

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Truce: FAA Sets C-band Deadline, Satellite Operators Give Repack Update

The late protests from the aviation industry on the potential harms of C-band spectrum deployments for 5G has been a source of frustration for the likes of **Verizon** and **AT&T**, but the holiday season was a reminder of just how delicate the systems that keep airports and aircraft running are. An **FAA** system outage that struck overnight into Wednesday morning impacted a key safety system, leading to a nationwide ground stop. Transportation Secretary *Pete Buttigieg* has directed the agency to determine the root causes of the incident and recommend the next steps to prevent them in the future.

As that investigation gears up, there may be an end in sight to the battle between the wireless industry and aviation bodies over C-band spectrum for 5G. The **FAA** released a notice of proposed rulemaking this week that proposes a deadline of Feb. 1, 2024 for airplanes to replace or retrofit faulty altimeters that may have functions disrupted in areas where C-band spectrum has been deployed to support 5G networks.

Since 5G C-band deployments began, the FAA has received more than 420 reports of radio altimeter anomalies within known locations of spectrum deployments. Approximately 315 of those were determined not to be related to 5G C-band deployments, but causes related to the spectrum could not be ruled out for the rest. The remaining 100 or so anomaly reports included a number of erroneous system warnings, including those related to landing gear, Traffic Collision Avoid-

ance Systems and Terrain Awareness and Warning Systems.

Some radio altimeters have already demonstrated tolerance to the 5G C-band emissions without any modifications, and others may need to install filters between the altimeter and antenna to increase the altimeter's tolerance. "For others, the addition of a filter will not be sufficient to address interference susceptibility; therefore, the radio altimeter will need to be replaced with an upgraded radio altimeter," the FAA said in the NPRM. The agency estimates a total cost of compliance with the NPRM's February deadline, including labor, to be up to \$26.05 million.

Since the completion of the FCC's C-band auction, **Eutelsat**, **Intelsat**, **SES**, **Star One** and **Telesat** have been working in partnership with earth station operators and the FCC to repack their operations on an accelerated basis from the entirety of the band to the upper 200 MHz, leaving the lower 280 MHz for terrestrial flexible use as well as space for a 20 MHz guard band between those stretches. They had to clear 120 MHz of spectrum in 46 priority partial economic areas (PEAs) by Dec. 5, 2021, to meet the first deadline, and they must clear the lower 120 MHz in the remaining PEAs as well as an additional 180 MHz nationwide by Dec. 5 of this year to meet the second.

The satellite companies repacking their operations produce quarterly reports for both the Commission and the Relocation Payment Clearinghouse, and the 4Q22 round of submissions given to the FCC in December show good progress toward this year's deadline.

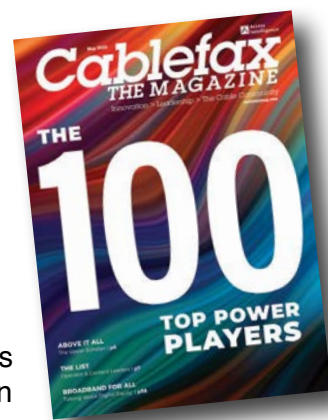
SES has completed approximately 68% of its Phase II satellite transitions, which include broadcast TV, cable network



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

The Cablefax 100 salutes the most influential executives whose leadership continues to take the industry to new heights. We will rank the top professionals in the media, cable & broadband industry and publish the list in the June edition of Cablefax: The Magazine.

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Nominate at www.Cablefax100.com | Questions: Kate Schaeffer at kschaeffer@accessintel.com

services and other services being received in the 3820-4000 MHz range. It has also installed nearly 100% of the antennas associated with its Phase II transition schedule. In its report, SES highlighted the partnerships it has maintained and fostered throughout the C-band relocation process with its customers in an effort to make the transition as smooth as possible.

NCTC, ACA Connects, NAB and the **National Religious Broadcasters** have all agreed to post information about SES's latest moves on their websites and in their newsletters. "ACA Connects conducts monthly webinars at which SES representatives present status and upcoming activities to ACA Connects members and address any questions and concerns they may have," the satellite company said. "Additionally, ACA Connects and SES have an ongoing dialog to address specific member questions and concerns outside of the regularly scheduled webinars." It also has plans to attend the ACA Connects Summit, set for Feb. 28-March 2 in Washington, DC.

Eutelsat has already completed the transition of a number of its Phase II earth station antennas, including one from **Altice USA**, seven tied to **Comcast**, four from **Frontier Communications** and one from **Google Fiber**. **Commscope** is the project management lead for Eutelsat's transition efforts. The satellite company's estimated transition costs are approximately \$8.2 million, but the submission of claims and supporting documentation to the Relocation Payment Clearinghouse for those costs is still ongoing.

NEW ADDITIONS TO HOUSE COMMERCE

A day after Rep *Cathy McMorris Rodgers* (R-WA) officially took over as chair of **House Commerce**, we're getting word of the new GOP members joining the committee that is most often involved in issues of broadband/cable and technology. Newbies include *Jay Oberholte* (R-CA), a computer engineer and video game developer with a degree in artificial intelligence who voted against California's net neutrality as a member of the state legislature. Also joining the committee is *Diana Harshbarger* (R-TN), a member of the House Rural Broadband Caucus who supported robust funding for the **USDA's** ReConnect Program and the Rural Access Loan program, and *Russ Fulcher* (R-ID), who has a background in the tech industry and worked for **Micron Technology** for 15 years. The other new GOP members are: *Randy Weber* (R-TX), *Rick Allen* (R-GA), *Troy Balderson* (R-OH), *August Pfluger* (R-TX), *Mariannette Miller-Meeks* (R-IA) and *Kat Cammack* (R-FL). As for new chair Rodgers, she issued a statement Wednesday responding to President *Biden's* [WSJ opinion](#) that called for Republicans and Democrats to come together to pass legislation to hold Big Tech accountable, particularly when it comes to the data these companies collect. "President Biden is correct to acknowledge the risks posed by Big Tech for Americans. Rather than trying to address these harms unilaterally through executive action and contorting authority, the administration needs to work with Con-

The WHO and the WHY

CFX's spotlight on recent new hires & promotions



JASON

Armstrong

CFO

COMCAST CORPORATION

3 THINGS TO KNOW

- Upon celebrating nine years with Comcast, Jason was upped to CFO, replacing Mike Cavanagh who became President of the company in Oct. Jason will manage all financial functions of Comcast and oversee its capital formation and allocation, credit-related matters and investment management activities. He was previously Deputy CFO and Treasurer.
- He came to Comcast in Jan. 2014 and also spent time in the investor relations side of the business as SVP, Investor Relations and Finance. He's dabbled in roles across the pond at Sky, having served as its CFO.
- He's not one to bounce around. Jason was with Goldman Sachs for 13 years, most recently being Managing Director and Deputy Business Unit Leader for the firm's technology, media and telecommunications research group. He originally began his career with the consulting firm Ernst & Young as an Associate.

gress to enact comprehensive privacy protections through one national privacy standard that protects all Americans, especially our kids," Rodgers said in calling for a national privacy standard to be signed into law. She also said the Committee would work to reform Section 230.

PARKER TAKES OVER AS DISNEY CHAIR

Disney's board has elected **Nike** Executive Chairman *Mark Parker* as its next chairman. Parker, a board director since 2016, will succeed *Susan Arnold* who cannot stand for re-election pursuant to the company's 15-year term limit. As a result, the size of the board will be reduced to 11 members. Parker will chair a newly-created Succession Planning Committee that will be charged with the review of internal and external candidates. The board is also nominating the following incumbent directors for re-election at Disney's annual meeting: *Mary Barra*, *Safra Catz*, *Amy Chang*, *Francis deSouza*, *Carolyn Everson*, *Michael Froman*, *Bob Iger*, *Maria Elena Lagomasino*, *Calvin McDonald*, *Mark Parker* and *Derica Rice*. It also stated its opposition to proposals from investor **Triam Group**, including the nomination of *Nelson Peltz* for a seat on the board and changes to the company's bylaws.

STEPHANIE MCMAHON LEAVES WWE RING

WWE co-CEO *Stephanie McMahon* is resigning less than one week after *Vince McMahon*, her father, returned to the com-

pany. Stephanie had just begun a leave of absence when WWE began an investigation into Vince over allegations of sexual misconduct, and she returned to the company and took on the role of co-CEO in July. Now, she's reasserting her desire to take some distance from the wrestling venture. "I look forward to cheering on WWE from the other side of the business, where I started when I was a little kid, as a pure fan," McMahon said in a tweet. "I will always remain dedicated to WWE." WWE's board unanimously elected Vince as Executive Chairman, and *Nick Khan* will serve as its sole CEO moving forward. WWE shares skyrocketed early Wednesday amid speculation that it was being acquired by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, but normalized after those rumors were struck down.

AT THE COMMISSION

The **FCC** Enforcement Bureau has sent cease-and-desist letters to voice service providers **Vultik** and **SIPphony** warning them to end their apparent support of illegal robocall traffic. Thus far, the bureau has sent warning letters to more than 20 providers with nearly all demonstrating that the traffic was cut off or notifying the Commission that they would be ending all operations. – The Commission voted Monday to adopt a plan from Chair *Jessica Rosenworcel* to establish a Space Bureau and a standalone Office of International Affairs. The existing International Bureau will be eliminated with that team being incorporated into the new bureau and office. As for next steps, the FCC needs to seek Congressional approval for the reorganization and make formal notice of the changes in the Federal Register.

RETRANS ROLL CALL

INSP affiliate **Imagicomm Communications** and **Verizon** struck a retransmission agreement for Imagicomm Syracuse (WSYT – FOX68) and its MyNet partner My43 to be on Fios. Imagicomm acquired WSYT from **Cox Media Group** in August, which came with 11 other stations.

STREAMERS DOMINATE GLOBES, SAG AWARD NOMS

House Targaryen doesn't just reign over Westeros anymore. **HBO's** "House of the Dragon" took home the **Golden Globe** for Best Drama Series on Tuesday night during the Hollywood Foreign Press Association's 80th awards ceremony. **HBO** and **HBO Max** led the way with four total awards as *Zendaya* took Best Actress in a TV Series for her role in "Euphoria." "The White Lotus" supplemented the other two with Best TV Limited Series, Anthology Series or TV Motion Picture and Best Supporting Actress–TV Limited Series/Motion Picture (*Jennifer Coolidge*). **Netflix** followed with three wins, as did **ABC** thanks to "Abbott Elementary" taking home a trio of awards. **Apple TV+**, **FX**, **Hulu** and **Paramount** each won one award. – The nominations for the **29th Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards** were revealed Wednesday, with streaming leading the charge. Netflix had 12 nominations, followed by **HBO Max** with 9 nominations. **Apple TV+**, **FX**, **Hulu** and **Prime Video** each had four, followed by **AMC Networks** (3) and **ABC** (2). With four nominations, Netflix's "Ozark" had the most for any series. HBO's "Barry," AMC's "Better Call Saul" and Hulu's "Only Murders in the Building" all received three noms. The

ceremony will take place Feb. 26 at 8pm on Netflix's YouTube channel. Speaking of, starting in 2024 the SAG Awards will stream live on Netflix following a multi-year partnership between the streamer and SAG-AFTRA.

TCA NOTEBOOK

The **Television Critics Association's** Winter Tour has been in full swing all week, with Wednesday marking Day 1 of 4 **Disney/ABC** presentations. *Craig Erwich*, president, ABC Entertainment, Hulu & Disney Branded Television Streaming Originals, got things started by announcing a third season for "Abbott Elementary." The **Warner Bros. Television** series that airs on ABC had snagged the Golden Globe for Best Comedy the night before. Tuesday offered a sneak of **MGM+**, which launches Jan. 15 as a rebrand of **EPIX**. "MGM+ will deliver on its iconic and beloved studio legacy, with cinematic, sophisticated, and transportive storytelling that audiences love," *Michael Wright*, head of MGM+ said in a statement. The rebrand debuts the same day as the Season 3 of "Godfather of Harlem." The net used TCA to spotlight upcoming series, including "Murf the Surf," based on the life of jewel thief *Jack Roland Murphy*, and six-ep limited series "A Spy Among Friends" (March 12). AMC also took the stage to promote new series "Lucky Man" with *Bob Odenkirk* and "The Walking Dead: Dead City." According to reporters at TCA, President of Entertainment and AMC Studios *Dan McDermott* addressed the recent cost cutting, including content cuts, at AMC Networks. "As human behavior continues to evolve, our industry is experiencing an unrivaled period of reflection and correction. Factors including rising inflation, challenging ad market, too many shows, and an over-reliance on streaming metrics that don't necessarily deliver profitability, have caused most content companies, including ourselves, to take stock and recalibrate their forward path," he said according to [Deadline](#).

NFL PLAYOFFS KICK OFF SATURDAY

The 2022 regular season of the **NFL** came to a close this past weekend, which means the postseason is here. **Fox** will carry the upcoming NFC Wild Card games between the 49ers and Seahawks at 4:30pm Saturday and the Giants and Vikings at 4:30pm on Sunday. The network will broadcast the two NFC Divisional Round games next weekend, the NFC Championship and the 2023 Super Bowl on Feb. 12. Additionally, all playoff games will be broadcast in 4K—the first time for one network to do so. Those 4K broadcasts will be available with Fox's distributors, including **DirectTV**, **FuboTV**, **YouTube TV** and **DISH**.

PEOPLE

NBC Chairman *Mark Lazarus* announced *Will Gonzalez* will lead the company's TV & Streaming organization. The new division is a merger of NBC's research and decision sciences teams, which will help the company streamline its resources and understand audiences across platforms. Gonzalez—who was made EVP/Chief Data Officer of **Peacock** in Aug. 2021—will continue to lead his current Decision Sciences and Consumer Insights team for the DTC service. – The TV advertising technology company **Madhive** named former **Hulu** and **Roku** executive *Kristin Wnuk* as SVP of Sales.

Think about that for a minute...

Ghosts

Commentary by Steve Effros

We've just experienced the traditional end-of-year, beginning-of-year rituals. First watching "A Christmas Carol," and marveling once again at how the ghosts of past, present and future let Scrooge know what's coming. Then suffering through all the thousands of reporters telling us following the Consumer Electronics Show what this year will bring in new, neat technology. Both, in the main, are fiction.

I couldn't help but notice a few things, however, about the reporting at this year's CES. First, there were very few "blockbuster" announcements or demonstrations. One that seemed to catch the attention of a lot of folks was the new LG OLED television, a huge 97 inch model, that was "wireless." Now there are a few things to say about that. First of all, I should disclose that I am the very happy owner of an LG OLED television. I do think OLED is the best screen technology and that view seems to be spreading. LG was the industry leader for a long time, now OLED models are being offered by a host of other manufacturers.

The issue I have with this latest offering, however, is twofold; first of all, the "wireless" aspect of this device is somewhat meaningless. Most of us don't mount a television on a blank wall, or if we do there still has to be a power cord getting to it somehow and all the other wires could be included in however that's done. But more important, it's the size.

Sure, I know, there seems to be this mythological view that bigger is always better. Not true. We learned that a long time ago in the television business when the original "theater size" large screen consoles (prior to flat screens) started arriving. A whole lot of them got returned. There were two reasons; first, the resolution wasn't good enough on those old big screens. That's been solved by the new flat screens and certainly by the OLED technology.

But the other problem was that most homes are simply not big enough to put a massive screen in the room and hope that it won't overpower the viewer. How does it do that? By being

so big that you can't really take in the whole picture simply looking at the screen. You have to look up, down, left, right to see all of what's going on. The result: headaches, and in many cases, nausea. Hence, folks returned the biggest sets. That's why a 55 or 60 inch set is today's favorite. Now the manufacturers need a reason for you to buy a new set. The answer seems to be size. 70, 80 and 90 inch screens are the big new focus. Beware.

Let's remember that just a few years ago the "big thing" coming was 8K. So much more resolution, needed for those big new sets! Well, relatively few manufacturers even bothered to show any new 8K models this year. So much for that marketing ploy.

The other news that seemed to percolate at the show was not really about technology. It was all the rumors and announcements about what the "streaming" services were going to do in 2023. There's general agreement that the multiplicity of Apps has to be rationalized. Viewers are getting too confused and don't like having to switch from one app to another. Will WBD (Warner Brothers /Discovery), really marry a whole lot of its product, like HBO and the Discovery Channel into a big new bundle simply called "Max"? Will Disney/ESPN, and maybe even Hulu once they finish buying out Comcast's one-third ownership share also merge into a big video package? Will advertising become the norm? Will broadcast channels be


added to these bundles? I see the Ghost of cable past! But now maybe we'll call it an Apparition! Sorry, had to do that!



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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