

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Better Together: Fiber Connect Wraps With Partnership Talks

The **Fiber Broadband Association's** Fiber Connect conference came to a close Wednesday with a heartwarming discussion on how leaders across cable, fiber and technology can come together to shape the connected future of the nation. The discussion was in some ways inspired by the way cable operators are deploying fiber and adopting it as a method to bolster their existing HFC plant or to make a splash in new markets.

"They're coming over to us, they're embracing fiber and I want to make that as easy and inviting as possible," FBA President/CEO *Gary Bolton* said during the panel discussion. "If you look at our association, everybody's competitive... but we all pull together for digital equity and really improving quality of life for everybody across the country, and that's what it's really about. It's about growing the pie and really taking this to the next level for generations."

Former **ACA Connects** President/CEO *Matt Polka* doesn't think anyone should be surprised that cable operators are embracing fiber more than ever. Discussion around fiber has been around for quite a while, but the plentiful amount of federal and state funding that's available for ISPs that also gives preferential treatment to fiber buildouts is creating some of the urgency being observed today.

"This is something that is really just part of the evolution of their companies becoming better servants in their communities

and meeting their community's needs with fiber-based future proof networks, particularly when they go to greenfield areas," Polka said. "There is, particularly when we look at some of the political sides of things, a bias towards fiber, but the truth is that whatever technology is needed in that community, we're going to find a way to do it."

And while fiber isn't really a household term yet, it's well on its way to becoming one. **NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association** has recently taken on a number of partnerships that could bring more awareness to fiber as a connectivity option while also building out more networks. It has teamed up with the creators of *FiberHomes.com*, a website that features homes on the market based on how they're served by broadband providers, in an effort to highlight how gamechanging internet access can be and to showcase rural communities as great places for remote employees of coastal companies to settle down.

The Fiber Broadband Association is also seeing interest from home builders, buyers and sellers. Bolton said **Zillow** expressed in conversations with the association that it plans to start including whether or not a home has fiber connectivity as a feature when they're listed on its platform. That technology is allowing some homes to sell at even higher prices.

NTCA has also encouraged its members to become those partners to rural electric co-ops and other entities that want to deploy their own broadband service, but can't bear the risk of



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it all on their own. CEO *Shirley Bloomfield* is very bullish when it comes to the potential for those partnerships and how they can be utilized to reach rural markets. For some co-ops, that helping hand has already proven to be a pivotal factor in their decisions on whether or not to offer broadband.

“I’ve had CEOs that come in and say listen, we did it. We did our due diligence. We looked at the business, but it just doesn’t make sense for us,” **National Rural Electric Cooperative Association** VP, Business & Technology Strategies *Paul Breakman* said. “But they find partners to get it done, to build that middle mile.”

### TALKING AD SALES AT WARNER BROS DISCOVERY

Advertisers going after female audiences are taking a closer look at sports this upfront cycle, according to **Warner Bros. Discovery** Ad Sales Chief *Jon Steinlauf*. “I think right now in this market what the advertisers really covet is sports. In fact, for 2Q to-date on women 25-54, 30 of the top 50 shows in all of television are sports and half of those are ours,” he said during a Credit Suisse investor conference Wednesday. What he didn’t do is offer up an update on the company’s progress in the upfront. “We never talk about the market while we’re in the market. This is nothing new. There will be a point in time where we can provide some guidance of where things are going, but this is not the time,” Steinlauf said. “This is a process that requires more complexity [for advertisers] than in the past. However, they really like what we’re doing because we’ve created a one-stop shop.” While WBD was mum, three other major media companies at the conference indicated high single-digit increases. Steinlauf talked up the strengths of the combined Warner Bros. and Discovery portfolio, pointing to the reach and interesting combinations it can offer. “**CNN**, **NBA** and **TLC** would link up really well in the African American marketplace,” he said, citing high African American viewership among all three (for TLC, hit series “90 Day Fiancé” scores particularly well with Black viewers). “Finding those links to be able to market across this portfolio in ways that neither company could have done independently is something that we look at. The combinations of CNN Sunday night lifestyle with two of the great lifestyle networks—**Food** and **HGTV**. Having those kinds of combinations to build more scale on a theme around female lifestyle is something we’re now starting to put together.” Steinlauf tackled the CPM gap between broadcast and cable, chalking it up to history. Cable CPMs were low and supply was really high in the 1980s as new networks were launching virtually every month. That low CPM basis has continued, but streaming is changing things. Streaming advertising dollars don’t seem to differentiate on whether content is coming from cable or broadcast, he said.

## The WHO and the WHY

CFX’s spotlight on recent new hires & promotions



**JULIANA Stock**  
CHIEF MARKETING & BRAND OFFICER  
A+E NETWORKS

### 3 THINGS TO KNOW

- A+E Networks vet Juliana Stock was bumped up to this role overseeing the global media company’s Strategic, Creative and Corporate Brand marketing teams. She is the company’s first CMO since Amanda Hill left in 2018 to take a similar role at Harrods department store. Juliana most recently was EVP, Corporate Brand Strategy and Chief of Staff to President & Chairman Paul Buccieri. The A+E chief is a big fan, describing Juliana as integral in shaping the company’s vision, values and culture while also driving strategic business initiatives.
- The announcement effectively combines the Strategic Marketing, Creative Marketing and Corporate Brand teams into one division under her purview. Juliana will report directly to Buccieri. She joined A+E back in 2013 as VP, Strategy & Innovation.
- Juliana has received many accolades over the years, including being ranked as one of the “Top 50 Women in Brand Marketing” while at A+E Networks. During her 11-year tenure at Conde Nast, she was named one of *Adweek’s* “40 Young Influentials,” and *Gourmet Live*, which she oversaw as general manager, won an *Ad Age* Media Vanguard Award.

### CARRIAGE

**Nexstar** and **altafiber** (formerly **Cincinnati Bell**) reached a comprehensive multi-year agreement covering WDTN-TV, the Nexstar station serving Dayton, Ohio, and national cable news network, **NewsNation**. The MVPD didn’t previously offer NewsNation in Dayton and Cincinnati. The cable newser is currently available in 75 million households across the U.S. Financial terms of the agreement were not disclosed.

### DISH CONFIRMS ALL’S WELL

**DISH** waited until the day after its **FCC** deadline to confirm what most suspected—that it has in fact made its 5G wireless network available to more than 20% of the U.S. population. Consumers can visit [Genesis5G.com](http://Genesis5G.com) to learn about the 120+ current service areas and sign up with Project Genesis for unlimited data, voice and text through DISH’s cloud-native Open RAN network. DISH boasted that it’s the only major network in the world built primarily with American vendors, including **AWS**, **Cisco** and **CommScope**. Both the Samsung Galaxy S22

and the NetGear 5G hotspot are currently offered to Project Genesis subscribers. DISH already offers the Motorola Edge+ for purchase in Las Vegas and will expand the sale of this device to more markets in the coming months.

#### PINK SLIPS AT WBD

**Warner Bros Discovery** could cut up to 30% or nearly 1,000 jobs in its global advertising sales team, *Reuters* reported, citing a person familiar with the matter. The company began offering voluntary buyouts to ad sales employees on Tuesday.

#### ACP WAIVERS PARTIALLY GRANTED

The **FCC** Wireline Competition Bureau granted **NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association's** request for an extension until Sept. 15 for small broadband internet providers that serve Tribal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) customers to track usage on a rolling 30-day basis ACP subscribers who receive free-to-the-end-user service, including ACP/Lifeline subscribers who receive both benefits on the same service. The bureau also agreed to NTCA's request for a retroactive waiver to January 1, 2022 of the Lifeline requirement to track usage on a rolling 30-day basis to the extent that this subset of providers apply both the Lifeline and ACP benefit to the same service resulting in free-to-the-end-user service. However, it denied NTCA's request for an indefinite waiver of this requirement for small broadband providers that serve Tribal ACP subscribers. The FCC also granted **AT&T** with a temporary 60-day waiver to Aug. 13 of the non-usage rules for AT&T's customers who receive free-to-the-end-user ACP service that uses ADSL technology, but denied an indefinite waiver request of these rules for this subset of AT&T subs.

#### WEEKLY RATINGS

**Fox News** was the most-watched ad-supported cable net in total viewers for primetime (2.27million) and total day (1.45 million) last week. **ESPN** ranked #2 in prime at 1.74mln, followed by **MSNBC** (1.44mln), **HGTV** (996,000) and **INSP** (911,000). MSNBC was a runner-up in total day, averaging 754,000 total viewers, with ESPN taking third place (567,000).

#### FCC PRIORITIZES WIRELESS NETWORK RESILIENCY

**FCC** Chair *Jessica Rosenworcel* distributed new draft rules to her fellow commissioners Wednesday aimed at improving the reliability of wireless networks during emergencies. If adopted, the rules would require facilities-based wireless providers to strike mutual aid arrangements allowing them to request and receive requests for assistance in times of need. Bilateral roaming agreements would also be required under the new rules. The list of triggers that would activate those requirements would be expanded as would the testing and reporting of networks during disasters.

#### BECK MEDIA BUYS TWO AGENCIES

Communications firm **Beck Media & Marketing** has acquired San Francisco-based **Big Noise PR** and **Beaucoup Media**. The combined companies will operate under the Beck Media banner, effective immediately. The deals wrapped earlier this year and Big Noise clients and staff have already been integrated into the larger Beck Media umbrella. Big Noise founder

*Bronagh Hanley* has joined Beck in an advisory role. **Beaucoup Media** founder *Amber Williams-Wright* is now a Beck Media VP working with the company's Atlanta office.

#### DON'T FORGET - BROADBAND DATA COLLECTION

The **FCC** Enforcement Bureau reminded all facilities-based providers of fixed or mobile broadband that they must file their Broadband Data Collection data by Sept. 1. Providers can begin submitting data on June 30. Failure to file in a timely manner may result in enforcement actions and penalties. A live, virtual webinar is scheduled for June 29, 2022, starting at 2pm ET to preview the Broadband Data Collection system for filers.

#### ADVERTISING

**Katz Media** and **MadHive** teamed up to offer what they say is the largest local CTV marketplace for political advertising, including inventory from MadHive's local broadcast clients and more than 1,300 publishers and exclusive marketplaces from the Katz Digital Video portfolio.

#### PROGRAMMING

**History's** eight-part docuseries "Colosseum" arrives on July 17 at 9pm. It centers on the rise and fall of the Roman Empire through one of the most iconic arenas in global history.

#### DOING GOOD

**Charter** revealed the 20 students to whom it has awarded \$400,000 in scholarships Wednesday. The company's Spectrum Scholars program is designed to help underrepresented college students in need of financial aid. Each student will receive a \$20,000 scholarship, a mentor at Charter and the opportunity to take on an internship at one of the company's offices in Stamford, Charlotte, St. Louis or Denver. To be considered for the program, applicants had to be rising college juniors with financial need and identify as Asian/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino and/or Native American. Their participation in the program starts this fall with in-person meetings at Charter's offices and a summit planned for later this year. – **Breezeline** is launching a series of initiatives centered on pushing digital literacy and equity in the communities it serves. It partnered with Cyber-Seniors for the creation of free webinars on digital basics for seniors, The Digital Wellness Lab for the presentation of short videos and webinars for parents to understand the impacts of media on children and with Pacer Center's National Bullying Prevention Center and CyberSecurity Non-Profit to create cyberbullying prevention resources. It is also serving as the lead sponsor for the Interactive Case Competition and is supporting Code/Art's annual coding festival and competition.

#### PEOPLE

**Sinclair** upped *Adam Ware* to SVP, Growth Networks Group, placing him in an oversight role over the company's national multicast networks as well as streaming platform STIRR. He previously served as VP/GM of the group. Ware joined Sinclair in 2014 and previously spent time at **Viacom**, **HSN** and **Fox Broadcasting**. – *Rick Tarvin*, **Viamedia's** EVP of Sales, has been promoted to Chief Revenue Officer. He's been with the ad firm for 16 years.



Think about that for a minute...

It's Worth a Try

Commentary by Steve Effros

It wasn't too long ago that the cable industry, and particularly the local engineering and customer service staffs always had one eye glued on weather forecasts for places like Long Island, NY. Why? Because back then one of the largest satellite uplink sites for HBO was there, and when bad weather hit that area the HBO satellite feed would falter.

For those of you not familiar with what that might mean, at the time almost all HBO satellite distribution except for the West Coast was handled by that Long Island facility. If it had a problem, cable had a problem. We couldn't reliably deliver the movie folks were watching, or "The Sopranos," or anything else. And of course this applied to all the other major "cable channels" whether "pay" or not, wherever they were uplinked from as well.

Cable customers in Cleveland, on a beautiful, clear night, would suddenly see the movie they were watching flicker, disappear, or whatever. And, of course, they blamed the local cable company. That company knew what was coming. The engineers gritted their teeth, the customer service reps swore under their breath, and the calls came in. Telling subscribers that it was the fault of the weather just didn't cut it, no matter how accurate that really was. The transmission up to the satellite from the "uplink" facility was simply being blocked by bad weather, and there wasn't a darn thing anyone could do about it!

Fast forward to today and we happily have a lot more redundancy in both uplink capability and wireline broadband backup, so those early problems have been reduced. But, not surprisingly, we have new ones.

The annual ranking of customer satisfaction with various services and companies has come out, and as usual the cable/broadband cohort is at the bottom of the list. As I said, saying "the weather did it" doesn't fly. But now it's even more complicated, and the "ratings" themselves show why. While the broadband service providers are rated down, the "streaming services" are rated higher. But, but...the streaming services

are delivered by the broadband providers! How does that happen? Well, it's all a matter of what you define as the "service".

To be sure, customers are unhappy, for instance, when there is "buffering"... the picture freezes and the little arrow goes around and around. They instantly assume this is the service fault of their local ISP. What if we explained that most "speed" and "reliability" issues in the home are not triggered by the local company, but by, in many cases, their own WiFi service in the home itself? Would it change minds? Probably not, just like the weather. But in this case it might help to explain it because in many cases the consumer can help fix their own problem.

If Dad is trying to watch a movie, Mom is on a Zoom call and two kids are playing streaming video games there might, indeed, be a problem with the level of broadband service that family has signed up for. But just as likely it's their own in-house connection that can't handle the load. What if we spent more time explaining stuff like that?

Of course, there are lots of other things that could be explained, like the fact that the local ISP can't control what's happening in the "middle mile" with someone else's infrastructure that gets the broadband signal from the local community to the big-city interstate nodes which pump out the data. But again, it's like blaming the weather. It's true, but not likely to be considered a satisfactory answer. Sure, we could buy more "middle mile" service and get more "speed" or "reliability,"

but complaints about higher prices would then go up. You can't win, but I think explanations are worth a try.



Steve

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(Steve Effros was President of CATA for 23 years and is now an advisor and consultant to the cable industry. His views do not necessarily reflect the views of Cablefax.)

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