

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Broadcast News: FCC Opens Comments on ATSC 3.0 Petition

While much of the broadcast world was gathered Monday in Vegas for the annual **NAB Show**, some big news for the industry was actually made in Washington. The **FCC** Media Bureau released **NAB's** petition for a rulemaking to establish a clear timeline for the complete transition to ATSC 3.0/NextGen TV. Comments are due May 7, with reply comments due June 6.

FCC Chairman *Brendan Carr* is not attending NAB Show. His fellow Republican Commissioner *Nathan Simington* was slated to keynote an ATSC 3.0 session on Tuesday, though he was missing from the online schedule Monday. Simington has been [supportive](#) of setting a date certain for the transition, saying the price of ATSC 3.0 receivers isn't going to go down until there's universal adoption.

NAB filed its [petition](#) in February, recommending stations in the top 55 markets (representing approximately 70% of the U.S. population) transition fully to ATSC 3.0 in February 2028, with limited waivers for smaller or noncommercial stations as necessary. The remaining stations would transition in or before February 2030. The association also wants the FCC to ensure that TVs include ATSC 3.0 tuners in them by February 2028—a request met by resistance from the consumer electronics industry. The **Consumer Technology Association** argues that a mandate would drive up the cost of television sets while fewer than 10% of Americans relying on antennas for TV viewing. CTA contends the transition must remain volun-

tary and market-based, not guided by government mandates.

NAB Show kicked off Saturday, with nearly 1,100 companies part of its exhibit floor and an anticipated 60,000+ attendees. There were plenty of ATSC 3.0-focused announcements, with two dozen companies from around the world showcasing options for next-gen broadcasting in the booth of **ATSC, the Broadcast Standards Association**. They include **AT&T Business**, which is demonstrating ATSC 3.0 enabling instant and reliable communications at venues and in high-traffic environments. It's joined by **Sinclair** and **ONE Media**, which are showing off a variety of ATSC 3.0 features that will be possible when broadcasters sunset ATSC 1.0 – including 4K High Dynamic Range video, emergency alerting and information and data services from **Broadspan**.

The show also features more than 20 conference sessions on the broadcast standard, including panels on optimizing digital ad insertion for ATSC 3.0 as well as its potential for cloud-based broadcasting. **Panasonic, RCA, Hisense, Samsung** and **Sony** are among the companies showcasing NextGen TV sets. Also on display are upgrade accessory receivers from the likes of **ADTH, MyVelo, VBox** and others that allow consumers to experience next-generation broadcasting on TVs that don't have built-in ATSC 3.0 tuners.

In addition to seeking comment on NAB's petition for a transition deadline, the FCC wants input on a report submitted by NAB on efforts undertaken as part of the Future of Television Initiative, a public-private initiative announced by then-FCC Chairwoman *Jessica Rosenworcel* in April 2023 to guide the next steps

Media and broadband executives'
NUMBER 1
TRUSTED SOURCE
for the industry's most
important developments

1 Cablefax
Daily

PARTNER WITH US TODAY: Amy Abbey • 410.979.0171 • aabbey@accessintel.com

of the transition to ATSC 3.0. That report's recommendations included the FCC and industry exploring strategies and sources of funding that could help eliminate or lower the costs of devices to consumers. Other recommendations include reviewing a recently released **SCTE** standard that addresses redistribution of ATSC 3.0 signals by MVPDs to determine what challenges remain and whether regulatory action may be necessary.

NAB's petition asks the FCC to consider whether updates to the MVPD carriage rules are necessary, particularly updating good quality signal requirements for must carry. To the extent the Commission were to adopt ATSC 3.0 must-carry, MVPD participants in the working groups behind the Future of Television report stated that ATSC would likely need to develop a Recommended Practice for ATSC 3.0 akin to A/78, which is currently used for evaluating transport streams in ATSC 1.0.

The FCC Media Bureau also is seeking comment on whether any marketplace barriers have impacted efforts to deploy ATSC 3.0 and whether there are intermediate steps the Commission could take to increase flexibility for broadcasters as they transition to ATSC 3.0 (such as MPEG4 compression on certain programming streams).

COMCAST, CHSN STILL AT ODDS

While **Comcast** may have [sorted out its carriage dispute](#) with **YES Network** (for now), it's not totally in the clear yet as it continues to work through a carriage impasse with **Chicago Sports Network**. The RSN launched in October after the Blackhawks, Bulls and White Sox's agreements with the now-defunct **NBC Sports Chicago** expired, but has yet to close a deal with Comcast. *Crain's Chicago Business* [interviewed](#) Chicago Bulls President **Michael Reinsdorf** at a Crain's real estate event last week, in which he claimed Comcast was negotiating in bad faith and that the lack of a deal is a corporate issue rather than a local one. Comcast didn't offer comment on the interview. Reinsdorf even said the two sides had a deal in place in December, but it fell through for an undisclosed reason. The Bulls, along with the White Sox and Blackhawks, are owned by Reinsdorf's father Jerry, and each team has a piece of CHSN ownership. CHSN also has studios located in the White Sox's Guaranteed Rate Field and the Bulls/Blackhawks' United Center. As with Comcast's other spats with RSNs, the dispute stems from its desire to place RSNs on a higher tier.

BIG NUMBERS FOR NCAA TOURNEY, 'WHITE LOTUS' FINALE

The stage is set for Florida to take on Houston tonight to determine this year's NCAA men's basketball national champion. Through the Final Four, tournament viewership is averaging 9.9

million viewers across **TBS**, **TNT**, **truTV** and **CBS**, up 2% from last year. Saturday's Final Four games averaged 15.3 million viewers on CBS, with Houston's dramatic comeback to beat Duke earning 16 million viewers—a tournament-high—and Florida's win over Auburn recording 14.6 million. Florida vs Houston is scheduled to tip off at 8:50pm on CBS. – The Season 3 finale of **HBO's** "The White Lotus" reeled in 6.2 million U.S. cross-platform viewers. That's the third straight week of record highs for the series, beating last week's viewership record by 30%. Sunday's finale performed 51% better than the Season 2 finale that had 4.1 million U.S. viewers.

FANDUEL SPORTS NET SORTING NBA FUTURE

FanDuel Sports Network is looking to finalize its agreements with five **NBA** teams, but whether or not they cross the line remains to be determined. After a soft deadline of April 1 came and went for FDSN to sort deals with the Hawks, Cavaliers, Heat, Timberwolves and Bucks, *SBJ* [writes](#) that the deadline was extended for an undisclosed amount of time. That could be beneficial for FDSN as it may prompt the teams to opt into RSN agreements for the 2025-26 season since the offseason is a couple of months away. If teams don't run it back with FDSN, local deals could be made that are similar to the ones that the Jazz, Mavericks, Pelicans, Suns and Trail Blazers have made. It's not the first time the deadline was moved as an initial one was set for December. The NBA is currently figuring out a possible national streaming RSN and is in talks with the likes of **Amazon**, **YouTube**, **Apple** and more.

FCC SETS APRIL AGENDA

Spectrum is the star on the **FCC's** April 28 Open meeting agenda. The Commission is set to take up a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that looks to modernize spectrum sharing for satellite broadband. That includes initiating a review of the decades-old spectrum sharing regime between geostationary and non-geostationary satellite systems operating in the 10.7-12.7, 17.3-18.6, and 19.7-20.2 GHz bands. It also seeks comment on whether alternative sharing frameworks would promote greater efficiency to the benefit of American consumers. The FCC also plans to take up a Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on the lower 37 GHz band, which is currently shared by the government and commercial entities. The Commission will vote to establish a new licensing framework for this band, effectively opening up 600 megahertz of spectrum for new commercial services. This spectrum could be used for fixed wireless broadband and the Internet of Things. "There are no clear sharing rules for this spectrum, which is keeping companies from moving forward

with deployments. So, this month, the Commission will vote to establish a new licensing framework for this band, effectively opening up 600 megahertz of spectrum for new commercial services," FCC Chair *Brendan Carr* wrote in a blog post.

2025 NAB SHOW BEGINS

Some folks got started early with **NAB Show** announcements last week, but **Verizon Business** put its wheels in motion Sunday when it announced solutions that include a portable Private 5G Network framework. Designed to reduce live-broadcasting issues broadcasters face, the mobile framework can be deployed to use different types of spectrum including C-band, CBRS and millimeter wave. It's powered by **NVIDIA's** accelerated computing, which includes **NVIDIA AI Enterprise** and **NVIDIA Holoscan for Media**, which use AI to manage multiple camera feeds and highlight key moments, helping with video prioritization. Initial mobile framework partners include **FanDuel TV**, **Haivision** and **Ericsson**.

NEW FAST CHANNEL FOR ACORN, AMCN'S 'GREAT AMERICAN STORIES'

Upfront season is upon us, with programmers lining up to show off their upcoming debuts. **AMC Networks** holds its presentation Wednesday night, but it's already sharing a bit of news, including the development of new franchise "Great American Stories." Each season of the anthology series will be devoted to a different celebrated work, historical moment or individual narrative celebrating the American spirit. *Rolin Jones* ("Anne Rice's Interview with the Vampire," "Friday Night Lights") will adapt "The Grapes of Wrath" for AMC and AMC+ as the first season of the series and then manage the franchise. Other upfront tidbits include horror streamer **Shudder** greenlighting six-ep competition series from "The Walking Dead" Director/EP *Greg Nicotero*. Described as if "Survivor" and "Blair Witch Project" had a baby, "Guts & Glory" puts players into an immersive horror experience full of unexpected challenges to capture their real reactions. Meanwhile, AMCN's in-house broadband entertainment studio Content Room announced a full slate of opportunities for brands for the coming year, including the 15th anniversary of "The Walking Dead" on Oct. 31 and an expansion of Acorn's promotional footprint to include advertiser opportunities across FAST with a new channel, "Acorn TV Mysteries," launching this spring.

NEW WNBA TEAM GOES LOCAL

The **WNBA's** latest expansion franchise is getting its local distribution sorted early. The Golden State Valkyries signed a deal with **CBS Bay Area** to make it the team's official media partner in its inaugural season. Fans in the Northern California region will be able to access games on KPIX and PIX+ (KPYX), and select games will be made available on **CBS Sacramento** (KQVR and KMAX). Additionally, CBS Bay Area will air a weekly show that'll take fans behind the scenes with Valkyries players

and coaches. The first preseason game will air on PIX+ come May 6, with the first regular-season contest set for May 16. A full broadcast schedule will be released in the coming weeks.

FIBER FRENZY

Eight Gig speeds are now available to **TDS'** residential and business customers in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. The provider completed a network upgrade throughout Dane County after it initially launched 8 Gig speeds in Stoughton in late 2024. TDS acquired Sun Prairie Utilities' fiber assets in 2017 and subsequently invested around \$15 million to add over 170 miles of fiber. Other projects TDS has going on in Wisconsin include Fox Valley, Onalaska, Eau Claire, Janesville, Evansville and Milton.

PROGRAMMING

Basketball Hall of Famer *Grant Hill* signed a long-term contract extension to remain with **TNT Sports**. He'll continue to be a lead game analyst on men's March Madness coverage and expand his contributions to **Big East** and **Big 12** basketball. – Have you ever wondered what it looks like to prepare a baseball field before the gates are opened? **YES Network** and the Yankees are pulling the curtain back in a new docuseries "The Stadium" that looks at operations in Yankee Stadium that have never been recorded previously. It'll debut next Monday following the Yankees postgame show (Royals-Yankees play at 7:05pm) and it'll be available to stream on the Gotham Sports app. – Hispanic media company **Hemisphere Media Group** nabbed the exclusive rights for "Francisco, El Jesuita" in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. The four-part miniseries will air on **WAPA-TV** on April 18 at 6pm local time, and **Cinelatino** will run it in the U.S. on the following day at 7pm. Episodes will be made available on AVOD platforms as well, including **ViX**, **The Roku Channel** and **Tubi**.

PEOPLE

Comcast nabbed former **Expedia**, **Apple** and **DirectTV** exec *Jon Gieselman* as Chief Growth Officer for its Connectivity & Platforms division. He'll report to *Steve Crouney*, recently named COO for the division. Gieselman will lead the teams responsible for Comcast's domestic residential businesses, including product and the Xfinity brand strategy across connectivity, wireless and entertainment as well as sales, marketing, acquisition, retention and base management. He begins the role April 28, having most recently served as President, Expedia Brands. Gieselman also served as VP, Marketing at Apple and was SVP, Marketing at DirectTV for 10 years. – **Sinclair** named *Christina Tesaro* as SVP, Sales–**Tennis Channel**, **AMP Sports**. Tesaro joined Tennis' sales team in 2018 and was most recently VP, Sales and Partnerships for AMP Sports, Sinclair's new advertising sales and integrated marketing division that came about in January. During her tenure, Tesaro has helped spearhead partnerships and sales opportunities across Tennis Channel platforms, including last year's launch of Women's Day on T2.