

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Pay Up: ACA Connects Reports Issues with C-band Payments

The **FCC**'s C-band spectrum transition continues to be riddled with problems with **ACA Connects** members reporting a number of issues with outstanding band relocation payments. The 2020 C-band auction aimed to make up to 300MHz of midband spectrum available that would be repurposed to fuel 5G growth in the U.S. MVPDs that used the band for video delivery were able to opt-in to receive lump sum payments to transition to other technologies that would allow them to migrate off the spectrum.

"And yet, numerous ACA Connects Members, including some who have pursued their payment claims actively since the claims process commenced in late summer 2021, still have not received any portion of the lump sum payments they are due, causing them to divert operating funds to finance necessary transition activities, or even to seek external financing," ACA Connects said in an **FCC** ex parte Friday.

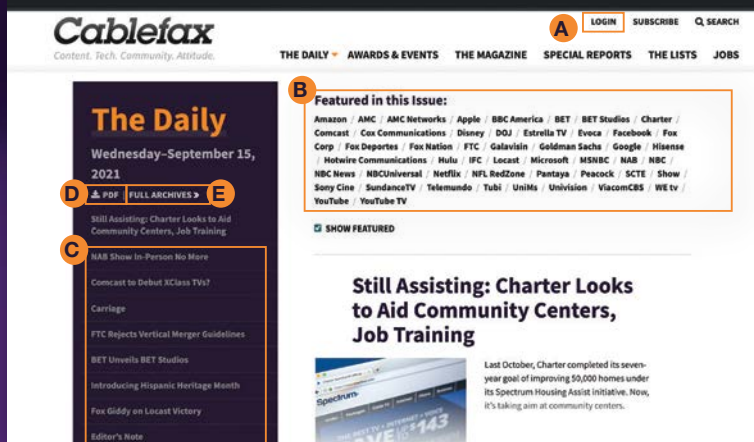
The association voiced issues with the lump sum payments and the FCC's cost catalog before the auction occurred, asking the Commission in July 2020 to include that cost of integrated receiver/decoders in the lump sum to give MVPDs the option to easily replace their existing earth stations with fiber-based alternatives. The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau denied that request and ACA Connects asked the **D.C. Circuit** to step in, review the decision and implement a stay on the deadline for incumbent earth station operators to elect to receive a lump-

sum payment. That request was denied in September 2020.

According to the **C-band Relocation Payment Clearinghouse**'s last quarterly report, which was released in late July, 1,427 claims had been received through June 30, 2022, with a total dollar value of \$2.04 billion. Once the claims are received, the RPC reviews the supporting documentation and assesses them against the FCC's Report and Order against the transition plans of space station operators and the Commission's cost catalog to determine whether the submitted costs are appropriate for the program. Adjustments made by the RPC led to a net reduction of \$2.6 million in amounts approved versus original claim amounts. Some 969 claims have been reviewed and included in invoices sent to licensees, with \$1.05 billion headed to space station operators and \$80.8 million being distributed in lump sums across 930 claims made by earth station operators.

While it awaits answers on those outstanding payments, the association is pivoting its focus back to the **NTIA**'s BEAD program. ACA Connects and business consulting firm **Cartesian** have also released a study focused on how states and territories should allocate funds to make the most of the \$42 billion BEAD program. It starts by estimating the number of unserved and underserved households in each state and territory using adjusted Form 477 data and uses that to project the amount of funds each is likely to receive from NTIA. Finally, a model was used to produce cost estimates for bringing service to those households based on the challenges that each

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state and territory faces.

Nationally, the study estimates that high-speed broadband could be deployed to all unserved locations for \$49 billion, but bringing fiber to locations above the high-cost threshold would add another \$10 billion to that total. ACA Connects is in the process of working with state and local governments to help them understand and apply the framework to their plans moving forward.

#### G4 SHUTTERING AFTER YEAR BACK ONLINE

**G4**, the linear channel with a focus on video games and pop culture, is headed back to the grave one year after its revival. *Deadline* had the [exclusive](#) on the Sunday news with many of the network's employees tweeting that they were not informed by management of the closure and found out via social media. In a memo received by *Deadline* that was set to be delivered to employees, **Comcast Spectacor's Joe Marsh** said HR would be reaching out to those impacted to discuss other opportunities and offer support. G4's challenges weren't entirely unexpected by those that were fans of the channel, which tried to reach wider audiences by producing content for **Twitch** and **YouTube**. G4 President **Russell Arons** left the network in August, leaving the channel in the hands of Marsh, who currently serves as CEO of the esports joint venture **T1**. Two weeks later, the network was hit with a round of layoffs that impacted as many as 20-30 employees on both the production and the talent side. G4 had distribution deals in place with **Verizon Fios**, **Cox**, **Comcast** and **Philo** as well as an agreement with **Twitch**.

#### NEXSTAR DARK ON FIOS, FOX STAYS ON ALTICE

**Nexstar** and **Verizon** were unable to strike a renewal on their distribution agreement ahead of their Friday deadline, leading to a station blackout impacting **Fios** subscribers across 10 markets. Nexstar claims it has been negotiating in good faith and offering the same fair market rates it has offered to other distribution partners to no avail. The broadcaster is encouraging impacted viewers to call Verizon and request refunds to compensate consumers for the loss of programming. Verizon claims that it offered Nexstar an extension to continue negotiating in the short-term, but that was refused. "Our offer to extend stands; if Nexstar wishes to accept an extension, we can restore signals while the parties continue to negotiate so that customers can access content from Nexstar channels," Verizon said in a statement. On the other side of the coin, **Altice USA** and **Fox Corp.** announced their renewal just before the clock struck midnight on Friday. Optimum customers will continue to have access to programming from Fox stations as well as **Fox News Channel**, **FS1**, **FS2** and more.

#### HELLO/GOODBYE FOR WOISARD

Last week's **Diversity Week** doings served as a hello/goodbye situation for **Cox Communications** SVP of Corporate Public Affairs **Leigh Woisard**. While in NYC, friends gathered to wish

her happy upcoming retirement. She's set to exit Cox in December after 22 years at the operator and plans to do some consulting and executive coaching. It was also her welcome party to **The WICT Network**, with Woisard taking over as the organization's chair in 2023. The week served as sort of the passing of baton to her from current WICT Network board Chair **Sandy Howe**, who is wrapping up her third and final term. **Mal-lard Holliday** was named as Woisard's successor at Cox. He's been with the company for nearly 20 years. "As I prepare to retire, I know I've helped to create a team that is multidimensional, multitalented and so capable that they won't miss a beat when I am gone," said Woisard.

#### CLIPPERVISION TIPS OFF

Many media companies are entering the crowded streaming service ring, but now, so is an **NBA** team. The Los Angeles Clippers launched streaming service **ClipperVision**, the first DTC platform in the league. It'll carry 70 of the team's 82 regular-season games (the exclusion being nationally broadcast contests) and come at \$199/season. However, the early bird gets the worm as fans who sign up now through Thursday will [get](#) 50% off, and early subscribers will also receive a limited-edition Clippers jacket. ClipperVision will have six channels for fans to view games, including the traditional telecast, channels carrying the Spanish- and Korean-language broadcasts and "BallerVision," which will feature former players, coaches and occasionally Clippers' owner **Steve Ballmer**. The other two channels—"Court Vision" and "CourtVision Mascot Mode"—will be powered by AWS and be stats-oriented, with the "Mascot Mode" taking a fun spin on the game with fan-friendly animations and graphics. To get ClipperVision, subscribers must be based in L.A. and authenticated with their respective ZIP code. No cable subscription is required, and fans will still be able to watch games on the team's RSN partner **Bally Sports SoCal** and free-to-air on **KTLA** (CW).

#### COMCAST SPEEDS ON THE UP

**Comcast** is increasing Xfinity Internet speeds for over 20 million customers across the U.S. at no additional charge. Beginning this week, those on the Performance Starter/Connect plan will see their speed increase to 75 Mbps, the Performance/Connect More to 200 Mbps, Performance Pro/Fast to 400 Mbps, Blast/Superfast to 800 Mbps and Extreme Pro/Gigabit to 1 Gbps. The news comes after Comcast announced plans to deploy multi-gig speeds to 50 million homes and businesses by the end of 2025.

#### FUBO CLOSES SPORTSBOOK, GAMING DIVISION

**FuboTV** is closing **Fubo Sportsbook** and its Fubo Gaming business after a strategic review, effective immediately. The streaming company said that while multiple parties did express interest in the business, none of the proposals would have generated large enough returns for shareholders. FuboTV co-founder/CEO

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David Gandler promised more details would be revealed on the company's Nov. 4 3Q22 earnings call. The company revealed some preliminary results with the announcement, expecting to close the quarter with North American revenue of at least \$210 million, up 34% YOY. Paid North American subscribers are expected to exceed 1.22 million with paid subs for the rest of the world expected to reach approximately 350,000.

#### STANDARD GENERAL FIGHTS FOR TEGNA DEAL

**Standard General** Founding Partner **Soo Kim** is fighting back against some of the attacks being made against his company's proposed acquisition of **TEGNA**. He has taken particular issue with comments from **NewsGuild's Jon Schleuss**, **David Goodfriend** and **Andrew Schwartzman**, which he believes are sexist and racially charged. Those comments have been directed at both Kim and Standard Media Group CEO **Deb McDermott**. Among them are statements that the investment from Kim is "anonymous foreign investment" in American newsrooms and that the deal should be scrutinized more closely due to "China(s) increased tensions" in the Taiwan Strait. "To be clear, I am ethnically Korean. And I am a proud American citizen. These three men are attempting to define what constitutes a minority or what is the right kind of diversity—this is offensive and inappropriate," Kim said in a statement. "Notably, the NewsGuild did not comment on other recent Broadcasting deals such as the **Scripps** acquisition of **ION** or the **Gray** acquisitions of **Meredith** or **Quincy**—all deals that were not as straightforward as ours given that they resulted in tremendous consolidation and required station divestitures to address regulatory/DOJ concerns."

#### SNOWING IN FALL

In an expansion of its existing commercial partnership, **OpenAP** announced an investment from **Snowflake Ventures** that'll help accelerate the development of the cross-platform and cross-publisher solution the OpenAP Data Hub. Snowflake is now the first non-TV publisher to have an ownership stake in OpenAP, and the investment also means an initial release of data and services to the Hub will roll out this quarter, including a custom-hashed OpenID person and household identity spine.

#### DIRECTV, YAHOO EXPAND ADVERTISING DEAL

**Yahoo** is expanding its partnership with **DirecTV Advertising** to include set-top data. Now, Yahoo's demand-side platform customers can use TV usage data from DirecTV households to help with the planning, activation and measurement of digital campaigns.

#### GET CREATIVE

**NBCUniversal** launched the 2022-23 Creator Accelerator program, an initiative that seeks to identify and develop rising social media content creators. This year's cohort has more than 10 million followers combined across 11 accounts, and all 11 creators have agreed to development deals with **Universal Studio Group** to create original series relating to the content each individual makes. The creators will get a content development mentor to assist in creating scripted and unscripted content, and if a pitch gets greenlit, the creator will get to produce the program.

#### STRAIGHT TALK TAKES ON INTERNET

**Straight Talk** is rolling out Straight Talk Home Internet, a no-contract, prepaid fixed wireless service available at **Walmart**. It offers unlimited 5G and 4G LTE data with speeds up to 100 Mbps on 5G and 50 Mbps on 4G for \$45/month. A self-set-up router is needed as well and comes in at \$99.

#### FIBER FRENZY

**TDS Telecommunications** began building its fiber network in Socorro, New Mexico. Once done, TDS will bring speeds up to 2 Gbps as well as the TDS TV and phone products to around 5,300 residents and businesses. The project—solely funded by TDS—will initially install 18 miles of fiber to over 1,400 service addresses.

#### PROGRAMMING

**Allen Media Group's theGrio** will host "TheGrio Awards" on Sunday, highlighting leaders, icons and allies in the African American community. The TV event will be broadcast on Nov. 5 on broadcast stations across the U.S., theGrio TV Network and other AMG platforms. This year's honorees include **Tyler Perry** (ICON Award), **Jennifer Hudson** (Trailblazer Icon Award) and **Dave Chappelle** (Cultural Icon Award). – All four hosts of **TNT's "Inside the NBA"** signed long-term contract extensions with **Warner Bros. Discovery** to remain on the show "for many years to come." Sports Business Journal reports **Charles Barkley** [agreed to a 10-year deal](#), but the terms for **Ernie Johnson**, **Shaquille O'Neal** and **Kenny Smith** are unknown.

#### DOING GOOD

In its effort to advance digital inclusion within its footprint, **Frontier** is launching a social impact program called "Broadband for Good." The initiative will connect underserved communities, and Frontier will also donate high-speed broadband connectivity and computer equipment to selected communities. The first location chosen was The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Brazos Valley located in Bryan, Texas. – **The Alliance for Women in Media** is teaming up with **ESPN** to award \$5,000 scholarships to one Black and one Hispanic female undergraduate student for the 2023 spring semester. The winners will also get complimentary tickets to the Gracie Awards Luncheon event on June 20 in New York. The deadline to [apply](#) is Dec. 2.

#### OBITUARY

Well-known lawyer **Jack Cole** passed away last week at the age of 92. He practiced media/telecom law in D.C. for 50 years, principally with the firm of **Cole, Raywid & Braverman**, of which he was the founding partner in 1966. Cole was affectionately referred to as the "Dean of the Cable Bar" and was highly involved in fighting must carry rules, [telling The Cable Center](#) the Turner Supreme Court ruling was a "mortal blow" to him. As Cole withdrew from active legal practice, he served on a number of boards, including 18 years with **Liberty Global**. His family wrote in an obituary published in the [The Washington Post](#) that Cole "led a productive, satisfying, ethical and enjoyable life. As he so often observed, 'Who could ask for more?'" A memorial service will be held in DC in the coming weeks.