

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Happy Trails: NCTA Board Meeting Represents Cox Leadership Hand Off

With the final weeks of 2021 upon us, the retirement parties are in full swing with industry heavyweights making the rounds to say their goodbyes. Execs counting Dec. 31 as their last day of work include **Cox Communications** CEO *Pat Esser* and **Cable Center** CEO *Jana Henthorn*. Even **Disney's** *Bob Iger*, whose departure date was a guessing game for years, has said he will step down as chairman of the board at the end of the year.

Various formal and informal gatherings are occurring over the coming weeks, an especially welcomed sight given the long months of virtual-only networking. **NCTA's** board meeting this week provided the perfect venue to raise a glass in honor of Cox's Esser. He was recognized at the board dinner Wednesday night, with NCTA President/CEO *Michael Powell* leading a toast that celebrated Esser as a positive and effective force for the industry, a trusted adviser and a person of humility and integrity.

When we caught up with Esser shortly after he announced his retirement plans, we asked him to reflect on his longevity with Cox. It's not every day you find a CEO who has stayed at a company for more than 40 years. "Not often do you find a company as fortunate as I was as early in my career whose values and what they were trying to achieve matched up so well with me," said Esser, who served as Cox's president for 15 years. "I have been given opportunity after opportunity after

opportunity here at Cox. It felt like my company and it always has. The Cox family lets it lets us as employees make it feel like our company."

With Cox entering a lot of new spaces, including edge computing, Esser felt it was a healthy and exciting time for new leadership. "I feel like I'm not leaving the company in a position that I wouldn't want it to be in. I take it very personally," he said. Ready to take the reins as President of Cox on Jan. 1 is *Mark Greatrex*, who also attended NCTA's board meeting Thursday. He'll take Cox's seat on the board in 2022. The new boss is getting into the swing of things right away. For years, Esser has made semi-regular appearances as **CES**. We're told Greatrex is indeed planning to be in Vegas in January and will be a part of **Cablelabs** happenings.

NCTA's board meeting Thursday also was a chance for some internal goodbyes, with the association's SVP of Industry & Association Affairs *Rob Stoddard* and SVP & Chief of Government Relations *Joanna McIntosh* retiring at year-end, both racking up more than 30 years in the industry apiece.

INDEMAND LAUNCHES PPV STREAMING SERVICE

Transactional VOD company **INDEMAND** has launched a PPV streaming service at PPV.com and via an app. The company, which is owned by **Comcast**, **Cox** and **Charter**, said the addition of the platform makes it the only provider of turn-key PPV solutions for both industry partners and consumers. It will continue to operate PPV infrastructure for cable operators to sell directly to subscribers. [PPV.com's](http://PPV.com) first events are this

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weekend with the International Soccer Friendly Match Ecuador vs El Salvador at 8pm ET Saturday and Sunday's Gervonta Davis vs. Isaac Cruz fight at 8pm ET. Interactive video company Kiswe helped build out the platform, which features interactive fan engagement during live events. Viewers will be able to interact with other fans, post comments, upload video selfies, buy merchandise and other activities. "Our focus is delivering what consumers want: ease of finding an event, simplicity of ordering, and quality of stream," inDEMAND President and CEO Dale Hopkins said in a statement.

SINCLAIR SNAGS NHL DEAL

With Sinclair on a mission to shore up a DTC streaming service, the company said it has reached a multi-year renewal with the NHL that includes the right for Bally Sports RSNs to stream live games on an authenticated and DTC basis in the territories of 12 NHL teams. Teams included in the agreement are the Anaheim Ducks, Arizona Coyotes, Carolina Hurricanes, Columbus Blue Jackets, Dallas Stars, Detroit Red Wings, Florida Panthers, Los Angeles Kings, Minnesota Wild, Nashville Predators, St. Louis Blues, and Tampa Bay Lightning. The digital rights agreement was expanded to allow post-game highlights on Sinclair's digital news platforms, alternative feeds, and use of the NHL's proprietary Puck and Player Tracking data in the broadcasts of the games.

IN THE COURTS

The Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit denied China Telecom's emergency motion to halt an FCC order that it stop all operations in the U.S. by Jan. 3. The court said the company failed to satisfy the stringent requirements for a stay pend-

ing court review. The FCC voted in October to revoke China Telecom's authority to provide telecom services in the U.S., with Acting Chair Jessica Rosenworcel declaring that the "record makes clear that China Telecom Americas operates as a subsidiary of a Chinese state-owned enterprise and as such the Chinese government has the ability to influence and control its actions."

SVOD SLOWDOWN?

Deloitte Global predicts that in 2022, at least 150 million paid subscriptions to SVOD services will be canceled worldwide, with churn rates of up to 30% per market. The churn is a sign of a maturing market, and it's not all bad news, with Deloitte predicting that overall, more subscriptions will be added than canceled and the average number of subscriptions per person will increase. The U.S. has the most marked churn, with the most SVODs launched and highest adoption rate. Leichtman Research estimated that 80% of households in the U.S. had a paid SVOD subscription last year. Deloitte predicts more ad-supported and cheaper packages emerging in the U.S.

PROGRAMMING

"Love During Lockup," WE tv's newest installment of "Love After Lockup," will debut on the network Jan. 7. New eps will become available on streamer ALLBLK every Tuesday following their WE tv premiere. - AVOD Tubi has two original holiday films debuting this month. "Most Wanted Santa" begins streaming Friday. "The Secrets of Christmas: Revealed" premieres Dec. 20 on Tubi and Fox. Tubi has more than 500 titles for its "Holiday Hits" programming stunt. - Accomplished chef Alex

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Guarnaschelli is welcoming 15 chefs from across the United States to beat her in head-to-head battles in **Food Network's** "Alex vs America." It premieres Jan. 2 on the linear network at 10pm, but discovery+ subscribers will get an early look at the premiere on Dec. 25.

DOING GOOD

When it comes to how **Discovery, Inc.** will give back this holiday season, it's asking viewers of **discovery+** to make the call. The streamer's audiences are asked to choose between No Kid Hungry and Save the Children as donation recipients. For every pick made, discovery+ will help to provide up to two million meals to kids in need in the U.S. through No Kid Hungry, or up to 400,000 education supplies to underserved students around the world through Save the Children. The [campaign](#) runs through Dec. 26.

OBITUARY

Veteran PR professional *Tom Cosentino* passed away Nov. 30 at the age of 59. He was founding GM of **Catalyst Public Relations**, where he represented companies such as **ESPN.com** and **Versus** as well as **Cable Positive**. He most recently served as executive director of the Garden State Wine Growers Association.

ON THE CIRCUIT

The **Fiber Broadband Association** has issued its call for speakers for **Fiber Connect 2022** (June 12-15, Nashville). New programming includes sessions focused on public/private partnerships, demand drivers for fiber broadband, innovation, cybersecurity, grant writing and training. Submit proposals [online](#).

EDITOR'S NOTE

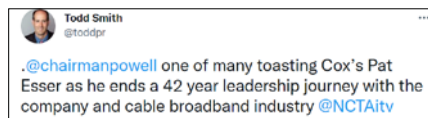
Don't forget to submit those **Cablefax** Program Award [nominations](#). The first deadline is today, with Dec. 10 the final deadline. Categories include VR content, limited series and game show. – It's not too late to [register](#) for **Cablefax's Most Powerful Women** luncheon taking place in NYC Tuesday at the Edison Ballroom South. And keep your eyes peeled for the release of **Cablefax: The Magazine's** Most Powerful Women issue on Tuesday.

CABLEFAX DASHBOARD

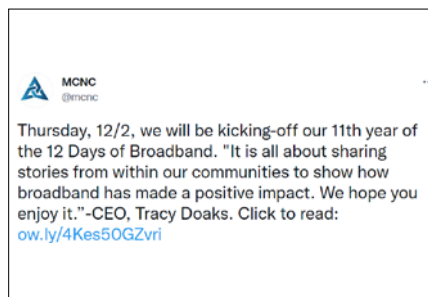
Twitter Hits











Research

(Source: *Plume IQ Report*)

- > Over a six-month study period, WiFi 6 deployments grew by 63% in the U.S. compared to 45% in Europe.
- > The most common WiFi 6 devices in Plume homes were, in order, smartphones, laptops and tablets.
- > In terms of WiFi 6 growth rates, tablets led with a 107% growth rate followed by smartphones (55%) and laptops (50%).
- > Apple is the most popular brand for WiFi 6 devices, setting a 275% growth rate. It's followed by Google (39%) and Samsung (27%).

Up Ahead

- DECEMBER 7:** [Cablefax Most Powerful Women Celebration](#), NYC
- JANUARY 11-14:** [CES 2022](#), Las Vegas
- JANUARY 18-20:** [NATPE Miami](#)
- JANUARY 25-28:** [RealScreen Summit 2022](#), Austin
- FEBRUARY 13-16:** [NTCA Rural Telecom Industry Meeting + Expo](#), Dallas

Quotable

"Since 2018, we've held six hearings examining tech platform accountability, and our members have sent countless letters... To be clear, Section 230 is critically important to promoting a vibrant and free internet, but I agree with those who suggest the courts have allowed it to stray too far. Judge Katzman, the late Chief Judge of the Second Circuit, brought some clarity to this issue in his dissent in Force v. Facebook. He stated that Section 230 does not and should not bar relief when a plaintiff brings a claim that is based not on the content of the information shown but rather on the connections a platform's algorithms make between individuals... The challenge for us is to clarify the statute, if the courts do not, while ensuring that we balance the statute's good against the pain it inflicts."

– **House Commerce Chair Frank Pallone's (D-NJ) remarks at a hearing entitled "Holding Big Tech Accountable: Targeted Reforms for Tech's Legal Immunity"**