

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Not So Fast: Adelstein Cautions Congress on Speed Mandates, Price Reg

Wireless Infrastructure Association president/CEO *Jonathan Adelstein* is optimistic when it comes to what he's hearing about the bipartisan infrastructure plan struck between President *Joe Biden* and Republican lawmakers, particularly in the doors it leaves open for wireless providers that want to do their part to close the digital divide.

Adelstein has long advocated for the government to support broadband investment on a technology-neutral basis. During a **Media Institute** appearance Thursday, he cautioned lawmakers who want to write broadband performance standards into law, especially those that can only currently be achieved through fiber.

"We want to reward those applications that have higher bandwidth without specifying numbers and let the agencies figure out ways to get it done because in some areas, it might make sense to go to 100/100, and some areas may be under 20, in some areas it might be a gigabit," he said. "You know if you exclude certain types of applications, you may get nothing. Give yourself some flexibility to consider a lot of different approaches and innovation."

Adelstein, a former **FCC** commissioner, agreed that it is inevitable that the agency will work to restore net neutrality rules that would regulate ISPs under Title II. There's been an ongoing debate about how that could impact network investment, but he said the jury's out on that question.

"The ideal is to have Congress enact a policy that would settle it once and for all. If we can achieve bipartisan agreement on this, we'd be able to know what the rules of the road are," he said. "I think it would enhance the ability of folks to invest knowing what's going to happen going forward. The flip flopping is never, never good for investment."

He hopes Washington steps away from the idea of mandating rate regulation and pricing, calling it a threat to broadband deployment. Adelstein argued that competition has helped cut the cost per megabit by 98% in the last decade, all while people are getting so much more bandwidth than they did at that time.

"I would offer anybody who thinks we need price regulation to go back and I'll give him a 2015 plan and 2015 prices, have at it. We're offering more broadband for less money than ever before, and every day it gets better," he said. "The last thing you want to do is try to regulate prices that would limit investment and even the threat of that, I think, limits the ability to attract capital to an industry like this."

Adelstein went on to say that any slow in investment tied to price regulation would have a trickle-down effect on all of the other industries that increasingly rely on connectivity services, whether that be healthcare, Big Tech or education. He argued that federal lawmakers would be sending a very mixed message to the marketplace if they continued advocating for more government programs or legislation flowing money into the broadband ecosystem while instituting prohibitive restric-

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Aiming to shape the future of connectivity, the event's general session will be kicked off by this year's program chair, Kevin Hart, executive vice president and chief product and technology officer at Cox Communications. Hart will be joined during the general session by powerhouse technology executives focusing on how the industry can build on key pandemic-era learnings as it unleashes 10G connectivity, revolutionizing the way we live, work, learn and play.



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tions on the industry.

“I don’t think serious policymakers will go down that path,” Adelstein said. “I think they, Democrats and Republicans, they value investment in broadband networks too much to make a mistake of that magnitude.”

VIACOMCBS, CHARTER STRIKE DISTRIBUTION DEAL

ViacomCBS and **Charter** signed comprehensive multi-year distribution agreements for the continued carriage of the content company’s broadcast, entertainment, news and sports network. What’s new here is the licensing of ViacomCBS’s streaming services for future distribution to Spectrum customers. That includes **Paramount+**, **Pluto TV**, **BET+** and **Noggin**. The pair will also expand their existing partnership around addressable media and advanced advertising.

DESANTIS, CARR WANT TO OFFER CUBANS INTERNET

FCC commissioner *Brendan Carr* is supporting Florida governor *Ron DeSantis* after the state official asked President *Biden* to allow American ISPs to provide Cubans with connectivity services. After news broke that the Cuban government cut internet following a rise in protests against the regime over the weekend, DeSantis wrote to Biden asking him to break down barriers blocking American companies from stepping in when connectivity is cut. “I urge you to act immediately to provide all necessary authorizations, indemnifications, and funding to American businesses with the capability to provide internet access for the people of Cuba,” DeSantis said in the Wednesday letter. It seems internet service has been restored for now, but access to social media networks continues to be denied. Carr spoke with DeSantis on Wednesday and joined

the governor’s call, saying American enterprises have the technical capabilities to beam connectivity to Cubans. “Internet shutdowns are increasingly becoming a tool of tyranny for authoritarian regimes across the globe. America must stand against this anti-democratic tactic and move with haste to provide Internet freedom to the Cuban people,” Carr said in a statement. “Opposition from Havana—a regime that actively works to block Radio Televisión Martí’s signals—is expected. We must not be deterred.”

MAGNOLIA LAUNCHES APP, DISCOVERY+ CONTENT

Magnolia Network is one step closer to its full launch, releasing its slate of original programming on **discovery+** Thursday. That includes cooking show “Magnolia Table with Joanna Gaines” and backyard DIY series “Super Dad”. Also arriving on the streamer is the complete five-season library of “Fixer Upper.” Roughly 30 additional projects are currently in production, and Magnolia Network plans to drop new episodes and series to stream each Friday on discovery+. The Magnolia app has also launched, which offers recipes, blog content, instructional courses and access to the network’s content. A discovery+ subscription is required to access the Magnolia Network programming as well as the service’s workshops.

FCC TO CONSIDER POLITICAL PROGRAMMING RULES

FCC acting chair *Jessica Rosenworcel* said Wednesday that she has proposed updates to the Commission’s political programming rules, and now we have a better idea of exactly what that looks like. The NPRM circulated to the rest of the Commission Wednesday would propose to revise the definition of “legally qualified candidate for public office” in the rules to add the

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use of social media and creation of a campaign website to the list of activities that may be considered in determining whether a person running as a write-in candidate has made a “substantial showing” of their candidacy. It would also propose revising the agency’s political recordkeeping rules to include any request for the purchase of advertising time that “communicates a message relating to any political matter of national importance.” That would update the Commission’s rules to conform with the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002.

AT&T ON BUSINESS WIRELINE HIGH

AT&T is celebrating after another big win at **JD Power’s** 2021 Business Wireline Satisfaction Awards. In the large enterprise segment, the company won out in customer satisfaction scores for a fourth consecutive year with a score of 882. AT&T also was tops in the medium business segment for its second year running with a score of 846. **Verizon** (841) came in a close second. In the small business segment, Verizon rated highest for the third year in a row with a score of 785, while **Comcast** came in second with 863. While business wireline customer satisfaction remained high in the last year, survey data showed a gap between the preferred communication channel and the channel that actually yields higher satisfaction. While business wireline customers say they would prefer email, the data revealed phone calls actually leave customers happier.

LIONSGATE NABS SPYGLASS STAKE

Lionsgate acquired a 20% stake of content company **Spyglass Media Group** as well as the vast majority of the company’s 200-title film library. The agreement also includes a multiyear first-look TV deal between Lionsgate Television and Spyglass. **Gary Barber** will continue to lead Spyglass as its chairman/CEO and all other members of the company’s senior leadership team will remain in their respective roles.

RURAL BROADBAND ORGS FIGHT FOR FUNDING

Six organizations including **NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association**, **INCOMPAS** and **Public Knowledge** stood together Thursday to renew their call for Congress to give out enough money through the federal government’s infrastructure plan to enable every American to have access to broadband infrastructure. In a statement, the groups urged lawmakers to require that networks built using federal funds be future-proofed, with a minimum speed of 100/100Mbps. The six also said communities without wired 25/3Mbps speeds should be prioritized when it comes to what projects are awarded federal dollars. “Other nations, including China, the EU and the UK, have all set goals of deploying gigabit broadband by 2025, and the U.S. cannot afford to fall behind on deploying networks that are fast enough to support the education needs of today and the jobs of the future,” the groups said. “Adopting these goals will ensure that Congress is funding broadband infrastructure that will meet the future needs of our nation.”

ON THE CIRCUIT

SCTE and **CableLabs** unveiled more details Thursday about the **SCTE Cable-Tec Expo 2021**, scheduled to be offered as a

hybrid experience online and in Atlanta Oct 11-14. The show will feature more than 50 sessions, including a collaborative event with **NAB**. The event will kick off Monday with the **Cable TV Pioneers** Banquet at the Ritz-Carlton. Headlining Tuesday’s general session are a trio of tech titans: **Kevin Hart**, **Cox Communications** evp/chief product and technology officer and the 2021 Expo program chair; **Corning** chmn/CEO **Wendell Weeks**; and **Zoom** founder/CEO **Eric Yuan**.

FUBO STRIKES PA SPORTSBOOK DEAL

Fubo Gaming, the sports betting division of **fubo TV**, struck a market access agreement for its upcoming mobile Fubo Sportsbook in Pennsylvania. The deal allows for state-wide mobile access for both sports betting and iGaming. Fubo was previously able to strike similar deals with New Jersey, Indiana and Iowa. Fubo Sportsbook is expected to begin rolling out state-by-state in 4Q21.

SHENTEL GOES TO SCHOOL

Shentel Business is teaming up with the **York College of Pennsylvania** to provide voice and fiber services across the college’s three campuses. Through the deal, Shentel will serve an estimated 5,000 students and faculty.

PROGRAMMING

Madonna’s documentary film, “Madame X,” will premiere exclusively on **Paramount+** beginning Oct 8. – **INSP** greenlit two more seasons of historical anthology docudrama “Wild West Chronicles.” – Dog behavioral expert **Cesar Millan** returns to **National Geographic** with back-to-back episodes of “Cesar Millan: Better Human Better Dog” debuting July 30 at 9pm ET with a simulcast on **Nat Geo Wild**. Episodes will also be available to stream on **Disney+** every Wednesday starting Aug 4. – **TBS** greenlit a second season of extreme talent competition series “Go-Big Show,” beginning production in August. – Season 3 of comedy series “Tacoma FD” is set to premiere on **truTV** Sept 16 at 10pm ET.

PEOPLE

Netflix is planning to offer video games on its platform next year, according to a **Bloomberg** report, and it has hired video game industry veteran **Mike Verdu** to lead the charge. He’ll hold the title of vp, game development at the streamer and report to **Netflix** COO **Greg Peters**. He joins from **Facebook** where he served as vp, augmented reality and virtual reality content. – **WarnerMedia Ad Sales** appointed industry veterans **Laura Dames** and **Andrea Zapata** to key leadership roles. Dames is now evp, marketing and Zapata is joining the company as head of research, data and insights. Dames was formerly evp/gm of WarnerMedia Studios. Zapata comes from **Vevo** where she was vp, West Coast sales.

EDITOR’S NOTE

Cablefax introduces the Regional Rainmakers Awards, showcasing associations, companies and individuals that are making outstanding contributions on a local and regional level. Honorees will be featured in the September issue of **Cablefax: The Magazine**. Enter by Aug 13 at RegionalRainmakers.com

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

From OR to Courts: 'Dr. Death'

Based on a podcast that swept the nation with host *Laura Beil's* investigative reporting, limited series "Dr. Death" is coming to **Peacock**. The show centers on Dr. Christopher Duntsch (*Joshua Jackson*), a charming neurosurgeon who severely injured and/or killed 33 patients in Dallas, Texas, with his botched procedures. After a trail of medical professionals and institutions that refused to hold Duntsch accountable and prevent him from operating on other patients, Doctors Robert Henderson (*Alec Baldwin*) and Randall Kirby (*Christian Slater*) worked with Assistant DA Michelle Shughart (*AnnaSophia Robb*) to finally revoke Duntsch's medical license and put him behind bars. There's a lot of focus on the neurosurgeon, but the show's story is about something much larger than one man. "It was about the greater system, and how the system, in this case, failed to stop Christopher Duntsch," *Patrick Macmanus*, creator and ep, said. The story is a nightmare many have had before going into the operating room, but what sets this show apart are the characters. They're real people who are complex and varied in their motivations and actions. That was Macmanus's favorite part. While the ep and creator believes Duntsch deserves to be in jail for the rest of his life, he thinks there's more to the person. If he had stayed a researcher as he began, using stem cells to reinvent spinal surgery, his story could have had a much different ending, Macmanus said. "We would be talking about Christopher Duntsch in a very different way right now and there's a sort of Shakespearean tragic side of his character. A man who had a lot going for him, naturally, but a lot working against him, both in nature and through the system that sort of empowered and enabled him," he said. Dr. Death premieres on Peacock Thursday. – *Theresa Maher*

REVIEWS

"The Investigation," streaming on **HBO**. A common complaint about police procedurals is that they solve complex cases in fewer than 60 minutes. Also, they make police work seem more exciting than it really is. Well, TV should entertain and (sometimes) educate. Why then, was your reviewer glued to this six-part Danish series that moves as fast as a car without an engine? The story is based on a 2017 case. Award-winning Swedish journalist *Kim Wall* is invited to travel on a homemade submarine. Its maker, *Peter Madsen*, is a well-known (in Denmark) tech entrepreneur. She was never seen alive again. (An ironic note: Wall rode the sub to interview Madsen about his plans to build a rocket.) Owing to filmmaker *Tobias Lindholm's* choices, we never see Wall or Madsen. In fact, Madsen's name is mentioned not once. Lindholm's goal is portraying the painstakingly slow pace of police work, which drags more than usual here since it involves divers scouring the vast Scandinavian seabed for Wall's body. One of Madsen's several confessions has Wall being killed accidentally in the sub; a hatch hit her in the head, he testifies. Later, Madsen says he buried Wall at sea. Without examining her corpse, though, Danish police are unable to disprove Madsen's story. How Lindholm keeps viewers captivated is this series' magic. – *Seth Arenstein*

BASIC CABLE P2+ PRIME RANKINGS* (07/05/21-07/11/21)		
MON-SUN	MC US AA%	MC US AA (000)
FNC	0.657	2,024
MSNBC	0.411	1,266
HGTV	0.406	1,252
HALL	0.282	867
HIST	0.271	834
CNN	0.267	822
INSP	0.261	803
DISC	0.260	801
TLC	0.255	786
FOOD	0.238	734
TNT	0.200	615
TBSC	0.199	612
USA	0.192	592
HMM	0.191	587
ESPN	0.186	573
TVLAND	0.178	547
ID	0.174	537
NATGEO	0.154	475
BRAVO	0.151	465
AMC	0.150	463
LIFE	0.149	460
FS1	0.147	454
WETV	0.146	450
NICK	0.146	449
A&E	0.141	435
FX	0.141	434
GSN	0.137	423
NAN	0.135	415
PARA	0.133	409
ADSM	0.120	371
BET	0.115	354
SYFY	0.107	330
OXYGEN	0.103	318
FRFM	0.103	317

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