

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Bridging the Gap: Closing the Telecom Labor Shortage

More government dollars than ever before are being devoted to the buildout of broadband networks, with over \$42 billion to come from NTIA's BEAD program alone. But a looming labor shortage could ultimately hinder efforts to put that funding to work.

"That's going to be the biggest issue for us to be able to deploy all this capital," **Fiber Broadband Association** President/CEO *Gary Bolton* told **CFX**. "Normally, our federal funding for broadband is somewhere around \$4 billion a year. We saw somewhere in the range of \$12.5 billion last year, and that's going to double again this year and in the next couple of years."

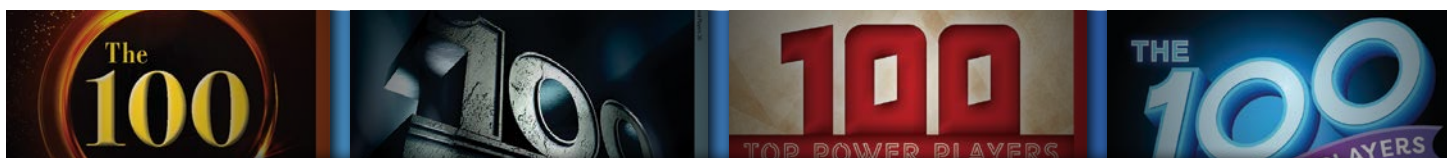
NCTI first started to see signs of a shift in the workforce in the summer of 2020, particularly in the type of training being taken by its customers. "Less new hire, onboarding training was being taken and more fiber, WISP and WiFi needs have emerged, possibly driven by the huge move to more virtual/remote work and learning," *Jeff Gibson*, NCTI's Director of Learning and Development, said. "Networks have needed to carry a much larger and more reliable load, and that means more reliance on better-trained technicians and support staff."

Compounding the issue is a wave of cable veterans retiring from the industry, and that exodus has only quickened due to factors like the COVID-19 pandemic and rapid technological changes within operators' networks. "This is becoming a very complex business and they're probably just tired after COVID, and there's going to be some churn in that area too," **SCTE**

President/CEO *Mark Dzuban* said. "It is a wave of the development of skill sets to build new networks, to modify existing networks to 10G and to replace folks that may be retiring in new areas of science... I look at artificial intelligence, automation, machine learning, some other things we're doing as the future of how you manage very complex, sophisticated networks."

NCTI President/CEO *Stacey Slaughter* noted that some of the areas most in need of additional talent are customer support centers, particularly for smaller operators in rural areas. Giants like **Amazon** are bringing more competition to many of those job markets with remote work opportunities, and operators in those communities are having to raise the bar in order to not only recruit but retain employees. "The frontline technician talent pool is another area feeling the crunch," *Gibson* said. "The skills employed by technicians are in high demand in the energy sector, logistics companies and many other roles where self-directed, high-quality customer interactions are required."

As part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the **FCC** formed the Telecommunications Workforce Interagency Group to address the workforce needs of the telecom industry. It had its first meeting earlier this month and will submit a report to Congress with recommendations on how to address labor challenges by January 14. NCTI is bolstering its content offerings with a greater focus on fiber as well as topics like fixed wireless and mobile. Through the rest of the year and into 2023, it is also investing more into the improvement of its student experience and the expansion of its accessibility options.



CONGRATULATE the **CABLEFAX 100** and **REACH** the Top Leaders in Cable, Broadband & Digital

Ad Space Close: April 4 | Ads Due: April 8

Advertising Contact: Ellen Kamhi, Director of Business Development
917-626-5574 | ekamhi@accessintel.com

WWW.CABLEFAX100.COM

Magazine Publish Date: April 27

UNION STATION | PRESIDENTIAL SUITE

50 MASSACHUSETTS AVE NE, WASHINGTON, DC 20002



EarthX

03
30
22

EarthxTV

**JOIN CABLE INDUSTRY LEADERS FOR A DISCUSSION ON
WHAT IS BEING DONE IN THE SUSTAINABILITY SPACE.**

5-6 VIP COCKTAIL HOUR

6-6:45 PROGRAM

TRAMMELL S. CROW, EARTHX FOUNDER

MICHAEL FLETCHER, EARTHX CEO

THE HONORABLE MIKE DOYLE, CHAIRMAN OF
COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY SUBCOMMITTEE

THE HONORABLE JOHN CURTIS, CHAIRMAN OF THE
CONSERVATIVE CLIMATE CAUCUS

VANESSA SINDERS, SVP, GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS AT
CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS

6:45-7:30 NETWORKING

OPEN BAR & PASSED HORS-D'OEUVRES

EarthxTV is a free 24/7 network promoting conservation and sustainability.
A global platform to recognize a positive impact for media that matters.
EarthxTV showcases amazing discussions with world leaders, award-winning
films and entertaining & informative shows.

For more information on EarthxTV visit: EARTHXTV.COM

COCKTAIL ATTIRE

**RSVP REQUIRED
LIMITED CAPACITY**

GETPUGNACIOUS.COM

The Fiber Broadband Association launched its Optical Telecom Installation Certification (OpTIC) program with a pilot course kicking off on March 29 in partnership with Greenlight Community Broadband and Wilson Community College in Wilson, North Carolina. That initiative is designed to quickly deliver a fiber technician education to those interested in the field, preparing them for positions needed to complete the rising number of fiber deployments in the U.S. and Canada.

SCTE just kicked off a partnership with Fort Hays State University to create a degree program for professionals working in the telecom industry. “We have a program called Workforce 2027. It’s on how to build scale, which is addressing the problem. We also have another program called Project Wisdom and it’s how do we develop a set of skills and talent that is unique to our industry,” Dzuban said.

STATE OF LINEAR TV VIEWING

MoffettNathanson took a deep dive into linear viewing for 2021, declaring that non-live time viewed has “fallen off a cliff.” Non-live viewing fell on average 8% annually over the past 10 years. Despite there being several million fewer pay TV homes out there today, live TV viewing is flat, with sports, and to a lesser extent news, where linear is finding a “lifeline.” “Many of cable networks’ biggest shows experienced significant declines from 2020 to 2021. Movies declined between -9% and -18% across **FX, AMC, and Freeform**, making up 84% to 90% of total ratings. Of the 60 shows on this list of the top three shows per cable network, only 14 increased in time viewed from 2020 to 2021,” the MoffettNathanson “State of Linear Viewing” report said, noting that **Paramount’s** “Yellowstone” stood out as one of the few scripted shows to grow. The firm said that cable and broadcast’s top shows capture two-thirds to half—or even worse—of the time viewed than their respective counterparts would have captured in 2021. The outlier? Yellowstone prequel “1883,” though only its first two eps aired on Paramount Network, with the rest exclusively on **Paramount+**. “By now, it should be clear that the future of linear consumption will be more sports and news. Original scripted content in linear should now follow the Paramount model of airing across multiple distribution platforms,” the analysts said. Other findings: Since 2016, affiliates of the big four broadcast networks have seen their reach shrink by -2,050 to -2,490 bps to just 52% to 59%; cable networks experienced on average a decline in time viewed of -9% among viewers aged 18-49 and -18% among all viewers; **CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC** were the only cable networks to experience an increase in timed viewed among viewers aged 18-49 from 2020 to 2021, while every other cable and broadcast network experienced declines among 18-49 viewers, and every channel but **ESPN** experienced overall declines among P2+ viewers.

Cablefax Executive Round Up

What do you expect to be a key conversation that emerges at this year’s upfronts?



Adam Bergman
SVP, Sales
VIZIO Ads

“The upcoming newfronts will mark the year that programmers and brands take a fully data-informed approach to TV. This means leveraging glass-level ACR data at the core of everything they do, from programming and content creation decisions, to powering the next generation of measurement currencies that will help advertisers prove ROI.”



Daniel Church
Head of Advanced TV Product
Beachfront

“A key trend we will see this year during the upfronts will be the continued rise of connected TV as a key component of deals. Major networks have already indicated intentions to present a unified media portfolio inclusive of their streaming offerings, which for some is unprecedented. Agencies and holding companies have also been open about moving beyond linear-only as part of their upfront planning. This will be the year where convergence really takes hold.”



Stacie Danzis
SVP, Digital Ad Sales
A+E Networks

“Cross-platform measurement will continue to lead upfront conversations this year since there is no agreed-upon universal standard. A+E Networks’ content extends across the entire multiplatform ecosystem and as such we have invested in best-in-class, data-driven targeting and attribution platforms to work with our brand partners to reach their key audiences and measure the efficacy of their advertising campaigns. There is no one-size-fits all model, so the teams that can deliver customization coupled with precision targeting will come out on top.”



Adam Monaco
EVP, Sales
Disney Advertising

“The focal point for us this upfront season is combining the scale and reach of our diverse portfolio of brands with the data insights advertisers need to accurately measure the impact of their media in a consultative, and strategic way.

We are bringing the power of automation to arenas like live sports and special events, while renewing our dedication to diversity, equity and inclusion. Disney Advertising intends to triple the \$100 million multicultural commitments we received last year.”



Stu Schwartzapfel
SVP, Media Partnership
iSpot

“This will be the most dynamic upfront season in history. You’ll see dollars shift to new currencies based on tracking and verifying modern, multi-platform consumption habits.”

TV CAMERAS IN THE COURT

The possibility of cameras in the **U.S. Supreme Court** is just one of many topics SCOTUS nominee *Ketanji Brown Jackson* was asked about during her four-day long confirmation hearing, which wrapped Thursday. Sen. *Chuck Grassley* (R-IA), who has long been in favor of televising Supreme Court proceedings, was the first lawmaker to ask the judge for her view during Day 2 of her hearing. "I would want to discuss with other justices their views and understand all the various potential issues related to cameras in the courtroom before I took a position on it," she said. Grassley responded that he thinks it's a fair answer to a question that has been controversial even within the Senate Judiciary. Sen. *Dick Blumenthal* (D-CT) brought up the issue again, saying he's hopeful that SCOTUS will actually back legislation such as the Sunshine in the Courtroom Act, which would allow judges to permit media coverage of trial and appellate cases. Jackson reiterated that if confirmed, she'd look forward to talking with colleagues to understand the positions. On Wednesday, Sen. *Ben Sasse* (R-NE) spent a moment speaking out against adding cameras to legal proceedings. "We should recognize that the jackassery we often see around here is partly because of people mugging for short-term camera opportunities..." he said. "For what it's worth, I hope the court doesn't respond to some well-meaning impulses from Congress to push for cameras in the courtroom, but also some bullying." The committee is expected to vote on Jackson's nomination April 4. She currently sits on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit. **Fox News** continues to lead other cablers in viewership for the hearings. Early **Nielsen** data for Day 3 show Fox with 1.8 million viewers from 9am-5pm vs **MSNBC's** 886,000 and **CNN's** 843,000.

DIRECTV TO SETTLE WITH SMALL BUSINESSES

Court docs filed this week show **DirecTV** is ready to establish a \$9.4 million fund to settle a class action lawsuit from small businesses that claim they were signed up for residential accounts and then "shaken down" by lawyers working for DirecTV for settlement of alleged commercial misuse. The complaint was originally filed in 2012. Under the settlement, which awaits court approval, DirecTV would include a statement in its order confirmation to highlight the distinction between residential and commercial services and would agree not to retain the Lonstein Law Office in any capacity at any time.

ALTICE USA, T-MOBILE STRIKE NEW MVNO

After weeks of hints from **Altice USA** leadership, the operator has finally announced an expansion of its MVNO agreement with **T-Mobile**. T-Mobile will continue offering its network as the nationwide support for Altice's Optimum Mobile service. Details of the deal weren't released with Altice calling the terms of the new agreement "mutually beneficial to both companies."

ON THE HILL

The **House Communications Subcommittee** released its witness list for March 31's **FCC** oversight hearing. It's made up of all four current FCC commissioners, apparently in recognition that *Gigi Sohn* won't be seated as the fifth commissioner by then. Earlier

this month, **Senate Commerce** voted 14-14 on Sohn's nomination. The next step is for Senate leaders to hold a discharge vote before lawmakers could move forward on her confirmation.

YOUTUBE LAUNCHES AVOD SERVICE

To combat competing free streaming services like **Tubi** and **IMDb TV**, **YouTube** is making over 1,500 movies and nearly 4,000 episodes of TV shows free with ads, with up to 100 new titles being made available each week. U.S. users can watch on the web, mobile devices and most connected TVs via the YouTube on TV app. The service also enhanced its navigation options and released individualized banner art for highlighted titles.

NEXTGEN TV ARRIVES IN ALBANY

Leading TV stations in Albany began broadcasting with **NextGen TV** powered by ATSC 3.0. The launch included **WTEN (ABC)**, **WRGB (CBS)**, **WXXA-TV (FOX)**, **WCWN (CW)** and **WMHT (PBS)**. NextGen TV provides a new way for broadcasters to reach viewers with advanced emergency alerts, as well as improved video and sound quality. Available features vary depending on the device and station.

PROGRAMMING

UPTv released its programming slate for the upcoming "Easter Lives Here" event. Beginning April 9, the week-long celebration of the Easter season contains 20 movies and shows totaling to 100 hours of programming, highlighted by "The Passion of the Christ" on April 10 at 7pm and the world premieres of "Faith, Hope & Love" on April 17 at 7pm and "Small Group" following at 9pm. – *Mike Clay* signed a multiyear contract extension to stay at **ESPN**. Clay contributes to ESPN.com and appears on programs such as "Fantasy Football Now," "SportsCenter," "Daily Wager" and "The Fantasy Football Show with *Matthew Berry*." – **Crown Media Family Networks** and *Holly Robinson Peete* signed a multi-picture deal that includes exclusivity on holiday movies. She most recently starred in and executive produced "Our Christmas Journey" and has also appeared in "Morning Show Mysteries" and "The Christmas Doctor."

DOING GOOD

The James M. Cox Foundation is giving a \$500,00 grant to the **American Red Cross** to provide humanitarian assistance to the Ukrainian people. The James M. Cox Foundation is named in honor of **Cox Enterprises'** founder and provides funding for capital campaigns and special projects. – **Spar-klight** extended free, unlimited international calls to Ukraine for residential phone customers through March 31.

PEOPLE

NBCUniversal Advertising & Partnerships tapped *Carrie Stimmel* as Chief Growth Officer, Olympics & Paralympics. She'll seek ways to fully monetize NBCU's Olympic and Paralympic business interests and will oversee media sales through the 2032 games. In addition, *Josh Noval* was named NBCU's SVP, Olympics & Paralympics, Advertising & Partnerships. Both Stimmel and Noval will report to President, Advertising & Partnerships *Dan Lovinger*.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

Text Alert From 'The Girl From Plainville'

The line between reality and the digital world is more blurry than ever before, and nobody knows that better than *Michelle Carter*. She was convicted in 2017 of involuntary manslaughter after texts showed she had encouraged *Conrad Roy*, who had exited his vehicle after attempting to end his life via carbon monoxide poisoning, to get back inside. Her life and conviction are re-examined in **Hulu's** "The Girl From Plainville," which hits the streamer on Tuesday. "What attracted me to the project in the first place was I'm a young person living today and that relationship that I have with technology, and with my phone, and with kind of that false sense of intimacy, and false sense of reality that that creates," *Elle Fanning*, who plays Carter, said during a panel at the **TCA Winter Tour**. "For me, it was diving deeper into how technology affected these two people." Whether you believe Carter is innocent or guilty (the cast and crew have chosen not to make any judgments), one fact that none can argue is that she is one of the biggest fans of musical series "Glee," referencing it often in communications with friends and family. The showrunners needed to be able to tap into that and honor that love, and warned networks in their pitches that they needed to figure out how to put Glee in the show. Their efforts bore fruit, and an homage to *Ryan Murphy's* show comes in the last scene of the pilot. "We all took from the article and then more so even through the texts and the case just how enamored she was by Glee and how much it affected her life," Co-Showrunner *Liz Hannah* said. "We were really lucky and fortunate that our team at Hulu and at **Universal** were able to happily be a part of the show. It was definitely touch and go at times, but we did it." – *Sara Winegardner*

REVIEWS

"Love Infinity," streaming from 3/25, **MUBI** (globally curated film streaming platform). How many times have you heard someone say about an upcoming show or film, 'You've never seen anything like this before'? Well, with "Love Infinity" it's probably the truth. The filmmaker is Oscar-winner *Tim Yip* ("Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon") who, like several of the people in this semi-documentary/semi-fiction art film, is a fusion artist, working in a variety of disciplines. At its core, the film is about artists in East London, including *Daniel Lismore*, whom "Vogue" called "England's most eccentric dresser." He's that and more, living his life as sculpture (you'll see). And a tip of the cap to *Jonny Woo*, another artist, comedian and drag queen, whose opening monologue is compelling. – "We Crashed," streaming, **Apple TV+**. We love watching train wrecks. And when the train's conductors are *Anne Hathaway* and *Jared Leto*, it's hard to turn away. Known for inhabiting his roles, Leto is as *Adam Neumann*, the Israeli "serial entrepreneur," whose iron will and salesmanship built and almost destroyed WeWork. In a wig and aping an Israeli accent, Leto's performance will strike some as over-the-top. Yet, in contrast to Hulu's "The Drop Out," where it's unclear why investors trusted *Elizabeth Holmes*, it's obvious why people invested with Neumann. At 8 eps, the series is long. The best eps bookend a sagging middle. – *Seth Arenstein*

BASIC CABLE P2+ PRIME RANKINGS* (03/14/22-03/20/22)		
MON-SUN	MC US AA%	MC US AA (000)
FNC	0.815	2538
TBSC	0.622	1937
TNT	0.405	1263
HGTV	0.348	1085
MSNBC	0.335	1042
TRUTV	0.330	1027
CNN	0.322	1003
INSP	0.280	872
TLC	0.274	855
FOOD	0.263	818
HALL	0.244	760
HIST	0.233	726
DISC	0.225	702
ESPN	0.214	668
USA	0.191	596
LIFE	0.182	567
TVLAND	0.174	542
ID	0.166	516
A&E	0.166	516
WETV	0.137	428
AMC	0.135	420
FX	0.132	412
HMM	0.125	391
NATGEO	0.123	382
GSN	0.115	358
SYFY	0.113	351
BET	0.111	347
BRAVO	0.110	344
OXYGEN	0.101	314
PRMNT	0.101	314
NAN	0.094	294
NICK	0.094	293
COM	0.092	288
TRAVEL	0.092	288

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

IT'S FREE TO ENTER – BUT YOU MUST SUBMIT YOUR ENTRIES BY APRIL 1, 2022

ANNOUNCING Cablefax's TOP OPS Nominations

Who deserves to appear in Cablefax's annual power Top Operators list?

Submit Today at: www.CablefaxTopOps.com

Questions: Contact Mary-Lou French at mfrench@accessintel.com or 301.354.1851.

