

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Deeper Dive: Why Now is the Time for Breezeline Mobile

**Breezeline** is the newest cable operator to enter the mobile scene, and President *Frank van der Post* told **CFX** the decision has been a long time coming.

“For more than a year, we’ve been carefully examining a Breezeline mobile proposition that would provide a compelling value for customers while allowing us to deploy in a fiscally responsible way,” he said in an interview. When **NCTC** announced its MVNO agreement with **Reach Mobile** and **AT&T** last year, management said it quickly became clear that it was the most advantageous way for the operator to begin offering its customers access to a powerful, national mobile network.

Breezeline Mobile is going to make its debut in Connecticut in early April, and leadership is going to use that initial launch as a learning experience. Van der Post expects to announce additional launches across the other 12 states in Breezeline’s footprint shortly after, and customers will be notified of the availability of mobile services once it comes to their area.

The tasks that led up to the mobile announcement and launch were largely entrusted to VP, Products & Programming *Heather McCallion*. She has built the team that will oversee the launch and help drive growth in the new business line. Van der Post also said Breezeline’s front line employees have been trained extensively on how to support the launch and incorporate the new product into their interactions with customers.

“In addition, we have worked with Reach to build a customized, scalable, end-to-end digital solution to support our online sales channels, as well as billing, service provisioning and more,” he said.

Breezeline Mobile will be available exclusively to Breezeline internet customers at launch, and that seems to be the game plan for the foreseeable future. That’s because van der Post and his team see the benefits that come with the convergence of wired and wireless, and he believes that is the best path forward for Breezeline customers.

“Our focus for now is on continuing to build our core broadband business while delivering enhanced value to our broadband customers via a converged bundle of internet and mobile,” van der Post said. “There will be savings for Breezeline customers when they bundle, plus the convenience of having a one-stop shop for all of their connectivity needs, at home or on the go.”

Breezeline hasn’t been shy about investing in its broadband network, pouring tens of millions into it to improve performance and reliability. On top of that, it has launched FTTH in many of its markets. But in a stiff competitive landscape, the hope is that mobile will be yet another differentiator that makes it the standout choice to customers looking for great savings and service.

“We believe that the mobile offering with its flexible plans and bundled savings will provide great retentive benefits by enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty, in addition to attracting new Breezeline customers,” he said.

# THE FAXIES

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## DISTAD TO LEAD SPORTS STREAMER

One of the many questions about **ESPN**, **Fox** and **Warner Bros. Discovery's** sports streaming jv has been answered. *Pete Distad*, a former **Apple TV** and **Hulu** executive, was named the streamer's CEO. Distad's name was prominently in the rumor mill since the three companies announced the new platform, but now he'll officially oversee all aspects of the jv including overall strategy, distribution, marketing, sales and more. He'll report to the jv's board, which will include representatives from each of the three companies. Distad will be based in L.A., where the jv's offices will soon be set up along with the management team he'll create. Still no word on what the streamer will be named. Distad spent 10 years at **Apple**, originally joining to lead product marketing for the Apple TV hardware product. He did quite a few other notable things too such as leading the launch of Apple TV in 2015 and later guiding teams to launch and scale the Apple TV app, **Apple TV+** and **MLS Season Pass**. Before Apple, Distad was a member of the original Hulu launch team when he served as its SVP, Marketing and Distribution from 2007-13. He also spent time in various management consulting and technology roles at McKinsey & Company, Calence and Andersen Consulting (now Accenture).

## ASSOCIATIONS SPAR OVER HOW TO MOVE FORWARD WITH POLES

The **FCC** has taken some steps to ease the pains that come with applications exceeding 3,000 poles in preparation of grant-subsidized deployments, but groups are split on whether it needs to take further action. **NCTA** noted in reply comments submitted this week that it appreciates the Commission's recent adoption of an expedited RBAT complaint process, but fixed timelines are needed to overcome utilities' superior leverage in negotiations and ensure deployments move forward in a timely manner. **NCTA** warned that with the looming broadband grant construction milestones from state and federal programs, the complaint process could easily and quickly become overwhelmed if there are no set timelines, and if attachers must file complaints to seek relief every time a utility imposes unreasonable delays. The situation could be particularly complicated for applications that today are only subject to good faith standards. "Moreover, where the issue is timely pole access, it makes no sense to require attachers to wait out the complaint process only to have the Commission agree the utility is taking too long without any repercussion to the offending utility. Essentially, it would reward the utility's inaction while doing nothing to accelerate deployment," **NCTA** said. Meanwhile, **USTelecom** said it was more than pleased with the Commission's rules as they exist today. It argued that the FCC should continue to require negotiated make-ready timelines for

requests from a single attacher that, within a 30-day period, exceed the lesser of 3,000 poles to 5% of the utility's poles in a state. **USTelecom** believes this forces the relevant companies to come together and cooperate to determine the best way to segment and prioritize work given the prospective attacher's plans and deployment readiness, permitting issues and pole owner and attacher workforce restraints, among other things. "Replacing negotiated timelines with a one-size-fits-all deadline would ignore the realities of broadband deployment and sacrifice the flexibility needed to best address each deployment project alongside the many others pending at the same time," **USTelecom** said.

## MAX MADNESS

Discounts feel as good as buzzer beaters in March. **Max** is getting ready for the March Madness hysteria with a 40% off deal across all yearly plans when customers prepay for one year. That'll give fans access to all 2024 NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament coverage through **TBS**, **TNT** and **truTV**, which is the first time **Max** is streaming the tournament. The offer is available to new, existing and returning customers on **Max.com**, new and returning customers from the **Apple** app store, **Google Play Store** and **Roku** and new customers on **Amazon Fire**. It'll be available through April 9. Additionally, **Max** will have two shows highlighting March Madness games. "Max Bracket Breakdown" will make its debut Thursday in a one-hour show previewing the day's tournament action, and "Max Daily Replay" will premiere a day later as it goes over top moments of the day from on and off the court.

## FAMILIAR FACES SHOW OUT FOR TCM'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY

Some familiar industry faces will help **Turner Classic Movies** celebrate its 30th anniversary on April 14. To commemorate the milestone, **TCM** staffers from its launch days are helping host every Thursday night in April. The stunt's called, "The Beginning of a Beautiful Friendship: 30 Years of TCM." The lineup of 15 guest programmers includes former president *Brad Siegel* who chose "Annie Hall" as his film; ex-GM *Tom Karsch* ("Diner"), former marketing head *Katherine Evans Porges* ("The Thin Man"), first head of publicity *Jim Weiss* ("The In-Laws") and **Warner Bros. Discovery's** *Laura Galletta*, who was **TCM's** VP of Strategic Partnerships ("Woman of the Year"). Along with reflecting on their film selections, the industry vets discuss the network's origins and their experiences working for **TCM**. The net also has planned a 24-hour marathon of films with historical introductions from **TCM's** first host, the late *Robert Osborne*, on April 14.

**SLING TV'S AUTO RECORD**

Miss the game? No worries, **Sling TV** is introducing a new feature that'll let users automatically record **NCAA** football, men's and women's basketball, **NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL, Premier League, WNBA, Bundesliga** and **Liga Santander** games. Users must subscribe to **DVR Plus** for \$5/month to access "Auto Record" before needing to opt into the offering. Recorded games will vary based on the user's subscription package and won't count toward the 200 hours of DVR space that **DVR Plus** provides. Games will be saved for three days after their live broadcasts. Additionally, Sling is making improvements to its **Sports Scores** feature and its **Sports Side View** offering that lets viewers watch additional programming in a small screen overlay.

**ONE DAY U NOW CURIOSITY U**

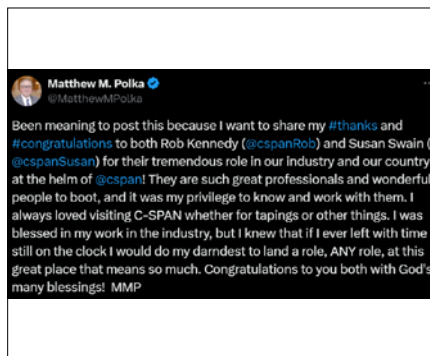
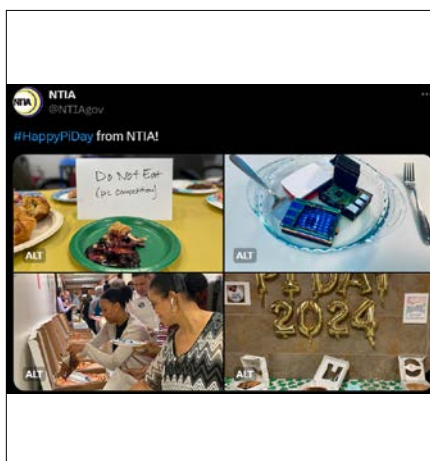
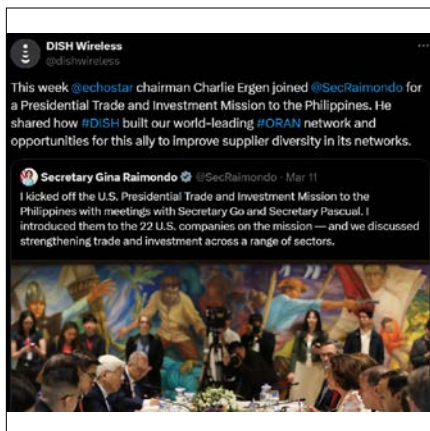
**Curiosity's** educational streaming service is undergoing a refresh as it passes 100,000 subscribers. One Day University is now **Curiosity University**. No word on whether **Curiosity U** will be in this year's **March Madness**, but it'll still have hundreds of lectures and informational talks from experts. **Curiosity** is adding more content in the form of courses, short- and long-form videos, podcasts, a weekly newsletter and live events. It's also expanding distribution with several partners including **Comcast, Xumo, Cox** and **Roku**.

**NBCU GETTING SET...**

The weather is getting warmer, which means the **Summer Olympics** are right around the corner. **NBCUniversal** is rolling out the "Rings Across America" initiative once again. A 20-foot-long interactive exhibit of the Olympic rings will be displayed at various spots across the country during high-profile sporting events (that just so happen to be available to watch on **NBCU** platforms). Fans will be able to take pictures with the exhibit, which is wrapped with tune-in information at the base. It'll start this weekend with **The PLAYERS Championship** and remain in Florida until Sunday. Then the rings will be present at "Premier League Fan Fest" in Nashville on April 6-7, the **Kentucky Derby** in Louisville on May 4 at the **Indianapolis 500** on May 26

**CABLEFAX DASHBOARD**

**Social Media Hits**



**Research**

(Source: Hub's Annual "Evolution of Video Branding" Study)

- > As many as half of consumers are not confident they could explain to someone else what makes each streamer unique.
- > Almost 40% of viewers say they've signed up for a new subscription just to watch one piece of content—roughly the same proportion as in 2023 and 2022.
- > Peacock was the only platform with a statistically significant increase in the number who signed up to watch a specific show. The survey was fielded after the NFL playoffs, where many signed up to watch the exclusive Chiefs/Dolphins game.

**Up Ahead**

**APRIL 3-4:** [Mid-America Cable Show](#); Dallas

**APRIL 10:** [T. Howard Foundation Diversity Awards Dinner](#); NYC

**APRIL 10-11:** [Pennsylvania Broadband Summit](#); Lancaster, PA

**APRIL 13-17:** [NAB Show](#); Las Vegas

**Quotable**

"Smaller markets in rural areas, the way that we define it is everything outside of the top 100 markets. So roughly 140 million people, 50 million households, 40% of the entire U.S. population. We started this whole journey back in 2021 at roughly a 13% share of the household number. At the end of 2023, we announced that we're now at 17.5% share... and when you look at the overall switching and our win share... the question now becomes what can we do beyond that? And now that we have this flywheel moved in and we have velocity in smaller markets of rural areas, there's really no reason why we can't achieve our fair share at some point in the future." – **T-Mobile President, Consumer Group Jon Freier at Deutsche Bank's 32nd Annual Media, Internet & Telecom Conference speaking on the company's efforts in rural markets**