addressable" initiative will examine challenges facing the addressable TV ecosystem and recommend actionable solutions. The overarching goal for the group is to simplify the process of buying and selling addressable TV campaigns, reducing inefficiencies and driving value for advertisers. Distributors supporting Go Addressable include **Altice USA's a4 Advertising, Charter's Spectrum Reach, Comcast, Cox Media, DirectTV, DISH Media** and **Frontier Communications**.

DISH, DELL TEAM UP FOR 5G NETWORK

DISH and **Dell Technologies** signed an infrastructure agreement that will see the latter craft DISH's edge network infrastructure foundation. The pair will work together to design everything from cell sites to data centers, and advanced machine learning capabilities will monitor the health of the

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system and predict anomalies that may impact performance. The companies will also co-develop technology for open RAN, operational automation and other areas of R&D. Joint teams will focus on the creation of multi-access edge computing solutions for enterprise and SMB customers.

NIelsen GAUGES CROSS-PLATFORM VIEWERSHIP

Nielsen launched monthly viewership visualization tool “The Gauge” Thursday. It shows how audiences in the US use streaming services on their TVs and how the streaming usage compares to traditional broadcast and cable television. The Gauge also displays how specific streaming services compare to each other. For May, The Gauge reported that streaming usage across all television homes has climbed to 26% of all time spent on TV. Cable led viewing at 39%, while broadcast accounted for 25%. The data caught the eye of **Netflix** chief [Reed Hastings](#), who tweeted, “Wild that most TV time in USA is still legacy linear. Stream team needs to up its game.” He also tweeted at **WarnerMedia** CEO *Jason Kilar*, saying that HBO Max should be listed on the graphic among streamers. Kilar responded with a hat tip to cable: “@WarnerMedia is already on the board strongly in that largest green pie piece Reed (TNT, TBS, CNN, HBO, CN...). Proud to serve customers in whatever way they choose. Fun to also be the crazy fast(est) growing upstart in @hboimax (2 Qs straight of 2.5M+ US sub adds).”

NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR WIT AWARD

WICT, **SCTE** and **Cablefax** jointly announced a call for nominations for the [Women in Technology Award](#). The acknowledgment is annually given to one woman who has contributed to the advancement of the cable telecommunications industry and demonstrates significant professional growth. The nomination deadline is August 2. Nominees must be in a senior technical position in the cable or telecommunications industry and must be a member of WICT and SCTE. This year’s award will be presented in conjunction with SCTE **Cable-Tec Expo**, which will be held Oct 11-14.

ADVERTISERS IN THE WATER AT ‘SHARK WEEK’

Discovery’s “Shark Week” announced its advertising partners supporting this year’s week-long event slate. The programmer teamed up with four new companies including **Devour Frozen Foods**, **T-Mobile**, **Sonic Drive-Ins** and **Vrbo**, and it will feature them in multi-platform content, with custom ads and some will offer sweepstakes or exclusive products throughout the week. They will join returning sponsors **Cooper Tires**, **Wayfair**, **Geico**, **The Gorilla Glue Company** and **The Home Depot**.

HONORING JUNETEENTH

BET is celebrating Juneteenth with a programming slate as part of its “Content for Change” initiative. Saturday at noon, the network will deliver social justice-themed episodes of series, inspirational films and short-form content across its platforms. BET will also launch a Manifesto campaign and deliver messages of inspiration from Black talent, thought leaders, and changemakers across its platforms. Shows on the content slate include “Black-ish,” “Ali,” “Pass the Mic” and more. BET and

BET HER will also simulcast “Queen Collective,” documentaries made by four diverse young female directors that shine a light on issues directly impacting the Black community. They premiere 9pm on Saturday with an encore at noon Sunday.

PROGRAMMING

The **Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference** and **ESPN** reached a multi-year rights agreement for SIAC football and basketball games through 2027. Beginning this fall, ESPN will feature at least 22 football games across **ESPN** and **ESPN+**. ESPN will also have exclusive rights to all men’s and women’s basketball championship preliminary rounds on ESPN+ and the championship games across ESPN networks. The first game of the agreement will be the first-ever “Red Tails Classic,” a college football event showcasing HBCUs. The game, Tuskegee University vs Fort Valley State University, will premiere Sept 5 on ESPN. – **HBO Max** renewed ballroom competition series “Legendary” for a third season. – **Nickelodeon’s** “Spongebob Squarepants” spinoff “The Patrick Star Show” debuts July 9 at 7pm, followed by the premiere of series “Middlemost Post” at 7:30pm.

ON THE CIRCUIT

Singer-songwriters *Willa Amai* and *Katie Pruitt* will perform at **MFM’s** Media Finance Focus 2021. **BMI** is sponsoring the up-and-coming singer-songwriters’ performances during two virtual awards shows that are held in conjunction with the annual conference for the Media Financial Management Association (MFM) and its BCCA subsidiary. Amai will sing June 23 at 4pm ET, following the Working Capital Awards. Pruitt will sing July 29 from at 11am ET during the Rainmaker Awards presentation.

PEOPLE

Charter upped *Adam Ray* to evp, sales operations & planning, adding oversight of sales, retention and analytics to his responsibilities. *Sharon Peters*, svp marketing, is now overseeing the full marketing function, including digital marketing. *Tom Monaghan*, svp, field operations, will now have oversight of all 11 operating regions, up from the 5 he previously oversaw. Ray and Peters will report to evp/CMO *Jon Hargis* while Monaghan will continue reporting to *Tom Adams*, evp, field operations. – *William Burck*, managing partner at law firm **Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan**, was elected to **Fox Corp’s** board. Burck served as Deputy Staff Secretary, Special Counsel and Deputy White House Counsel to President *George W. Bush* from 2005 to 2009. – *Brad Miller* is joining **Davis Wright Tremaine** as a partner in the L.A. media & entertainment practice. Miller, who worked as an associate at Davis Wright Tremaine in the late 1990s, last served as associate general counsel at **Amazon Studios**. He also ran a boutique law firm where he worked with clients like **Comcast Entertainment Group**, **MTV Networks** and **The Walt Disney Company**.

EDITOR’S NOTE

Your next issue of **Cablefax Daily** will arrive Monday in observance of the Juneteenth celebration. We hope you’ll join us in taking time to learn and grow this holiday weekend.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

'Dave' Returns to FXX for Season 2

With a main character who plays a rapper by the name of *Lil Dicky*, it's easy to dismiss **FXX's "Dave"** as an immature, crude comedy. And it is pretty coarse. But there's some depth there as well, which is what probably propelled Season 1 of *Dave* to become the most-watched series of any comedy on **FX Networks**. "If you were around me all day, I would try to make you laugh the entire time, but also, I'm sure we would have some genuine, real conversations too. I just think the better version of any content, but especially this show, is one that is more all encompassing because if characters weren't fleshed out real people who had significant thoughts and worries and fears, it would just be a bunch of silliness, and you wouldn't really care about the outcome," co-creator and star *Dave Burd* said during a press conference ahead of Season 2's June 16 debut. The series is based on Burd's career as a rapper, comedian and actor. The sophomore season premiere has plenty of wackiness as *Dave/Lil Dicky (Burd)* sets out to record a video with South Korean rapper *CL* with lyrics that begin "I woke up in Korea" and go downhill from there. It's quickly clear that *Dave* still has a lot of growing up to do as he hasn't attempted to learn a thing about the culture he's trying to appropriate. "One of the things about the show is that *Dave* is able to be the hero and villain of his own story. You want to root for him, but he's also getting in his own way," explained co-creator *Jeff Schaffer* ("*Curb Your Enthusiasm*"). "I think that first episode is a great example of that he's got a wrong headed perspective on many levels, and by the end of it, he's learning a little bit that he was wrong." There's a lot of learning—and laughs—as Season 2 finds *Dave* dealing with the pressure of what happens after a little bit of success. Season 2 debuted June 16 on **FXX**, with new eps every Wednesday at 10pm ET. It's available on **FX on Hulu** the next day. – *Amy Maclean*

REVIEWS

Desert in, streaming on **operabox.tv**. People like to say new shows and series as 'It's like nothing you've ever seen on TV.' It's rare when that description holds. Yet, if **operabox.tv** executives want to say that about this eight-part series, we'll back them. As you might have guessed, "*Desert in*" is an opera. But it's much more. A commission of the Boston Lyric Opera, it fuses opera and television in an eclectic pastiche that's highly watchable. You hate opera. Fine. Think of *Desert* as storytelling using operatic singing, instead of dialogue. Unlike opera in an opera house, nearly all the characters are actors, not singers. Unseen singers provide the singing and, rarely for opera, in English. Still need convincing? The episodes are short, not longer than 20 minutes. And the plot—we'll say only that it's a fantasy—is as surreal as the musical score. And don't fret if you're unsure what's going on; it takes time. Incidentally, a seven-piece ensemble performs the music expertly. Production values are excellent. On the other hand, sometimes the singing presents an issue common to opera: it's hard to understand the lyrics. A warning—while *Desert* is a great way to introduce newcomers to opera, there's a lot of sexual content that parents might want to preview before allowing young children to view. – *Seth Arenstein*

BASIC CABLE P2+ PRIME RANKINGS* (06/07/21-06/13/21)		
MON-SUN	MC US AA%	MC US AA (000)
FNC	0.687	2,115
TNT	0.641	1,974
ESPN	0.524	1,613
MSNBC	0.447	1,376
HGTV	0.383	1,179
TBSC	0.273	840
TLC	0.272	838
HIST	0.263	811
DISC	0.259	796
CNN	0.249	766
HALL	0.235	723
INSP	0.231	712
FOOD	0.223	686
USA	0.215	661
ID	0.183	564
LIFE	0.179	552
NBCSN	0.174	536
HMM	0.174	535
TVLAND	0.159	488
FRFM	0.153	470
GSN	0.152	470
FS1	0.150	463
A&E	0.150	461
BRAVO	0.147	454
FX	0.145	446
AMC	0.139	429
WETV	0.127	390
BET	0.126	389
ADSM	0.123	377
TRAVEL	0.115	355
NATGEO	0.105	324
NAN	0.105	322
APL	0.100	307
OXYGEN	0.099	305

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



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