

invest \$20 billion over the next five years in network resiliency. “2022 was a rebalancing back to the fundamentals of our business... and as we head into 2023, we look at the industry and what you’ll continue to see are improvements to our network that are tangibly visible to our consumers and business customers,” Staffieri said. “That’s important to us.”

DISNEY, PELTZ STILL FIGHTING OVER BOARD SEAT

Disney’s board continues to fight back attacks from the **Trian Group**, an activist investment firm, and its Founding Partner **Nelson Peltz** as he tries to gain a seat in the boardroom. Responding to materials issued by the Trian Group calling for Peltz to replace **Mastercard** Vice Chair/President, Strategic Growth **Michael Froman**, the board said Thursday that the election of either Peltz or his son (should Peltz be unable to serve) would threaten the strategic management of Disney during a period of important change for the media landscape. “Mr. Froman’s decades of experience in business and international affairs are critical to helping Disney assess the risks and opportunities in an increasingly complex global marketplace, given its strategic focus on global growth of its customer base and innovation in changing markets,” Disney’s board said in a statement. “He works closely with his fellow members of the Disney Board to guide the company, providing expert advice on complex international economic, policy and regulatory affairs to assist with Disney’s international strategy and operations, among other matters.” The board has also mailed a letter to shareholders warning them to disregard materials, including a blue proxy card from the Trian Group, and to wait to receive the white proxy card that contains Disney’s nominees for the board.

SATELLITE OPERATORS WANT FCC ATTENTION

Leaders in satellite broadband are applauding the **FCC** over its decision to establish a standalone Space Bureau, but they continue to be worried about regulatory uncertainty and their ability to access increasingly scarce swaths of spectrum. During a House Communications subcommittee hearing, representatives from **Echostar**, **Amazon’s Project Kuiper**, the **Satellite Industry Association** and more said they want the Commission to adopt rules that would provide more spectrum for non-geostationary satellite systems and to clarify satellite-specific rules for spectrum sharing. Some emerging companies like **Lynk Global** that plan to launch U.S. broadband service within the next few years said there is also a learning curve at the Commission right now when it comes to space, so starting with small asks has proven to be the most successful approach. “The FCC licensed our payload in a record amount of time, and that was the Office of Engineering and Technology with an experimental license. We’ve also taken the crawl-walk-run approach with the FCC where we’ve launched five experimental payloads,” Co-Founder/COO **Margó Deckard** said. “So they got to know us as a company before we put in our commercial application.” The witnesses are also trying to position themselves not as invaders of the connectivity business, but as companies offering solutions that could have a meaningful role to play in closing the digital divide as traditional broadband providers continue building fiber into new areas and bolstering their fixed networks. “Even if you’re using funding for broadband for fiber, it’s going to take years for that fiber to be deployed,” EchoStar SVP, Regulatory Affairs

Mark Your Calendars!

Cablefax 2023 Award Submission Deadlines

The FAXIES Awards

Deadline: March 24
Final Deadline: March 31

Top Ops Nominations

Deadline: April 21

The Diversity List Nominations

Deadline: May 12
Final Deadline: May 19

Most Powerful Women Nominations

Deadline: August 11
Final Deadline: August 18

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Jennifer Manner said. “So satellite can also serve as an interim solution while that’s being set up so that at least people have broadband now and they can use something different then.”

BILL WOULD STREAMLINE RECONNECT PROGRAM

A bipartisan group of senators reintroduced legislation earlier this week that would streamline and strengthen **USDA’s** Rural Development broadband programs and ensure funding is being targeted to the rural areas that need it most. The Rural Internet Improvement Act would merge the ReConnect program with USDA’s traditional broadband loan and grant program and limit funding to areas where at least 90% of households lack access to broadband service. It would also aim to improve the Reconnect program’s challenge process and require USDA to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the **FCC** and **NTIA** to facilitate outreach to rural residents and businesses pertaining to federal programs that promote broadband access and affordability.

COX GOING DEEPER INTO THE CLOUD

Cox Communications continues to invest in the cutting edge, announcing the acquisition of professional and managed cloud services company **Logicworks** Thursday. It will be combined with **Rapidscale**, **Cox Business’s** existing managed IT services entity, in hopes that they’ll develop top-of-the-line solutions for U.S.-based companies.

NAB TELLS FCC TO HOLD ON OWNERSHIP REVIEW

NAB is objecting to the **FCC’s** decision to move ahead with its 2022 review of media ownership rules, saying the agency should wait until it releases the 2018 Quadrennial Review. The agency is required every four years to examine its media ownership rules, which include a provision generally prohibiting two Top 4 broadcast stations in a local market from combining. The 2018 review was on hold pending legal proceedings, however those issues were largely resolved in 2021 when the **U.S. Supreme Court** upheld the FCC’s relaxation of some rules, including the newspaper/broadcast cross-ownership rule. FCC action on the 2018 review seems unlikely with the Commission split 2-2 by party. “Apart from violating a congressional deadline, an incomplete but still pending 2018 review also makes it challenging, if not impossible, for stakeholders to submit useful and relevant comments to inform a distinct 2022 review,” **NAB** said in its request filed Thursday.

PIRACY A GROWING ISSUE

A new study released by **Synamedia** found the value of entertainment piracy is three times larger than sports. The study was conducted by Ampere Analysis and surveyed seven markets (Brazil, Italy, India, Germany, Thailand, U.K. and U.S.). Within entertainment, comedy is the most pirated genre, followed by action/adventure, crime and thriller, respectively. The study claims if piracy were stopped for a single major movie release, it could potentially add revenues between \$130-\$280 million in the U.S. alone. If movie and TV pirates were converted to legal services, an additional \$21.8 billion worth of revenue would be created, with sports being able to produce \$9.8 billion in potential revenue. Soccer is the top sport pirated, with the FIFA World Cup, UEFA Champions League and English Premier League leading the way.

The only non-soccer league in the top 10 is the **NBA**.

APPLE KICKS OFF MLS SEASON PASS

Apple is gearing up for its first season as the exclusive home for **MLS**, and it began Wednesday as MLS Season Pass became available for fans to sign up for. From now until the 2023 regular season, fans can get free on-demand content from the league and its clubs. Once the season begins Feb. 25, it’ll have every regular-season match available live—including the playoffs and Leagues Cup—without blackouts for \$14.99/month. Fans can watch via the **Apple TV** app or online at tv.apple.com.

SLING TV LAUNCHES NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

Sling TV is flaunting its flexibility and friendly pricing in its new national ad campaign “The Live TV You Love.” The spot shows a family eating dinner as the parents commend their daughter for choosing a less “bloated bundle” for her TV viewing. Sling’s plans start at \$40/month for its Blue or Orange plans, with a \$55/month Orange & Blue offering as well. Currently, all three plans are half off for the first month.

CARRIAGE

Three FAST channels are being added to **Local Now** thanks to a deal between **Allen Media Group** and **Condé Nast Entertainment**. Those are the culinary channel **Bon Appétit**, **Architectural Digest** and **GQ**, which features men’s fashion and culture content. Local Now is available on devices such as **Roku**, **Apple TV**, **Amazon Fire TV**, **Xfinity**, **Samsung** and **Android TV**.

FIBER FRENZY

GloFiber is partnering with the Homeowner’s Association of Ford’s Colony in Williamsburg, Virginia, to bring its broadband services to more than 2,700 homes in the community. Construction is slated to begin in 2Q23 and is expected to complete in early 2024. Residents will receive communication from the company approximately 30 days before construction activity.

GCI INTRODUCES INDIGENOUS RESOURCE GROUP

GCI is launching an Indigenous Business Resource Group, which will focus on supporting Indigenous people and their communities. So far, the group has created an Indigenous names guide for conference rooms in the company’s corporate campus, promoted Indigenous Peoples’ Month, implemented company-wide Indigenous training and is planning to honor civil rights activist *Elizabeth Peratrovich* in conjunction with the Alaska Native Heritage Center.

PROGRAMMING

Friday is *Michael Jordan* Day for **ESPN** and **ACC Network**. ESPN will have special content and highlights across multiple shows, while ACCN will broadcast four games from Jordan’s college days at UNC and have an array of guest interviews during “ACC PM” at 4pm and “Bald Men on Campus” at 9pm. – The second volume of the animated series “Star Wars: Visions” will debut on **Disney+** on May 4, a fitting premiere to celebrate Star Wars Day. – A new animated preschool series is coming to **Nickelodeon**. “Bossy Bear” will premiere March 6 at 11am. – Six-part crime series “Black Snow” will begin with a two-episode debut Feb. 23 on **Sundance Now** and **AMC+**. New eps from that point will roll out weekly on Thursdays.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

Inexperience Meets Adversity in 'The Ark'

Leaders are the ones to look for in the midst of catastrophe, but on the ship of **Syfy's** "The Ark," it's the lower-ranking members who are called to step to the plate. The new series (also available on **Peacock**) debuted Wednesday, taking place 100 years in the future as hundreds of engineers, scientists and other personnel search for other planets to inhabit. They travel on a ship dubbed "Ark One," but trouble comes quickly after a major accident killed all high-level officers, ultimately leaving over 100 crew members on board to figure out how they can survive and complete their original mission: save Earth. "The number one thing that drove me forward was this idea of what if you had this calamity happen in space, but the victims of the calamity were all the people that you would rely on to run the ship," Executive Producer *Dean Devlin* told **CFX**. "We wanted to do a show that was a throwback to the kind of science fiction shows that I grew up watching, but to give it a modern spin." After writing the original script for the plot, Devlin sent it to fellow EP *Jonathan Glassner*, who built upon that wish for a modern-focused sci-fi series by injecting a power struggle and love troubles into the plot. While *The Ark* seems to rush past some points where explanation seems needed, it entices viewers by showcasing the ability of its characters to rise above adversity. "This is an optimistic show. I know the trend lately is super dark and super edgy, but we wanted to do a show that's really about the triumph of the human spirit," Devlin said. "I think in the moments where we see people becoming the best versions of themselves, that's the hope we have as a society." – *Noah Ziegler*

REVIEWS

"Wolf Pack," Season 1, streaming, **Paramount+**. Oh, to be a fly on the wall at **Paramount+** and **MTV Entertainment Studios** when story and marketing discussions were occurring. For months, most of what viewers of a certain knew or saw about "Wolf Pack" was that the new series marks the return of Buffy the..., er *Sarah Michelle Gellar*. True, you let audiences warm up before delivering the main course, but for much of ep. 1 your reviewer was wondering, 'Where's Sarah Michelle?' Indeed, she doesn't show until more than 45 minutes into the pilot. Mind you, the opening 7-8 minutes are compelling. Somewhat privileged teens are aboard a school bus, in mountainous terrain. A fire (fabricated with only so-so production values) nears and traffic stops. Eventually, the teens flee the fire, yet flames become somewhat incidental. More menacing are animals—large rams, no they're horned mountain goats, who knew?—creating mayhem. From there, several story lines emerge, including courageous teens absorbing wolf bites, which turn them into...well, the series' title should be enough of a hint. Finally, Sarah Michelle appears, as an arson inspector. Critics received just 2 eps. Hardly enough to form an informed opinion about *Wolf Pack*. We'll return for ep 3, but even Ms. Gellar might not be enough to overcome uneven special effects and predictable characters and plots. – *Seth Arenstein*

BASIC CABLE		
P2+ PRIME RANKINGS*		
(01/23/23-01/29/23)		
MON-SUN	MC	MC
	US	US AA
	AA%	(000)
FNC	0.663	2069
MSNBC	0.345	1079
HGTV	0.293	914
ESPN	0.267	833
HALL	0.266	832
INSP	0.229	715
HIST	0.227	707
USA	0.213	666
TBSC	0.199	622
FOOD	0.192	598
TNT	0.184	575
CNN	0.182	569
ID	0.175	548
DISC	0.170	531
TLC	0.164	513
TVLAND	0.162	507
A&E	0.155	484
HMM	0.131	408
LIFE	0.129	402
REELZ	0.126	395
GSN	0.120	376
BRAVO	0.114	354
AMC	0.112	349
WETV	0.111	346
OXY	0.096	300
BET	0.094	293
COM	0.093	289
NATGEO	0.089	277
APL	0.088	273
FX	0.087	271
FRFM	0.085	267
FXX	0.085	265
ESPN2	0.083	258
PRMNT	0.082	258
TRAVEL	0.076	238

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

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