

# ***Cablefax Daily***<sup>TM</sup>

## WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Expo Buzz: AI Demos Pack the SCTE TechExpo25 Show Floor

There's plenty of hype over artificial intelligence and even more pressure to make sure the technology is being used to its fullest, but it's often difficult to understand what that really means. A bevy of companies will be hoping to break it all down at [SCTE TechExpo25](#) next week in D.C.

It's important to understand that AI isn't just something for the largest companies to embrace. A new U.S. Chamber of Commerce [Technology Engagement Center](#) report finds small businesses are adopting AI at a blistering pace, with 58% using generative AI—more than double what it was in 2023.

Dozens of other examples of AI-powered remote network management will line the Expo show floor next week. Companies offering remote network management for networks include AOI, which counts **Charter** among its clients. **AOI** updated its **QuantumLink** suite to include an AI module for prediction and detection, as well as an Analytics Module for faster troubleshooting. **HPE Juniper Networking** recently rolled out new agentic AI-native capabilities designed to reduce IT trouble tickets, accelerate network resolution times and ensure issues are addressed proactively before users are ever aware of disruption.

“The need for faster detection of network impairments is driving AI-powered implementations in proactive network management,” said *Mark Trudeau*, CEO and founder of **OpenVault**. “We’ve seen particular interest from operators who recognize

that AI-powered PNM can be a force multiplier that enables customer service reps, field technicians and operations teams to keep networks running at peak performance.”

OpenVault expanded its AI tools with the OV-AI Smart Button in the Vantage Proactive Network Maintenance mobile app. It's a one-click diagnostic assistant embedded directly in cable modem service pages that applies AI to cable plant telemetry. The idea is to make it accessible to the entire workforce and offer explanations of the problem and guidance to shorten the time for fixes.

In a recent trial deployment across 500 homes, OpenVault said field techs achieved 22% faster on-site resolution, 50% fewer repeat visits and an estimated \$130,000 in truck roll savings using the tool.

The smart button makes specific recommendations in various situations. For example, when FM ingress spikes in the 88MHz to 108 MHz band, it suggested: “Inspect and fix drop and/or in-home wiring at subscriber location. Likely cause to be loose or improperly terminated connector or compromised shielding on drop/in-home wiring...”

When a cluster of modems showed upstream degradation, Smart Button predicted a 35% likelihood of service impact within 48 hours, enabling the operator to reduce critical modem alerts by 15%, boost first-time fix rates to over 70% and improve network resilience without adding staff.

OpenVault is stressing that the OV-AI Smart Button can help minimize impairments for next-generation DOCSIS networks before they impact traffic. A list of quantifiable benefits includes a 40%

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decrease in repeat truck rolls, a 20% drop in average customer-impact minutes as faults are resolved before service degradation spreads and a 50% reduction in Mean Time to Diagnosis through Smart Button's single window view of the relevant issue.

"We have machine learning algorithms for our PNA solution, but we also now are big into the agentic side of things where we are actually going way beyond just a chatbot, where a field technician could say, 'Tell me everything about this modem,' and it's going to tell you all these observations," Trudeau told **CFX**. "Our team is working with CableLabs and these other organizations—we've taken a lot of that domain-specific content that's been created over the years, some of which we've contributed to, and taken that approach where that's what we're training the models on. It's just a really powerful outcome when you're not using ChatGPT, but a very specific tool."

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## SINCLAIR BRINGS BACK KIMMEL

"Jimmy Kimmel Live!" returns to **Sinclair's ABC** stations this evening. ABC unsuspended the late-night show on Tuesday, but Sinclair and **Nexstar** continued to preempt it over concerns regarding remarks the host made last week following the death of *Charlie Kirk*. At deadline, Nexstar was still airing alternative programming during the timeslot. Sinclair, ABC's largest broadcast affiliate in the U.S., said it proposed measures to ABC to strengthen accountability, viewer feedback and community dialogue, including a network-wide independent ombudsman. "While ABC and Disney have not yet adopted these measures, and Sinclair respects their right to make those decisions under our network affiliate agreements, we believe such measures could strengthen trust and accountability," said a statement that noted it has received "thoughtful feedback" from viewers, advertisers and community leaders representing a wide range of perspectives. The broadcaster also called out troubling acts of violence, including a shooting at an ABC affiliate station in Sacramento. While some have suggested **FCC** Chairman *Brendan Carr* influenced the preemptions, Sinclair said it was an independent decision: "Free speech provides broadcasters with the right to exercise judgment as to the content on their local stations. While we understand that not everyone will agree with our decisions about programming, it is simply inconsistent to champion free speech while demanding that broadcasters air specific content."

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## NBCU-YOUTUBE TV FIGHT BEGINS

Whispers began trickling out Thursday about a potential carriage dispute between **NBCUniversal** and **YouTube TV**. Hours later, the

two companies took their feud public and warned consumers of a Sept. 30 deadline, otherwise NBCU's portfolio of networks will go dark on the vMVPD. That includes **NBC, USA, CNBC, Bravo, E!, Telemundo** and others, meaning events such as **Big Ten** football, Notre Dame football, **Premier League** and Sunday Night Football could be in jeopardy for YouTube TV users, in addition to programs like "Saturday Night Live," "The Voice" and "The Real Housewives." It's also not long until the NBA returns to NBC in the first year of a fresh media rights pact. "Google, with its \$3 trillion market cap, already controls what Americans see online through search and ads—now it wants to control what we watch. YouTube TV has refused the best rates and terms in the market, demanding preferential treatment and seeking an unfair advantage over competitors to dominate the video marketplace—all under the false pretense of fighting for the consumer," an NBCU spokesperson said in a statement provided to **CFX**. It's noteworthy NBCU is targeting YouTube TV's parent company, **Google**. Recall **Fox** [did the same](#) when it was headed toward a carriage blackout with YouTube TV just a month ago. It indicates an effort to call out big tech companies and their seemingly ever-growing reach. While NBCU claims YouTube TV has rejected "the best rates," the vMVPD pointed to **Peacock** as a reason for its disagreement. "NBCUniversal is asking us to pay more than what they charge consumers for the same content on Peacock, which would mean less flexibility and higher prices for our subscribers. We are committed to working with NBCUniversal to reach a fair deal for both sides ahead of our current agreement expiring on September 30," YouTube said in a statement, adding that in the event of an extended blackout, it'll offer a \$10 credit to subscribers. Recently, Peacock increased its prices from \$7.99 to \$10.99/month for the ad-supported Premium plan, while the ad-free Premium Plus shifted from \$13.99 to \$16.99/month. NBCU and YouTube TV have done the dispute threat song and dance before, having done so in 2021 before signing a short-term extension and eventually a renewed deal. YouTube TV not only has NBCU to worry about—it's in the [midst of a battle](#) with **TelevisaUnivision**, and on a more local level, it's one of two vMVPDs that **Monumental Sports Network** [sent warnings](#) about Thursday. For what it's worth, NBCU's only programming drop ever came in April 2019 when Puerto Rican station WKAQ went dark during a spat with **Liberty**.

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## MORE BEAD CHANGES INBOUND?

State broadband offices have been letting out collective groans as it appears **NTIA** is preparing to make further changes to its \$42.5 billion BEAD program, including additional revisions to the final proposals states have submitted.

Earlier this month, an internal [memo](#) was leaked to *Broadband.io* indicating NTIA intended to evaluate “outlier” and “unreasonably expensive” projects on a state-by-state basis, since it previously opted not to include a national excessive cost threshold. **New Street Research** thinks that signals more evaluations of plans, though based on its analysis, the firm predicts “the overall impact on the large operators isn’t material. **Comcast** may see the biggest impact followed by **AT&T** and **Frontier**.” NSR estimates that 129,000 locations—or 5% of all locations—would be above the price caps. That totals for \$2.3 billion in funding, or 17% of total allocated funding so far. Comcast might need to reassess bids for 26,000 locations, which could lead to a \$92 million reduction in funding and a drop in average funding per location from \$5,836 to \$5,388. AT&T’s 12,000 locations might lead to a \$55 million drop in total BEAD funding, while Frontier’s revision of its 6,000 awarded locations may cause a \$40 million reduction in overall funding.

## PEOPLE

**Pam Kaufman** is exiting her role as **Paramount** President/CEO, International Markets, Global Consumer Products and Experiences. Kaufman has been at the company since 1997, originally at **Nickelodeon**, climbing the ranks at the net before taking a more global role at Paramount, including overseeing international streaming and cable assets. In a memo, she wrote that she’s had “the slime of my life” at Paramount. – Also at PSKY: **Makan Delrahim**, a former Assistant Attorney General overseeing the **DOJ**’s Antitrust Division, has been tapped to serve as the company’s Chief Legal Officer, effective Oct. 6. In the new role, Delrahim will oversee all legal, regulatory, compliance and public policy matters for PSKY, including oversight of the company’s Government Relations team. – **Peter Friedlander** is joining **Amazon MGM Studios** as Head of Global Television after **Vernon Sanders**’ exit earlier this month. Friedlander, who spent almost 14 years at **Netflix**, will oversee original programming as well as **MGM Television** and **MGM Alternative**.



## CABLEFAX DASHBOARD

### ICYMI

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Monday marked Day 1 for Cory Gardner as @NCTAitv's new president and CEO.



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### Quotable

“The bigger point I’m making is that while the FCC in Washington, D.C., thinks this license threat is powerful, my attitude is, Wall Street does not think so. The numbers don’t bear that out. Walk away. Take the lawsuits. Don’t be regulated. In real life, no CEO would actually shut it down, they’d try to sell it. But the problem is that then the FCC gets involved in the license transfer. But the point is, Wall Street does not care about the broadcast business a tenth as much as Washington, D.C., cares about the broadcast business, because there are no economics in it.”

- **Needham & Co Senior Analyst Laura Martin** suggesting **Disney** shut down **ABC** entirely in a **Technology Policy Institute** [podcast](#)



### Up Ahead

**SEPT. 28:** [Cable TV Pioneers Banquet](#), DC  
**SEPT. 29-OCT 1:** [SCTE TechExpo25](#), DC  
**OCT. 6-8:** [Streaming Media](#), Santa Monica  
**OCT. 6-9:** [Advertising Week](#), NYC  
**OCT. 14:** [ScreenShift](#), NYC  
**OCT. 14-15:** [Mobile World Congress Las Vegas](#)  
**OCT. 19-21:** [WICT Leadership Conference](#), NYC  
**OCT. 28:** [FCC Meeting](#), DC  
**NOV. 5:** [Future of Television](#), L.A.

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CFX Exclusive: Maria Brennan, who's spent more than 16 years leading @wicthq, is stepping down from her role next year.

"It's just a function of making room for the next generation and a new legacy of leadership."



Exclusive: Maria Brennan to Exit WICT Network in 2026 | Associations, People | Cablefax

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