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WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Long Journey: Kentucky Begins Road to Recovery After Tornadoes

It's been a nightmare for residents of Kentucky, Arkansas, Illinois, Missouri, Mississippi and Tennessee as they recovered from storms Friday that led to the formation of multiple tornadoes.

Kentucky Governor *Andy Beshear* provided an update on the situation Monday, calling it the worst tornado event in the state's history. At least four tornadoes touched down in Kentucky and thousands of homes were damaged or destroyed. As of Monday morning, 64 residents were confirmed dead and 105 people remained unaccounted for. He ordered flags to be flown at half-staff Tuesday through next Monday evening to honor those lost and impacted.

"It may be weeks before we have final counts on both deaths and levels of destruction," Beshear said.

Communications providers in the region are assessing damage to their networks and doing what they can to assist both their customers and team members affected by the storm. **Charter** is continuing to survey network damage through the impacted areas and has already been able to repair some damaged fiber, but there are still a number of damage sites that cannot be accessed due to downed wires and other safety issues.

"We are working closely with local power companies—and have additional crews and resources in position—so we can respond quickly once we are granted access to damage sites,"

a Charter spokesperson told **CFX**.

Broadline, an **ACA Connects** member system located in Bremen, Kentucky, found that the tornado severed about a mile of fiber that extended from Bremen to Sacramento, Kentucky. Due to the severity of the damage, the provider warned it could be a week or more before it is able to restore service to affected customers. *TJ Scott*, the provider's VP of Operations, and his team took a trip over the weekend to assess the status of the system in Bremen, and he had never seen anything like it. He is still waiting to receive the all clear to get in and begin rebuilding efforts and the company is still determining what kind of humanitarian assistance it can offer.

"At the end of the day, damages can be repaired but the loss of loved ones can never be replaced," Scott told CFX. "Our team and local community are currently working together to donate items for those impacted by the storm, and we will do whatever we can to support our local communities."

Murray Electric System, an electric power and telecommunications provider in Murray, Kentucky, was mostly spared from the damage, but was hit with significant electrical outages Friday and Saturday.

A number of municipal operators are also working hard to restore service to local residences and businesses. **Bowling Green Municipal Utilities**, which offers electrical, water and high-speed data services to residents of Bowling Green, Kentucky, took to **Twitter** to tell its fiber customers that it doesn't anticipate internet or phone services to be online



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until Tuesday evening.

“Today has been another long day, but we have some tremendous help from sister companies and are working around the clock to get everyone restored,” BGMU said in a Sunday tweet. “Please be patient. We are updating as we can and appreciate your understanding.”

CONGRESS QUESTIONING FCC ON EBB FRAUD

Senators *Roger Wicker* (R-MS) and *John Thune* (R-SD) along with Reps *Cathy McMorris Rodgers* (R-WA) and *Bob Latta* (R-OH) sent a letter to **FCC** Chair *Jessica Rosenworcel* Monday looking for more information on the agency’s response to fraud in the Emergency Broadband Benefit program. The FCC Office of Inspector General found that a number of providers were fraudulently enrolling households in the EBB, claiming that certain households had children attending schools participating in the National School Lunch Program’s Community Eligibility Provision in order to receive EBB funds. The lawmakers were also looking for assurance that similar issues won’t occur with the Affordable Connectivity Fund. “Unlike other FCC subsidy programs, the ACP will be funded through appropriations, rather than Universal Service Fund contributions,” the lawmakers said. “We are concerned that the FCC may proceed with rules for a permanent ACP that do not adequately protect American taxpayers or best serve eligible households.” They have requested answers to a number of questions by Jan. 7, including when Rosenworcel’s office became aware of the fraud in the EBB program, if the providers who committed fraud have been identified and what enforcement actions the FCC can and will take against those providers.

MOFFETT NATHANSON PURCHASED BY SVB

Research firm **MoffettNathanson** is being acquired by **SVB Financial Group**, the parent of **Silicon Valley Bank**. The move will allow SVB’s investment banking business to expand its research coverage areas to include companies in both the healthcare and technology sectors. In an email to clients, MoffettNathanson said it anticipates a seamless transition for its clients and it will continue to provide the same independent research and events it has produced since its founding in 2013. “Gaining a deeper understanding of the innovators in TMT will help us deliver the most interesting and compelling value creation opportunities to you, our clients and valued partners, and will also greatly enhance our own understanding of the sectors and companies we cover today,” the firm said. “We believe the combination of MoffettNathanson and SVB, along with their partners at SVB Leerink, will bring together a set of skills and capabilities unmatched in TMT.”

VEXUS FIBER HEADING TO LAREDO

Vexus Fiber is building out a FTTH network in Laredo, Texas. Once completed, the network will be available to more than 70,000 residential and business customers. Construction will begin in the summer of 2022, with some availability arriving by the end of the year. The network is expected to be fully completed after 24 months.

DOING GOOD

GCI committed \$14,500 to the Alaska Black Caucus’s Community Conversations program to support dialogues around DEI efforts in the state. The organization backs efforts to move forward the educational, cultural, political

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and economic wellbeing of Alaska's African American community. The Community Conversations program has featured a number of Alaskan leaders including Senator *Dan Sullivan* (R-AK) and Alaska Chief Medical Officer *Dr. Anne Zink*. – **Discovery** and **Samsung** have agreed to a content partnership tied to the former's Project C.A.T. A short film, "Eye to Eye with the Tiger," was produced to build awareness around the initiative. The movie, which was captured with the Galaxy S21 Ultra 5G, can be watched in its entirety on Discovery's **YouTube** channel.

FCC MOVES UP ROBOCALL DEADLINE FOR SOME

The **FCC** has moved up the deadline for voice providers that are not facilities-based with 100,000 or fewer lines to implement STIR/SHAKEN caller ID technology to June 30, 2022, a year sooner than previously expected. The decision comes after evidence suggested that a subset of those smaller providers are originating an increasing quantity of illegal robocalls. Providers suspected of originating robocalls will be required to implement STIR/SHAKEN within 90 days of an Enforcement Bureau determination following a summary process.

CHARTER OFFERS PEACOCK PREMIUM PROMO

Charter is making **Peacock Premium** available at no extra cost for 12 months to most Spectrum TV customers, starting Monday. Spectrum Internet customers will also be able to access the streaming service's premium tier for 90 days.

TUBI PUTS ITS SANTA HAT ON

AVOD **Tubi** kicked off its "12 Days of Tubi" Monday, giving viewers an opportunity to win devices and other swag. Viewers can follow Tubi's social handles each day for a chance to win Amazon Fire TV Cubes, Chromecast with Google TV devices, TiVo Stream 4Ks, and goodies from Tubi, **Fox** and **Fox Sports**. The giveaways will run through Dec. 24.

GRACENOTE PREDICTS INVESTMENT RETURNS

Gracenote, the content solutions arm of **Nielsen**, introduced a content analytics tool Wednesday that forecasts potential future entertainment programming performance. The product, called Audience Predict, offers content distributors and owners predictive insights that should assist them as they make strategic decisions on how to maximize return on programming investments.

CARRIAGE

Nordic streaming service **Viaplay** is launching on Xfinity X1, Xfinity Flex and XClass TVs on Wednesday. The streamer will be available for \$4.99/month following a seven-day free trial. Its footprint now extends to 10 countries, and Viaplay is expected to launch in at least six more by the end of 2023 at the latest. – **BBC Studios** documentary streaming service BBC Select launched on Premium Subscriptions on **The Roku Channel** in the U.S. The \$4.99/month SVOD is also available through Amazon Prime and the Apple TV app. – **Redbox** signed a distribution agreement with **LG Electronics**

to include its FAST channels as part of LG Channels, a free streaming service providing users with live and on-demand movies, TV shows, news and sports. Redbox will begin streaming five FAST channels on the platform: Redbox Free Movies, Redbox Rewind, Redbox War and Westerns, Redbox Holiday and Redbox Romance.

PROGRAMMING

Chris Wallace is jumping over to **CNN+** after 18 years as the anchor of "Fox News Sunday." He's spent more than 50 years in broadcasting, previously spending time at **ABC News** as the chief correspondent for "Primetime Thursday" and at **NBC** as its chief White House correspondent. – **Acorn TV** renewed New Zealand romantic comedy "Under the Vines." The show's first season premiered on the streamer on Dec. 6. – "Halt and Catch Fire" is coming to **AMC+** on Dec. 16. All episodes of the first season will be available on that date, and a new season will roll out each Thursday over the following three weeks. – **HBO** documentary "Insecure: The End" will debut on **HBO Max** on Dec. 26 ahead of its network premiere on Dec. 27 at 10pm. The show will focus on the making of Insecure's final season. – Freeform ordered half-hour animated comedy "Praise Petey (wt)." The series will begin production in early 2022. – **VIZIO** is offering up 500+ hours of free holiday-themed content on WatchFree+ for SmartCast users. **Microsoft** is sponsoring the TV maker's "Winter Watchland," which includes exclusive movies such as "Four Cousins and a Christmas" and four different crackling fireplace scenes.

PEOPLE

Alexander Taylor has been named Chairman/CEO of **Cox Enterprises**, effective Jan. 1. Current Chairman *James Kennedy* will move to the role of Chairman Emeritus and remain a member of the board. Taylor is the great-grandson of Cox Enterprises founder *James Cox* and has served as President/CEO since Jan. 2018. In other personnel news, *Jill Campbell* will become Co-President/Chief People and Operations Officer and *Dallas Clement* will rise to Co-President/CFO. – *Keisha Taylor Starr* is joining **Scripps Networks** on Jan. 3 as its CMO. She has more than two decades of media experience, most recently serving as SVP, Marketing and Public Relations for digital news outlet The Recount. She also spent more than ten years at **WarnerMedia** and the **Turner** nets. – The **Fiber Broadband Association** elected its 2022 board during its 2021 Premier Members Meeting. **Clearfield** CMO *Kevin Morgan* was named Chair for a one-year term beginning Jan. 1. **On Trac** EVP *Joseph Jones* is Vice Chair; **Nex-Tech** CEO/General Manager *Jimmy Todd* is Secretary; **Corning** Director, Americas Market Development *Joe Jensen* is Treasurer; and the Immediate Past Chair is **EPB** VP, New Products *Katie Espeseth*. Other members include **CTC Technology & Energy's** *Joanne Hovis*, **OFS's** *Mark Boxer*, **Graybar's** *Scott Jackson* and **C Spire's** *Ben Moncrief*. – **C2HR** added three new members to its board: **Charter** VP, Executive Compensation *Nick Dunlap*; **WOW!** VP, HR Operations *Leslie Peabody*; and **ViacomCBS** VP, Talent Acquisitions *Leisha Shorey*.