

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Hot Seat: Senate Grills Davidson on NTIA's BEAD Plans

NTIA has received letters of intent from 36 states and territories indicating they plan to participate in the \$42 billion Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) program. That's according to NTIA head *Alan Davidson's* testimony during a **Senate Communications** subcommittee agency oversight hearing held Thursday morning.

Senators on both sides of the aisle grilled Davidson on the ins and outs of the Notice of Funding Opportunity for the BEAD program that was released last month. Areas of concern included whether NTIA was giving preferential treatment to fiber providers in its processes and the FCC's revamped broadband maps scheduled to be released this fall.

Senator *John Thune* (R-SD) pressed him on aspects of the program that are targeted at making broadband more affordable for consumers. For instance, states must include an affordability plan aimed at the middle class to ensure that high-speed broadband is available at reasonable rates. He and other Republicans are worried those price controls could open the door for rate regulation.

"We have looked at ways to make sure that we're promoting affordability while still giving states the flexibility to approach it in the ways that are appropriate for their state," Davidson responded. "We have three different ways that we promote affordability... we think those are all very appropriate."

The Notice of Funding Opportunity also tasks states with

ensuring that subgrantees don't impose unjust or unreasonable network management practices on their subscribers. To some committee members, that sounds like NTIA is giving states the greenlight to impose net neutrality provisions as a condition of a BEAD award.

"There are other agencies and organizations that are the right place to approach the neutrality issue... this is not our role," Davidson said. "There are several reasons we included that prohibition... but we know that net neutrality is a much broader concept than that and includes other kinds of requirements. We do not believe that this is a net neutrality requirement."

When asked about how the NTIA plans to work with state and local officials to streamline permitting and other issues that can delay broadband buildouts, Davidson pointed to the agency's efforts to build out a team of people who are federal program officers. Those individuals working in their assigned states will be NTIA employees with the expertise to help providers navigate state-specific issues. Approximately half of those federal program officers are already hired, but recruitment efforts are ongoing.

At NTIA headquarters, they're keeping a close eye on the supply chain and labor issues that have become areas of concern for many, if not all, providers and legislators that want the BEAD program deployments to be completed in a timely and smooth manner. Davidson said his team has been working closely with equipment providers and fiber providers to make sure they understand the challenges of supply and



YOUR CUSTOMERS ARE WATCHING.

USA vs Morocco showed double-to-triple audience growth, while the Mexico vs Uruguay match finished among the top 3 programs on all of television during primetime among Adults 18-49*.






FÚTBOL WILL LOOK TO DOMINATE THE RATINGS AGAIN THIS WEEK.

6/10  **VS** 
USA 9:30 PM ET GRENADA

6/11  **VS** 
MÉXICO 10 PM ET SURINAME

6/14  **VS** 
JAMAICA 7:30PM ET MÉXICO

 **VS** 
EL SALVADOR 10 PM ET USA



*Source: Nielsen, NPM, L+SD data

demand and can create solutions or guidance that could ease some of that burden.

While much of the conversation was dominated by the BEAD program, the NTIA is also administering the Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program. The \$1 billion program aims to reduce the cost of bringing high-speed internet to unserved and underserved communities, and Davidson is working with the Department of the Interior to create a memorandum of understanding that focuses on streamlining permitting processes among other topics.

"We are huge believers in the power of the middle mile, and we really appreciate the chance to administer that and have the funding," he said. "It's a real force multiplier, we think, and will help with the last mile efforts that we have as well."

Communications between the agencies that have a hand in the broadband funding pot have only improved since Davidson's confirmation in January. In May, the **FCC, USDA, NTIA** and **Treasury Department** signed an interagency agreement to share information about and collaborate on data and metrics tied to broadband deployment. The leaders of those agencies have committed to consulting with each other to share data tied to their respective programs, among other things.

"We are regularly coordinating with the other critical agencies—Treasury, USDA, others—for sharing data and making sure that we're being consistent in the way that we ask people to report," Davidson said. "We're trying to make this simple and we recognize that outside of the beltway, nobody knows the difference between NTIA, USDA, FCC. We want to make it easy for regulators, states and localities to interact with us."

RICE OUT AT DISNEY

Peter Rice has been ousted from his position as Head of TV Content at **Disney** and will be replaced by **Walt Disney Television** Chairman, Entertainment **Dana Walden**. According to the *New York Times*, Rice was let go due to an "ill fit with Disney's corporate culture." Rice renewed his contract in August through 2024, but NYT reports Disney will pay him for the remainder of the contract. There was speculation Rice was seen as a possible successor to current CEO **Bob Chapek**, whose contract is up in February 2023. However, Chairwoman of Disney's Board **Susan Arnold** affirmed the Board's support of Chapek. "The strength of the Walt Disney Company's businesses coming out of the pandemic is a testament to Bob's leadership and vision for the company's future," Arnold said in a statement. "In this important time of business growth and transformation, we are committed to keeping Disney on the successful path it is on today, and Bob and his leadership team have the support and confidence of the board." Rice was president of **21st Century Fox** when the company was acquired by Disney for \$71.3 billion in 2019, working alongside Walden for multiple years. Rice's career started in the late 1980s as an intern at 20th Century Fox, embarking on a more than 30-year career in the industry.

ARMSTRONG TOUTS 10G IN CRANBERRY

Armstrong is introducing a new product that will offer 3 Gbps symmetrical speeds within the next month in its service area in southern Butler County, Pennsylvania. The service plan will be called Zoom Extreme Plus, but we don't yet have details on pricing. The company is also boosting speeds on two of

Corporate Licenses

Cablefax Daily

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST.

Get reduced subscription rates for multiple readers in your organization.

Find out more! Contact Client Services at ClientServices@accessintel.com

www.cablefax.com



Cablefax Daily (ISSN 1069-6644) is published daily by Access Intelligence, LLC | www.cablefax.com | 301.354.2101 | Editorial Director: Amy Maclean, 301.354.1760, amaclean@accessintel.com | VP/Group Publisher, Cablefax and Synopsis: Robbie Caploe, 917.974.0640, rcaploe@accessintel.com | Managing Editor: Sara Winegardner, 301.354.1701, swinegardner@accessintel.com | Associate Editor: Noah Ziegler, 301.354.1704, nziegler@accessintel.com | Director of Business Development, Cablefax: Ellen Kamhi, 917.626.5574, ekamhi@accessintel.com | Dir of Marketing: Kate Schaeffer, kschaeffer@accessintel.com | Production Manager: Joann Fato, jfatto@accessintel.com | Kerry Smith, Divisional President, Marketing & Media Group, ksmith@accessintel.com | Group Subs/Subscription Questions, Client Services: 301.354.2101, clientservices@accessintel.com | Annual subscription price: \$1,799.00/year | Access Intelligence, LLC, 9211 Corporate Blvd., 4th Floor, Rockville, MD 20850

its lower speed tiers. Its 150 MB plan will now see speeds increased to 250 Mbps, and what was its 250 Mbps plan will now rise to 500 Mbps at no increase in cost. Additionally, all of its legacy WiFi customers will be eligible for a free upgrade to its enhanced WiFi product powered by **Plume**. The company has already eliminated data caps in the region, but it plans to do so in the rest of its footprint within the next year. The news was announced at a 10G Expo event held in Cranberry, Pennsylvania, Thursday. The program included a panel with Armstrong President **Jeff Ross** and CTO **Mike Giobbi**; **CableLabs** VP, Infrastructure Operations **Jeff Leget**; Butler County Chief, Economic Development and Planning **Mark Gordon**; and UPMC VP, Altoona Regional Health Services **Doug Heusey** as well as stations where attendees could experience technologies like light field displays and talk to subject matter experts. “We’re just scratching the surface of what this technology can do,” Ross said at the event. “This is going to enable things that we’re not even contemplating yet.”

SILBERWASSER NEW WBD SPORTS HEAD

Warner Bros. Discovery named **Luis Silberwasser** Chairman/CEO of Warner Bros. Discovery Sports, where he’ll guide the company’s domestic sports portfolio and oversee global sports strategy. Reporting to CEO **David Zaslav**, Silberwasser previously spent 16 years at **Discovery Communications** and held numerous roles, helping build the company’s international business and focus on live content. He was most recently President of **TelevisaUnivision** U.S. Networks Group, where he led the growth of its broadcast and cable networks. **Turner Sports** President **Lenny Daniels** and Regional Sports Networks President **Patrick Crumb** will report to Silberwasser.

COMCAST RELEASES FIRST AD REPORT

In the first **Comcast** Advertising Report, the company found 89% of traditional household TV viewing is spent watching live TV, while 54% of digital video viewing is live. Traditional TV viewers are watching just over six hours per day, with 71% of that time being outside of primetime hours. For digital content, 63% of viewers are watching on connected TVs, with 14% using a set-top box, 13% on a desktop and 10% on a mobile device. There was a 45% increase in ad views on digital services from the second half 2020 to 2021, and targeted campaigns have jumped 54% in that same period. Programmatic ads have grown 80% YOY as well as advertisers look to reach specific audience groups efficiently. The full report can be viewed [here](#).

NCTC BOLSTERS DISTRIBUTION WITH POWER & TEL

NCTC and **Power & Tel** have partnered to give NCTC members access to the latter’s distribution system. Power & Tel has access to a number of OEMs and will now be the primary supplier to the co-op for **National Strand**, **Clearfield**, **Times Fiber/Amphenol** and more. It will also be able to stock requested products, giving NCTC members increased asset visibility and the ability to be more efficient when managing materials.

NOTION ADDS NEW PLAN

Notion unveiled a new service plan that enables homeowners to extend protection with 24/7 monitoring for \$10/month. “Notion PRO” requires no professional installation and works with the existing sensors that monitor for water leaks, the opening of doors or windows, temperature changes and more. Notion—owned by **Comcast**—can notify emergency services even before customers see the notification.

FIBER FRENZY

By the end of 2023, **Brightspeed** will deliver over 60,000 new fiber passings in Virginia in the first phase of its fiber network build in the state. The company plans an additional 70,000 passings to be built in the subsequent years. Brightspeed previously invested \$2 billion in its fiber optics transformation and expects to reach as many as 3 million homes and businesses over the next five years. – **Breezeline** activated the first residential and business customers in Cheat Lake, West Virginia, and is expected to activate Morgantown and Brookhaven later this month. The company currently has a goal of reaching 30,000 additional West Virginia and New Hampshire homes and plans to activate Westover, Granville and Star City, West Virginia, by early 2023.

FCC CONTINUES ECF SUPPORT

The **FCC** is committing another \$244 million in Emergency Connectivity Fund support. This round of funding will support applications from the program’s third filing window and will provide support to more than 259 schools, 24 libraries and 1 consortium during the upcoming 2022-2023 school year. Those are located in California, Georgia, Michigan, Missouri, New York and Virginia. The Commission also gave the green light to \$18 million in funding from two previous application windows, bringing the total funding committed to date to \$5.1 billion.

CARRIAGE

QVC is now available on **FuboTV**, giving customers the ability to tune in to the service’s first livestream shopping channel. QVC has 20 hours of live video commerce programming, with celebrity guests and personalities presenting new products.

PROGRAMMING

Telemundo will broadcast the two World Cup intercontinental playoff matches, where the winners will solidify the full field for the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. Peru will take on Australia on Monday at 2pm, with Costa Rica and New Zealand squaring off Tuesday at 2pm. Both matches will be available on Telemundo, **Universo** and **Peacock**. Coverage will begin at 1:30 on both days and a 30-minute post-match show will follow the conclusions. – **Food Network**’s “Kitchen Crash” is returning July 12 at 10pm. This season will feature four one-hour episodes where three professional chefs surprise neighborhood block parties with a cook-off. – **Lifetime** greenlit “Girl in Room 13,” a film exploring the world of human trafficking set to debut in the fall. The movie will be part of the network’s “Stop Violence Against Women” campaign. – Season 2 of **Showtime**’s “We Hunt Together” will premiere on stream July 1 on Showtime, and the on-air debut will be July 3 at 7:30pm.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

AMC Lifting Native Voices in 'Dark Winds'

Lovers of *Tony Hillerman's* Leaphorn & Chee book series, rejoice: **AMC Networks** is bringing those stories to life in "Dark Winds," and the creation of the series has been a long time coming. *Robert Redford* optioned the books more than three decades ago. Premiering Sunday on **AMC** at 9pm and on **AMC+**, the police drama centers on Joe Leaphorn (Zahn McClarnon), a Navajo Tribal Police detective working near Monument Valley that sees his team expand to include Jim Chee (*Kiowa Gordon*) and Bernadette Manuelito (*Jessica Matten*) following a rise in cases. Creator/Writer *Graham Roland* thought it was key this story was told by people that understand the lives and experiences of Native Americans. The writers' room was filled with five Indigenous writers and the crew filmed largely on and around Native American lands. "What I hope to see from *Dark Winds* is just more doors opening not only for indigenous talent in front of the camera, but also behind the camera, and I think we're kind of in a unique time right now with Native representation in media," McClarnon, who also serves as one of the show's executive producers, said during a panel at **TCA's** Winter Press Tour. He's in fine company, claiming that title along with Redford, *Tina Elmo*, *Chris Eyre*, *Vince Gerardis* and *George R.R. Martin*. Efforts to bring more attention to Native American and Indigenous stories have ramped up in recent years, particularly in Canada. The First Nations in Canada do have a small network called **Aboriginal Peoples Television Network**, but it has been incredibly challenging for the creative individuals building that network to advance beyond that space. "I can't even express how much it means to have allies in this to just continue to humanize the experience of being indigenous in this day and age, or even in the 1970s where this show is taking place," Matten said. "It's playing a vital role in giving us the voices... in different realms too, like writing, directing and producing." — *Sara Winegardner*

REVIEWS

"The Janes," steaming on **HBO Max**. The timing of this excellent short doc from *Tia Lessin* and *Emma Pildes* seems fortuitous. It was filmed well before the SCOTUS draft memo about overturning *Roe v. Wade* leaked, in early May. Still, since abortion again is a major topic, the doc gets an added boost of relevance. On one level, the story is simple. It's the tale of Jane, a group of ladies and a few men, in Chicago who helped thousands gain access to relatively safe (though illegal) abortions in the late 60s and early 70s, until *Roe* became law, in 1973. Hearing the stories of women attempting to get abortions before 1973 is harrowing. The opening account of a woman working with organized crime to get an abortion is just one example. Others include equally awful details. On the other hand, stories of the ladies who formed the Jane organization are inspiring and offer a terrific history lesson. — "The Boys," season III, streaming on **Amazon Prime Video**. This bloody, gory, often darkly funny, fast-paced spoof of the superhero genre (and much more) isn't for everyone. Yet if you're seeking out-of-bounds irreverence, give this series based on the *Garth Ennis-Darick Robertson* comic book a shot. The ensemble cast includes *Antony Starr*, who starred in one of our favorite series, **Cinemax's** "Banshee." — *Seth Arenstein*

BASIC CABLE

P2+ PRIME RANKINGS*

(05/30/22-06/05/22)

MON-SUN	MC US AA%	MC US AA (000)
FNC	0.637	1985
ESPN	0.444	1382
TNT	0.329	1025
HGTV	0.317	986
INSP	0.265	826
HALL	0.263	819
TLC	0.259	805
HIST	0.252	786
MSNBC	0.249	775
DIC	0.237	737
TBSC	0.231	720
FOOD	0.214	668
CNN	0.189	589
LIFE	0.180	562
ID	0.172	537
TVLAND	0.158	493
USA	0.151	472
A&E	0.147	457
ESPN2	0.144	447
HMM	0.130	405
WETV	0.126	394
PRMNT	0.126	394
NATGEO	0.124	388
GSN	0.123	385
BRAVO	0.119	370
AMC	0.115	358
BET	0.113	351
OXY	0.104	325
FX	0.103	322
TRAVEL	0.102	318
APL	0.093	291
FRFM	0.091	282
SYFY	0.091	282
E!	0.088	273
NAN	0.087	271

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



Nominate for The Diversity List.

Help Cablefax recognize the top multi-ethnic executives based on their influence and power within the industry plus nominate for Cablefax's inaugural Pride List, honoring top LGBTQ+ execs who are making their mark on the industry.

Other nomination categories include D&I Mentor of the Year, Public Affairs Campaign and Thrivers Under 30, the industry's rising stars under 30.

Final Deadline, June 10 www.CablefaxDiversity.com

41363