

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Future Focused: Cox Chief Greatrex is Ready for Mobile, IoT to Take Flight

It has been a year since *Mark Greatrex* succeeded *Pat Esser* as President of **Cox Communications**, and things have been pretty busy. On Thursday, the Cox chief will give an update on Cox Mobile during a **CES** breakfast, with the operator expected to announce that it has launched the service in all of its markets.

We caught up with Greatrex last month, just as Cox was expected to complete its national rollout of mobile in a matter of weeks. “If we get through a successful national launch, then we’ll be able to turn the afterburners on,” he told **CFX**. “We look around at our cable peers and they’re setting quite a pace, quite a benchmark. That’s very interesting and a priority.”

Marketing has been low key for Cox Mobile thus far, but it is expected to ramp up this quarter. Given that Greatrex comes from the marketing side (he previously was Cox’s CMO and has held marketing roles at **AOL, Coca-Cola, Unilever** and **Eagle Family Foods**), we’re anxious to see what the campaign looks like. Perhaps there’s a hint in Greatrex’s description of the environment he’s trying to create at Cox. “Walking in the shoes of the consumer and going into their homes and understanding the role of your service in their lives—that’s just sort of innate to the way I roll and what I expect to my teams,” he said. “It’s not so much return on investment, it’s the return on our effort.”

The first Cox Mobile launches were in August in Hampton Roads, Virginia; Omaha, Nebraska; and Las Vegas, with steady additions through the end of 2022. Cox originally planned to

premiere its mobile service in October 2021 through a partnership with **Verizon**, but was forced to put it on hold after **T-Mobile** sued. Cox has stayed mum on who its MNO partner is, but with reporters and analysts invited to Thursday’s CES event, the secret may soon be out.

Mobile’s not the only priority in 2023, with Greatrex also ticking off extending the network to unserved and underserved homes as well as “stacking services on top of our connectivity.” “Whether that be managed cloud services, B2B services or commercial IOT, we’re seeing an incredible demand for, ‘OK, I’ve got the connectivity. Now, how do I digitize my business and help me run it more efficiently in the cloud,’” he said.

The B2B space has long been important to Cox, with its commercial service segment beginning in 1993 in Hampton Roads, Virginia. It hit \$100 million in annual revenue in 2000, exceeded \$2 billion in 2016 and has been climbing ever since. “We have invested in a couple of commercial fiber companies out of footprint because we think there’s a need there and a role we can play,” Greatrex said. In October of 2021, Cox acquired private fiber company **Segra**’s commercial enterprise and carrier business, tapping former Cox CTO *Kevin Hart* as the business’ CEO.

Greatrex recently attended a Cox SmartBiz [event](#) in Northern Virginia, and he seems to light up when he talks about the potential for advanced technologies and smart connectivity. Mention the words “digital twin,” and he gets giddy talking about the metaverse and the benefits of having a digital representation of something from the physical world. “It’s a way



## Who Deserves to Rank Among Cablefax’s Annual Top Power Players?

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of bringing the physical world to life and being able to visualize it and then see the impact of having a smart property,” he said. Cox is already in the space with **Cox ProSight**, an IoT-enabled business that aims to help hospitals with operational efficiency. It can help monitor and track items like wheelchairs and IV stands, which have a tendency to wander off, as well as staff locations and automated environmental monitoring.

“We’ve got a number of these around growth and one of them is connected environments, so applying commercial Internet of Things to help make properties smarter. That could be your smart home, a smart apartment property, a smart campus, a smart convention center,” Greatrex said. “When you start putting these Lego pieces together, soon enough you’ve got a smart community and even a smart city. Think about [the use cases for] certainly public safety, utilization of public investments and public spaces, energy efficiency and the list goes on. We’re working to distill some of the major business cases that will make sense for city governments and municipalities.”

As for his first year in the president role, Greatrex described it as incredibly fulfilling: “I feel like it’s a very special privilege to work for a company whose mission is to build a better future for the next generation. How amazing is that to be working for an incredible family that has a large business. We have a lot of resources; we do a lot of good in our communities. So, I think, for all of us at Cox Communications, we lean into our jobs, and we’re lean into the team because our work has a lot of purpose.”

#### FUBOTV SAYS GOODBYE TO AMC NETWORKS

Nine **AMC Networks** channels left **FuboTV** on Saturday after a carriage deal between the two expired with no renewal. “Our

mission has always been to offer a leading package of premium sports, news and entertainment programming while balancing value and keeping your costs as low as possible,” Fubo said on a support page for subscribers. “Unfortunately, as of December 31, 2022, AMC Networks have left FuboTV.” The vMVPD added that while it is open to striking a new deal with AMC Networks in the future, it currently has no plans to do so. “We are disappointed we could not reach an agreement with FuboTV, which is primarily focused on sports programming, to continue carrying **AMC, BBC America, WE tv, IFC, Sundance TV** and **BBC World News**,” AMC Networks said in a statement. It added that the dropped networks remain available through other providers as well as through streaming offering **AMC+**. FuboTV will not be offering any refunds or credits tied to the drop of the networks. Any cloud DVR recordings of AMC Networks programming will remain in subscribers’ accounts unless they choose to delete them.

#### SOHN NOM NOT GOING AWAY

President Biden plans to renominate a number of nominees that failed to earn confirmation in 2022, including *Gigi Sohn* for the fifth **FCC** seat. That’s according to a *WSJ report* that also indicates that Denver International Airport CEO *Phil Washington* will be renominated to lead the **Federal Aviation Administration** and former **IRS** acting head *Danny Werfel* to run the **IRS**. An estimated 85 of the 175 nominees that were not successfully confirmed in 2022 are expected to receive another chance.

#### FCC: BROADBAND AVAILABILITY, SPEEDS UP

The amount of households with download speeds of 100 Mbps or above has risen to 82.9 million, the **FCC** said in the 2022 Communications Marketplace Report. That’s a 25% increase from the



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approximately 66.4 million that met that standard in 2020. An estimated 64% of households are in census blocks that have at least two options for service that meet a 100/20 Mbps speed threshold while 4% are in those that have two options for service meeting a 940/500 speed threshold. But the divide between urban and rural is still significantly felt when it comes to optionality. Nearly 72% of households in urban areas have at least two providers offering 100/20, the same is true for less than 30% of those in census blocks in rural areas and fewer than 34% of households on Tribal lands. Residential connections to cable are now at 71.8 million, up from 67.1 million in the last report, and DOCSIS 3.1 is deployed to census blocks containing approximately 78% of U.S. households. The weighted mean advertised download speed for cable broadband subscribers that participated in the FCC's latest Measuring Broadband America report was approximately 178 Mbps as of Oct. 2020. The same figure for residential cable broadband connections in the Dec. 2021 FCC Form 477 data was approximately 325 Mbps.

### NATPE PURCHASED BY BRUNICO

Publishing and events company **Brunico Communications** has acquired the assets of **NATPE** three months after it filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. The purchase includes events like NATPE Global, NATPE Budapest and the Brandon Tartikoff Legacy Awards. Brunico, which is also the parent company of Realscreen, became the stalking-horse bidder for the NATPE assets in November after it offered \$150,000. The acquisition is expected to close by the end of the month.

### WHILE WE WERE DARK

ATSC 3.0-powered video provider **Evoca TV** [shuttered](#) on December 31 after being unable to raise the capital it needed to continue service into the new year. It is allowing subscribers to keep their Evoca Nextgen TV receivers if they wish to use them to watch over-the-air stations or streaming apps. At the time of its closing, Evoca was active in five states and focused on offering local and regional content. – NFL Sunday Ticket has a new [home](#), heading to **YouTube** and **YouTube TV** in 2023. The service will be available as an add-on for the vMVPD and as a standalone offering through YouTube Primetime channels. The deal marks the first time a carrier other than **DirectTV** has housed the offering since its creation in 1994. – **Standard General** and **Comcast** signed an agreement last week confirming that **TEGNA's** retransmission consent agreements with the operator would remain intact should Standard General successfully acquire the broadcaster. The announcement came less than two weeks after Standard General waived certain retransmission consent rights applicable to the TEGNA stations it would control post-closing of the deal in an effort to sway lawmakers seeking to block the acquisition. – Longtime **ABC** news correspondent *Barbara Walters* passed away Friday at the age of 93. She began her tenure with the broadcaster in 1976, staying with it until her retirement in May 2014. She was known for her appearances on ABC News, "The View" and a number of groundbreaking special reports and high-profile interviews. She also spent 12 years on **NBC's** "Today."

### CARRIAGE

**Altice USA** will launch **Alpha** in its Optimum Greek Package effective Jan. 26. The channels features live entertainment, Greek fiction, movies and more. The addition of Alpha means that the operator will cease a \$5 credit that was put in place in February 2022 following the removal of Greek channel **Mega Cosmos**.

### VIDEOAMP, WBD JOIN FORCES

**Warner Bros. Discovery** selected **VideoAmp** to measure cross-screen campaigns across the company's portfolio of sports, news, lifestyle and premium entertainment brands. WBD will utilize VideoAmp's measurement and data capabilities in order to better identify audiences for advertisers seeking to transact on linear, streaming and digital platforms through a unified currency. It'll also allow WBD to shift from traditional forms of measurement and present the value of their ad inventory more accurately.

### COMCAST ROLLS OUT 'FREE THIS WEEK'

**Comcast** is ditching Watchathon, its annual free preview week, and replacing it with a year-long program called "Free This Week." It will give Xfinity customers an array of free content each week from top streaming services and networks such as **HBO Max**, **REVOLT** and **Showtime**. The programming will be available on X1 and Flex devices, and a selection will also be available on **Xumo's** XClass TV and the Xfinity Stream app. 2022 marked the 10th year for Watchathon stunt, which gave customers a week to binge thousands of hours of free content.

### RATINGS

The College Football Playoff semifinals on **ESPN** reeled in 21.7 million viewers Saturday according to **Nielsen** Fast Nationals, becoming the most-viewed non-New Year's Day semifinals in the playoff's history and the third most-watched overall. Georgia's dramatic 42-41 win over Ohio State had 22.1 million viewers and peaked in the 9:45pm-10pm timeframe with 23.9 million viewers. That helped it become the most-watched semifinal contest since the CFP's first year and the fourth best overall. TCU's victory against Michigan checked in as the sixth most-viewed semifinal game of the CFP era with 21.4 million viewers, peaking at 26.4 million from 7:45pm-8pm.

### ESPN BRINGS BACK 'THIS IS SPORTSCENTER'

**ESPN's** beloved ad campaign "This is SportsCenter" made a return Friday after being absent since 2019. The [first spot](#), titled "Orange Slices," aired during Friday's Orange Bowl between Tennessee and Clemson. Featured in the commercial are U.S. Women's National Soccer Team players *Megan Rapinoe*, *Becky Sauerbrunn* and *Sophia Smith*, as well as "SportsCenter" anchor *Nicole Briscoe* and Syracuse University mascot "Otto the Orange." More ads will be released throughout the year with Track & Field Gold Medalist *Sydney McLaughlin* and other high-profile athletes.

### PEOPLE

**Starz** is promoting *Darren Nielson* to EVP, International Networks, filling in for the outgoing *Superna Kalle*. He'll manage the growth of Starz's international division's **Lionsgate+** as well as all aspects of programming, distribution, marketing and publicity in the U.K., Latin America, Brazil, Canada and Australia. Kalle will remain with the company for a transition period until March.