

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Bright Forecast: Fox Weather Ready to Take World By Storm

**Fox Corp** is the newest player on the weather scene. **Fox Weather**, an ad-supported streaming app and website, launched Monday with hopes of bringing a new feel and a plethora of new data to the game. There will be some familiar features, like the ability to save locations and receive notifications about weather developments in those areas, but they've been developed with a community feel in mind.

"We wanted to give people an easy way to create almost like a weather neighborhood of locations they care about," Fox Weather SVP, Digital Product & Strategy **Steve Baron** told **CFX**. "That's one of the key foundational concepts of the app is to let you build things you care about, and the app will help you understand what the weather is in those places." Users are able to set custom notifications for those locations and view graphics tied to those forecasts. They'll also have access to meteorologists providing insights and additional data behind the graphics. Live video feeds will be available through FAST channels integrated into the app. That means no cable log-in will be required to access the content.

Other features include the Fox FutureView, a calendar function that allows users to input an event scheduled far into the future. Updates on the forecast for that location are then delivered to the user in the months and weeks leading up to the event. In the future, Fox Weather hopes to continue adding more intelligence to the FutureView and the notification system

around it to alert users of when, for example, dramatic forecast changes occur around their scheduled events.

Fox Weather's 3D radar is another aspect it hopes sets it apart from other weather providers. Much like other radars, it offers views of what weather systems are approaching an area and when you can expect to see their impacts. What sets it apart is its capabilities to offer deeper insights into a storm's characteristics.

"You can actually control the view and the perspective you want on a storm... we can show you the height of the storm, and the height of the storm is relative to how strong the storm is," Baron said.

Fox Weather is using a number of resources from the rest of the Fox family to help build out the service, but it has also struck external partnerships to ensure it has the best data possible. It recently teamed up with **WeatherSTEM** to receive live weather data and video feeds from collegiate and professional sports stadiums across the country. The locations of those meteorological instruments is particularly exciting for Baron, who sees it as another opportunity for **Fox News**, **Fox Sports** and Fox stations to work together.

"We love the intersection of sports and weather and data, and now sports and weather and data and cameras," he said. "That all comes together with something Fox is really good at."

Fox Weather will face plenty of competition in the weather ecosystem. Of course, there are the linear cable networks like **The Weather Channel** and **AccuWeather**. There is also a paid streaming service, **Weather Channel Plus**, that is



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scheduled to launch by the end of Q4. By entering the market as an ad-supported streamer, Fox Weather hopes to win users by being as accessible as possible. It's off to a good start—it was the most-downloaded free app in the country as of 5pm ET, according to the **Apple** App Store charts.

“Let's face it, if you're going to turn a weather channel on, there's a good chance something weather-wise is impacting your life. Making it easy to load and quick and not having a bunch of things you have to do should lead to a bigger audience,” Baron said.

#### HERITAGE, BLOOMBERG BACK ON DIRECTV

**DirectTV's** retrans standoff with **Heritage Broadcasting** has ended after about a seven-week blackout. DirectTV and DirectTV Stream customers lost **WTV-CBS** of Traverse City-Cadillac, Michigan, on Sept. 3. The station returned around 9pm PDT Thursday. Also back on DirectTV, U-verse and Stream is **Bloomberg TV**. The provider had lost the financial channel on Oct. 1 after 25 years of carrying the network. It quietly reappeared Thursday.

#### FEE FIGHT

**The Consumer Technology Association** is urging the **FCC** to reject a proposal from the **NAB** that would have the agency impose regulatory fees on Big Tech and unlicensed spectrum users, such as **Google, Microsoft** and **Facebook**. CTA's arguments include that there is an enormous class of unlicensed spectrum users, including consumers, corporations, state and local governments, non-profits, schools, libraries and many more groups. **NCTA** agrees, telling the FCC that levying fees on unlicensed spectrum users “would have an effect that extends well beyond Big Tech, impacting thousands of entities, large

and small, offering millions of different products, services, and capabilities.” NAB's take is that the FCC's current fee approach is unlawful because it forces broadcasters, cable operators, satellite providers and others to subsidize Commission activities that substantially benefit others that currently contribute nothing. CTA said that many of its members build, sell and rely on unlicensed tech and that many of them actually already pay FCC regulatory fees. NCTA added that “unlicensed spectrum users are adding value to consumers' lives daily and are part of the ecosystem stimulating broadband deployment.” CTA also argued that unlicensed spectrum users defray FCC costs in significant ways, including by paying FCC-recognized labs and Telecommunication Certification Bodies to undertake equipment certification work rather than Commission staff, reducing costs and staff burden on the agency. NAB maintains there are many ways the FCC could go after large technology companies for fees. “While there may be good policy reasons for not imposing fees on every small appliance and other home good equipment manufacturer whose devices make use of unlicensed spectrum at this time, it makes little sense to delay imposing regulatory fees on Big Tech companies that actively participate in Commission proceedings, benefit economically from the Commission's activities (often at the expense of other regulates), and actively compete with broadcasters and other regulatory fee payors for advertising revenues,” the broadcast association said.

#### BATTLE IN THE GREAT WHITE NORTH

It's not such a beautiful day in **Rogers'** neighborhood. Eight directors for Rogers Communications issued a statement over the weekend expressing their “unequivocal support”

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for CEO Joe Natale. Edward Rogers, former Rogers' chairman and the son of the Canadian operator's founder, has said he intends to remove the majority of the independent directors. He's also reportedly sought to remove Natale as CEO. Rogers was removed from the role of chairman last week, with John MacDonald, a board member since 2012, assuming the post. Rogers remains a director. All of this comes as Rogers Communications seeks regulatory approval for its \$16 billion acquisition of **Shaw Communications**. The company issued a statement Sunday from eight directors, including Rogers' mother Loretta Rogers and sisters Martha Rogers and Melinda Rogers-Hixon, in support of Natale. "We remain as duly elected members of the Rogers Communications Inc. board and represent the majority of the board members of the company, the eight said. "No other group of individuals has any authority to purport to act as the board of directors of Rogers Communications Inc."

### REDBOX DEBUTS ON NASDAQ

With **Redbox** completing its previously announced combination with **Seaport Global Acquisition Corp**, it began trading on the **NASDAQ** Monday. RDBX shares closed at \$11.90, a 23.7% increase over their opening.

### COMCAST BRINGS GIG SERVICE TO GALLUP

**Comcast** launched speed tiers of up to 1.2 Gbps in the Gallup, New Mexico, area. More than 9,000 homes and businesses have access to Comcast's network in the area. The MSO also offers 50 Mbps, 100 Mbps, 300 Mbps, 600 Mbps and 900 Mbps speed tiers.

### AT THE COMMISSION

The **FCC** has received nearly \$1.3 billion in funding requests for the second application window for the \$7.17 billion Emergency Connectivity Fund Program. The money would fund nearly 2.4 million connected devices and over 564,000 broadband connections. The FCC offered the second application filing window, which ran from Sept. 28 to Oct. 13, to accommodate strong demand for the program in the first round. The funding can be used to support off-campus learning, such as homework and virtual learning, as schools and libraries continue to respond to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The agency also committed an additional \$269 million to fund connected devices and broadband connections requested in the first application filing window. – The FCC approved an additional 71 applications for funding commitments of more than \$40.46 million for Round 2 of its COVID-19 Telehealth Program. This is the FCC's third funding announcement of approved Round 2 applications bringing the total to approximately \$123.6 million awarded to health care providers for laptops, cameras, upgraded internet connectivity and more.

### CARRIAGE

**Charter** added Spanish-language religious network **ESNE TV** to its Spectrum TV lineup Monday. The network is available at no additional cost to subscribers of the operator's Mi Plan Latino and Latino View TV packages.

### RATINGS

**BET's** feeling pretty good about last week's premieres, with "Tyler Perry's House of Payne," "Tyler Perry's Assisted Living," "Tyler Perry's The Oval," "Tyler Perry's Sistas," "Twenties" and "Twenties After-show with B. Scott" delivering 5.6 million total viewers (L3 simulcast across BET and BET Her).

### PROGRAMMING

**Peacock** made a straight-to-series order of *David E. Kelley* crime drama "The Missing." The eight-ep series is based on *Dror Mishani's* novel "The Missing File." – **Hallmark Channel's** 12th Annual "Countdown to Christmas" kicked off Friday. The network celebrated by announcing its full slate of 41 holiday movie premieres for the season. They include *Lacey Chabert's* 11th movie for the net, "Christmas at Castle Hart" (Nov. 27) and "The Christmas Contest" with *Candace Cameron Bure* (Nov. 28). There's even a flick inspired by the band Train's 2015 "Christmas in Tahoe" album that stars the group's *Pat Monahan*. For the first time ever, SVOD **Hallmark Movies Now** will premiere two original movies: "Every Time a Bell Rings," shot on location in Natchez, Mississippi, and "Sugar Plum Twist," a Latin twist on "The Nutcracker" ballet. – **Food Network** serves up new competition series "Throwdown with Michael Symon" on Dec. 7. The Iron Chef will go up against some of the best chefs in the culinary world.

### STILL FIGHTING ROBOCALLS

In January, the **FCC** fined *Scott Rhodes*, 52, of Libby, Montana, nearly \$10 million, alleging he illegally used caller ID spoofing with harmful pre-recorded messages, including racist attacks on political candidates and threatening language toward a local journalist. Now the **DOJ** is trying to help collect on the penalty, filing a complaint in U.S. District Court for the District of Montana. "Combatting illegal robocalls is a top consumer protection priority of the FCC," FCC Acting Chairwoman *Jessica Rosenworcel* said in a statement. "In this case, the FCC's investigation found an ugly pattern of spoofing used to bombard and target communities with malicious robocalls. Working with the Department of Justice, the FCC will stand by this fine and demand payment. I also welcome the department's decision to seek an injunction to put a stop to this unlawful behavior."

### NEWSWEEK'S MOST LOVED WORKPLACES

Helped by benefits such as six months parental leave, **Spotify** ranked as the No. 1 company on *Newsweek's* list of "[America's Most Loved Workplaces.](#)" Among familiar industry names, **Verizon** clocked in at 22, followed by **ViacomCBS** (29), **A+E Networks** (40), **Twitter** (45), **Windstream** (63) and **Nielsen** (67). The list was created in partnership with the Best Practice Institute (BPI), which has conducted research to identify the specific management practices that lead to employee motivation and satisfaction. BPI measured five basic areas to determine how employees feel about where they work the level of collaboration at the firm; how positive workers are about their future at the company; how much employer values align with employee values; respect at all levels; and career achievement.