

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Finding Gold: Treasury OKs Broadband Funds, Talks Semiconductors

The money keeps flowing for broadband deployment. The **Treasury Department** awarded more than \$582 million to Louisiana, New Hampshire, Virginia and West Virginia as part of the American Rescue Plan's Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund. The CPF sets aside \$10 billion for states, territories, freely associated states and Tribal governments to fund projects that enable work, education and health monitoring in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

When completed, the four state plans approved in the first group from the Treasury Department will support broadband infrastructure to connect more than 200,000 homes and businesses with service that meets or exceeds symmetrical download and upload speeds of 100 Mbps. Louisiana estimates that the projects receiving funding from this award will close the digital divide for 25% of locations lacking high-speed internet access in the state. Meanwhile, Virginia believes the funding will expand last-mile broadband access to 28% of the locations it estimates lack access to high-quality broadband.

The Treasury Department has also already approved awards for more than 30 Tribal governments, but states and Tribal governments can still submit plans until September 24.

"Today's first state allocations under the CPF mark the beginning phase of a program with \$10 billion total set aside for broadband," **ACA Connects** President/CEO *Grant Spellmeyer* said in a statement. "With the bulk of the funds still to be

allocated, ACA Connects' members look forward to partnering with state fund recipients to ensure the program's success and fulfill the goal of closing the digital divide once and for all."

The announcement came as Treasury Secretary *Janet Yellen* was preparing to testify before **Senate Finance** on the fiscal year 2023 budget proposed by President *Joe Biden*. While it tackled a wide variety of issues from tax credits to clean energy, the topic of high inflation dominated the discussion. Sen. *Maria Cantwell* (D-WA) questioned Yellen on supply chain concerns and the need to address semiconductor shortages, and she responded by saying she believes it is critically important that the U.S. has the capacity to produce advanced chips within its borders. If it can't, Yellen believes the country is facing both a national security issue and an economic issue.

"We found ourselves in an almost unimaginable situation where the pandemic resulted in such an explosion in demand for chips globally as people switched increasingly to digital work in communications or auto factories found themselves unable to get chips," she said. "Here you have something that's caused a significant piece of the inflation we face that really results from structural shifts induced by the pandemic and insufficient capacity at home to build semiconductors."

When it comes to fueling semiconductor production within the U.S., Yellen believes there is a lot the country could learn from the nations that have emerged as leaders in the space. She is a supporter of issuing subsidies to private companies to supercharge investment into semiconductors and to encour-

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age more entities to consider boosting production. In February, the House passed a bill that would allocate \$52 billion over five years for grants tied to the construction of semiconductor fabrication facilities on American soil. The Senate passed similar legislation last year.

“There have been subsidies in many countries for semiconductor production and there’s certainly a conscious drive in China and other places to boost semiconductor production. It’s drifted away from the United States,” Yellen said. “I think it’s really critical that we develop that capacity.”

COMMISSO SCHOLARSHIP COMES TO COLUMBIA

Mediacom Communications CEO *Rocco Commisso* and his wife *Catherine Commisso* are giving back to Columbia University, his alma mater, by donating one of the school’s largest gifts to date for undergraduate scholarships to the Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science. The Rocco and Catherine Commisso Scholarship will annually support a group of up to 20 students in perpetuity. To be eligible, students will need to meet at least one of the following requirements: to have lived or studied in Italy for at least a year; to be proficient in Italian or have grown up speaking Italian at home; demonstrated leadership or involvement in the Italian community or in Italian cultural activities; to be a member of Columbia’s men’s or women’s soccer team; or to be from the Bronx, with a specific preference for alumni of Mount Saint Michael Academy.

ROKU CHANNEL LAUNCHES SPANISH OFFERING

Roku unveiled a new collection of programming geared toward U.S. Spanish speakers on **The Roku Channel**.

Called **Espacio Latino**, the destination has popular TV shows like “Hernan” and “A la Mala”, originals, telenovelas and family entertainment in Spanish. The offering has over 50 Spanish-language live TV channels covering a variety of genres, with content coming from partners such as **Canela TV, TelevisaUnivision, The Weather Channel en Español** and **EstrellaTV**.

FRNDLY TV GETS VIEWERSHIP BUMP

Affordable TV service **Frndly TV** saw a 63% increase in total amount of time subscribers spent on the platform for 1Q22 when compared to the period in the year prior. Viewership was up 60% YOY in Feb., and advertising impressions grew 632% in April compared to last year. Frndly TV added 17 channels in 2021—including **A+E Network, History Channel** and **FETV**—and has added six more so far this year.

AMPERSAND ADDS TO AND PLATFORM

TV advertising sales company **Ampersand** is expanding its current partnerships with **Charter, Comcast, Cox** and **Altice USA** by adding incremental reach capabilities powered by its AND Platform. AND is a data-driven buy-side TV platform that centralizes campaign planning and measurement. The added capabilities enable Ampersand’s clients to use Charter, Comcast, Cox and Altice’s aggregated viewership insights to identify households that are un-exposed or under-exposed to a national TV campaign.

CHARTER GETS NEW STAMFORD HQ

Charter opened a new headquarters in Stamford, Connecticut, on Monday. The company currently has over 150 open positions for the new location, which features a two-



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story food hall, 250-seat auditorium and an outdoor amphitheater set to open in the fall, among other amenities.

HOUSE TAKING ON DATA PRIVACY LEGISLATION

House Commerce is holding a legislative hearing Tuesday at 10:30am ET on a bipartisan data privacy proposal revealed last week. The American Data Privacy and Protection Act would see the **FTC** create a new bureau to enforce consumer data privacy requirements contained within the bill, including regulations that would require companies to minimize the consumer data they collect from customers and introduce additional data protections for children on their platforms.

WICT NETWORK REVEALS TOUCHSTONE PARTNERS

The WICT Network unveiled its 2022 Touchstone Partners Tuesday with this year's group including **Charter Communications, Comcast NBCU** and the **Walter Kaitz Foundation**. They are supporting the organization's professional development programs, original research and advocacy initiatives. The Catalyst Touchstone Partners, who also support The WICT Network's efforts to grow women leaders, include **Accenture, Altice USA, CommScope, Cox Communications** and **Disney & ESPN Media Networks**. The organization's activities are supported by its Inspire Touchstone Partners: **A+E Networks, AMC Networks, Amazon Web Services, Cisco, Paramount, TV One** and **Warner Bros. Discovery. Liberty Global** and Warner Bros. Discovery are among those assisting The WICT Network in its efforts to grow internationally.

CARRIAGE

Plex added **Very Local**, a streaming app that offers 24/7 access to news, weather and shows, to its streaming platform. Very Local has distribution agreements with **Roku, Amazon Fire TV, Apple TV** and **Samsung** Smart TVs from 2019 and later.

RATINGS

The quarterfinal of the 2022 French Open between *Rafael Nadal* and *Novak Djokovic* on Tuesday was the most-watched match ever on **Tennis Channel** with 666,000 viewers. This broke the old single-match record of 511,000 viewers from last year's French Open semifinal match, also between Nadal and Djokovic. – The opening weekend of **Hallmark Channel's** "Summer Nights" programming event saw the network clinch the No. 1 most-watched entertainment cable network in weekend total day among W18+ and W25-54, as well as the most-watched in weekend primetime among households, W18+ and total viewers. The premiere of original "Hidden Gems" was the most-watched entertainment cable program Saturday with an average of 1.7 million total viewers.

DOING GOOD

Comcast NBCUniversal is creating a new program aimed at enhancing STEAM preparation and digital skills among low-income and first-generation college students. Part of Comcast's digital equity initiative Project UP, the "Jurassic World

Rule Your Future STEAM Initiative" is backed by a \$1.5 million investment from Comcast, **Universal Pictures** and **Universal Parks & Resorts**. It works with the Council for Opportunity in Education to promote equity in college access through the Federal TRIO Programs. These three 10-hour courses incorporate themes from the upcoming "Jurassic World Dominion" movie. Comcast also provided activity boxes to 1,000 Lift Zone centers across the country.

MID-AMERICA WEARY SCHOLARSHIP

MACTA is taking applications for the 2022 MACTA Weary Scholarship. It's available to cable industry employees, their spouses and/or children in the Mid-America region. Students or parents can apply for one \$3,000 scholarship, and applicants must be at least a high school senior, eligible to enroll in college or currently enrolled in at least 12 hours of college classes. The deadline is July 18 and applicants will be notified via email about the committee's decisions by the first week of September. Apply [here](#).

PROGRAMMING

Season 2 of **EarthxTV's** "Chez Laurence" begins June 18 at 12:30pm. Host *Laurence Carr* highlights organizations in design-related industries that have made reducing waste a high priority. – **HBO Max** renewed drama series "Tokyo Vice" for a second season. The show's first season began in April. **HBO** also renewed "A Black Lady Sketch Show" for a fourth season. The third season came to a close on May 13, with all episodes available to stream on HBO Max.– "Top Gear" is coming back to **BBC America** on July 14 at 10pm, with the season premiere available July 7 on **AMC+**. The trio of hosts journey toward Florida to reach the home of grassroots racing in a five-episode season. – Three-part docuseries "Murdaugh Murders: Deadly Dynasty" will premiere June 19 at 9pm on **ID**, available to stream on **discovery+**. All three episodes will be released and investigate the tragedies surrounding a South Carolina family.

PEOPLE

Juliana Stock was appointed as **A+E Networks'** Chief Marketing and Brand Officer. She'll oversee the company's strategic, creative and corporate brand marketing teams. Stock has been at the network since 2013 and will report to President & Chairman *Paul Bucciari*. – **Allen Media Group** made *Tony Leadman* as Executive Director of International Distribution. He'll be responsible for developing and leading the business unit distributing **The Weather Channel** programming. Leadman previously was key in **CTV** and **Bell Media's** international program distribution business and was the Canadian Executive Manager of **MGM Studios'** TV division. – *Adriano Schmid* was named VP of **PBS Kids Content**, where he'll oversee the network's content team and full content library, while also working to expand its multi-platform content strategy. He comes from **Warner Bros. Discovery**, where he focused on multi-lingual programming in Latin American and U.S. Hispanic markets. Schmid begins June 13 and will report to SVP and GM *Sara DeWitt*.