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WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Action: Syndeo Embarks on Cable Industry Documentaries

You oughta be in pictures, cable. And the **Syndeo Institute at the Cable Center** is working to make it happen. It's just released the first [trailer](#) for the documentary "Hotwired: From Cable Innovation to Global Connectivity" (working title) and is starting a fundraising campaign for the feature-length film.

"Our constituents have wanted us to tell this story for years. I am beyond thrilled that we're in a position to get this exciting project off the ground. We've assembled a strong production team who excel in storytelling using archival materials that will complement new footage and interviews," Syndeo President/CEO *Diane Christman* told **CFX**. "I love that we're using technology as the foundation to tell the story; it shines a light on the innovative and can-do nature of our industry."

The Center was able to get started on the project thanks to a charitable remainder trust gift from [Jim Duratz](#) of the Barco Family (yes, the name behind its Barco Library collection of print materials, videos, audio recordings and artifacts). But it's going to need more funding to complete the film, with Christman saying it's [actively seeking underwriters and sponsors](#).

Syndeo has selected HaveyPro Cinema for the project, which has won a Telly for its documentary on the Colorado state capitol building as well as a Shorty Impact Award last year for feature film "Beyond Zero," which tells the story of how a flooring company went from harming the environment to a global leader in sustainability. Filming is complete for

the first segment on the cable modem, which is expected to be finished in September. The goal is to have the entire doc finished by the end of 2026. "We do not want to make this a niche, cable industry-only interest. It's really about how the cable industry, from its inception, has driven us to where we are now, from a technological standpoint," said Syndeo Chief Program Officer *Camilla Formica*. "The stability for broadband, the internet, streaming and all the things that we have really came out of the germ and the seed of our entrepreneurs and our founders."

The documentary includes a collection of new interviews and archival footage, including Syndeo's oral history archive from the industry's pioneers. "Some of those interviews are on actual film of people who are no longer with us, letting us weave that together. The project really shows an entire new generation how we got to where we are," said Formica. While Hotwired's sizzle reel shows interviews with titans like **Liberty Global's John Malone** and **Comcast's Brian Roberts**, Syndeo said the idea is to ultimately let the technology tell the story.

As for distribution, Syndeo hopes it will make some debuts at film festivals (The Sundance Film Festival moves to nearby Boulder, Colorado, in 2027) and that industry partners help it reach a wide audience. **NCTA** stuck its toe into the documentary space last year with the 20-minute "Every Last Mile" [film](#) about connecting rural America, which won a 2024 Greater Good Award in the "Better Future" category. With the passage of time, there seems to be a growing interest in cable's

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contributions. Last year saw the debut of six-part series “Call Me Ted” on **Max**.

CBS NEWS CHIEF STEPS DOWN

More changes are coming to **CBS News** and **Paramount** as pressure continues to rise regarding President *Trump's* “60 Minutes” lawsuit. *Wendy McMahon*, President/CEO of CBS News and Stations and CBS Media Ventures, said Monday she was stepping down from her role. It's the second CBS News shakeup to happen in the past month after *Bill Owens*, the third 60 Minutes Executive Producer in the program's 57-year history, resigned in April, citing increased pressure on independent decision-making. McMahon didn't indicate her decision was made due to editorial pressure, but her memo to staffers points to some level of disagreement with the direction CBS News and its parent company Paramount are heading. She specifically labeled the last few months as “challenging.” “It's become clear that the company and I do not agree on the path forward. It's time for me to move on and for this organization to move forward with new leadership,” McMahon's memo stated. In late April, Paramount officially began discussions with *Trump's* lawyers about settling the 60 Minutes case. Hanging over all of this, of course, is the Paramount-Skydance merger that's making its way through regulatory approvals. Neither a direct replacement nor an interim was named, but CBS chief and Paramount co-CEO *George Cheeks* wrote in a separate memo that *Tom Cibrowski* and *Jennifer Mitchell* will begin reporting to him. Cibrowski is currently the President/Executive Editor for CBS News and oversees all newsgathering, units and broadcasts. Mitchell, meanwhile, heads up CBS Stations in addition to local and national digital properties as the division's President, Stations and Digital. For CBS Media Ventures, EVP, Advertising Sales and Marketing *Scott Trupchak* and EVP, Programming and Syndication Production *John Budkins* will report to CBS COO/CFO *Bryon Rubin*.

MORE CHARTER-COX DETAILS

The industry had the weekend to digest Friday's [surprise news](#) of **Charter's** \$34.5 billion deal to buy **Cox Communications**, and it got more clarity into the terms of the agreement thanks to an **SEC** filing Monday. Both sides can pull the plug on the deal if it hasn't been finalized by May 16, 2026, though that date can be extended by either side in 90-day increments until May 16, 2027, if any of the required regulatory approvals haven't been obtained. Additionally, Charter shareholders could reject the move, and there's the ever-present factor of a court

or government entity stopping the merger. If Charter's Board switches course on its recommendation before a stockholders' vote—thus prompting Cox to pull out of the deal—Charter's termination payment to Cox will be \$875 million. Cox committed to undergoing internal restructuring before the deal closes. Charter agreed to non-solicitation obligations for certain third-party acquisition proposals in addition to certain restrictions on its ability to respond to such proposals.

CONNOLLY OUT AT DISNEY

Justin Connolly's decades-long tenure in the **Disney** ecosystem could be over. Late last week, Connolly resigned from his post as Disney's President, Platform Distribution. *Puck* was the first to [report](#). The move supposedly came as a surprise since Connolly signed a multi-year extension earlier this year. Though he didn't specify what his next move was, the rumor mill points to Connolly heading to **YouTube TV**. That could get interesting since *Puck* writes Disney hasn't agreed to release Connolly from his contract. Not to mention that YouTube TV and Disney's affiliate deal expires this fall. Connolly first joined Disney in 1998 before making the switch to ESPN in 2003. After climbing to SVP, Programming, he moved back to the Disney side of things in 2015 as EVP, Affiliate Sales and Marketing. Recently, he's helped mold ESPN's upcoming direct-to-consumer product and spearheaded Disney's consequential carriage agreement with **Charter**. Disney EVP, Platform Distribution *Sean Breen* and EVP, Distribution Strategy *Jimmy Zasowski* are expected to lead the distribution division while it searches for a new leader.

PRIME VIDEO READY TO RACE

The **NASCAR** Cup Series is speeding onto **Prime Video** on May 25. The streamer will make its Cup Series debut starting with the Coca-Cola 600 at Charlotte Motor Speedway, the first of five races to be presented by Prime Video. As part of its coverage, Prime Video is launching new streaming elements for NASCAR fans, including a Key Moments feature that allows viewers to access race highlights on demand while watching live coverage. Another new feature, Rapid Recap, compiles a two-minute highlight reel for those fans tuning into a race after it's already started. Double-box commercials mean viewers will be able to watch every second of the action, even during ad segments. Prime Video says it will use over 70 cameras for its broadcasts, including in-car and POV cameras, connected by “up to 10 miles of fiber optic cable.”

NAD AGREES WITH VERIZON ON T-MOBILE 'SAVE 20%' PROMOTION

Following a challenge from **Verizon**, the **National Advertising Division** issued a recommendation that **T-Mobile** discontinue certain comparative savings claims found in a [pair of commercials](#) as well as a brochure, savings calculator website and press release. NAD found the mobile carrier's claims that customers can save 20% by switching from another provider to T-Mobile misleading, determining that T-Mobile did not make it clear to consumers that the price comparison is based not on plan cost alone, but also the "additional optional fees" of bundled streaming services. While T-Mobile updated the promotion's disclosure during the challenge to reference these perks, NAD did not find the change sufficient, stating that most consumers do not expect "ancillary benefits" to be calculated in a savings comparison. NAD also determined that the updated disclosure did not clarify that the savings claim is based on purchasing three lines of service at a specific plan tier, which "further contradicts the message of the broad comparative savings claim." T-Mobile responded in a statement that it is "disappointed with NAD's decision and will appeal it."

SPECTRUM NEWS ADDS NEW NETWORK IN MICHIGAN

Charter is certainly keeping busy these days. On the heels of the company's merger with **Cox**, Charter is expanding the footprint of its **Spectrum News** operation. Launching today for all local Spectrum TV customers is **Spectrum News Michigan**, available on channel 1 across the state. The station provides 24/7 local news and weather reports as well as relevant stories from across the country. *Craig Huber*, a Michigan native with over 30 years of journalism experience, including seven at Spectrum News in Texas, is heading the news operation. The station can also be accessed through the Spectrum News App, **Xumo Stream Box**, **Apple TV** and **Roku**.

CARRIAGE

Lionsgate is launching a new action movie FAST channel on **MyFree DirecTV** curated by rapper-turned-actor/producer *Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson*. The suitably named "50 Cent Action" will live on lineups starting May 20 and feature films such as "Rambo," "Conan the Barbarian" and the first three "John Wick" installments.

FIBER FRENZY

Fiber-optic connectivity is now online throughout Alaska's Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. **GCI** turned on 2.5 Gig internet speeds and 5G mobile service in Bethel, making it the first community connected via the AIRRAQ Network made in part-

nership with **Bethel Native Corporation**. The project includes more than 6,000 residents and is assisted by over \$100 million in broadband grants by the **NTIA**, Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program, the **USDA's** ReConnect program and private funding from GCI.

POWER OF THE BUNDLE

The value of streaming bundles is growing as viewers respond to price hikes and economic constraints. **Hub Entertainment Research's** "The Best Bundle" study found that 52% of consumers said they have three of the top-seven SVODs (**Netflix**, **Prime Video**, **Disney+**, **Hulu**, **Max**, **Peacock** and **Paramount+**) in 2025, down from 61% in 2024. At the same time, package deals have become a primary driver in streaming signups. Hub revealed subscribers to Prime Video, Hulu and Max listed it as their top reason for subscribing. Something a majority of consumers yearn for is aggregation tools that make accessing content simpler. Approximately 70% of folks said they'd be interested in a service that allows them to choose, manage and pay for various subscriptions on a centralized platform, similar to Amazon with Prime Video Channels and Roku with the Roku Channel store. Hub conducted the survey in April among 1,600 U.S. consumers between the ages of 16-74 with broadband access.

PROGRAMMING

"Sesame Street" inked a new streaming deal with **Netflix**, which will carry the show beginning with Season 56 later this year. It's a big win for the educational kids show and its financial stability as well as for **PBS**, which will air new episodes on the same day and date as Netflix, something it couldn't do under the previous **Max** deal. Sesame Street will debut a re-imagined approach when it returns later this year, with episodes shifting away from the news magazine format in favor of two short narrative segments and a new recurring animated segment called "Tales from 123." – "The Mortician," a new three-part docu-series that explores the dark side of the mortuary business, particularly inside one Southern California funeral home that was gripped by scandal in the '80s, will premiere on **HBO** and HBO Max on June 1 at 9pm.

PEOPLE

Rich Battista and *Chris Brearton* have joined the Board of Directors of **Main Street Sports Group**, owner and operator of the **FanDuel Sports Network**. Battista is currently Executive Chairman at both Adweek and media company Wave Sports + Entertainment and was previously the CEO of Time Inc. Brearton is a Partner at independent entertainment company AGBO and formerly served as the VP of Corporate Strategy at Amazon MGM Studios.