

UP AHEAD

A week from today, the House Subcommittee on Communications and Technology is hosting an NTIA oversight hearing featuring Administrator Arielle Roth. The session will focus on NTIA's efforts to advance the U.S.' leadership in communications, boost national spectrum resources and deploy broadband—which presumably means plenty of BEAD-related questions are in the forecast. Tuesday's festivities will commence at 10am.

RACE'S EXPANSION IS FULL SPEED AHEAD

Accelerated expansion is the name of the game for California-based FTTH provider **Race Communications**. It's invested over \$200 million this year to deploy its fiber network in more than 25 cities across the Golden State, with construction currently proceeding in Bakersfield, Fresno, Merced, Porterville and Modesto. On Tuesday, the ISP announced that initial construction areas in Atwater are also now online. It's the latest stop on the ISP's roadmap for achieving rapid scale.

Race has invested more than \$650 million to date in fiber infrastructure deployments and is now in 50+ markets. Key to Race's expansion strategy is "looking at areas that are in most need of infrastructure," according to CEO and Founder *Raul Alcaraz*. The ISP's growth plan targets several regions, including San Joaquin Valley, Sacramento Valley, San Diego County and Southern California.

"Infrastructure has just not been there here in California, so we recognize that residents are in need of accessing the technology that will allow them to utilize all the services that are out there, that are growing and that are coming," Alcaraz said.

Notably, Race isn't tapping public funds for these fiber projects. The expansion is backed by private equity firm **Oak Hill Capital**, its investment partner since 2020. That partnership has allowed Race to "put fuel in the jet to just go faster," Alcaraz said. While Race utilized the California Advanced Services Fund in the past to deploy

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in unserved areas of the state, “the time that it takes to get through the process to actually access the funds, from my perspective, has become a little challenging. We look at the private funds to kick off the projects.”

Part of the expansion has come through M&A as well. Last year, Race acquired **Atherton Fiber**, a deal also backed by Oak Hill. At the time the deal was announced, Atherton served over 5,000 homes and had over 1,000 subs in San Mateo County, boosting Race’s footprint in the Bay Area.

“We were introduced to the Atherton fiber network long before the opportunity presented itself to acquire it. We knew the founding team, the designers, the construction guys, so we already were comfortable with how the network was built,” Alcaraz said of how the deal came together. “The Atherton fiber folks were looking to exit, and it just made for a great opportunity for us to step in, figure out how we could continue the work they were doing and then look at other areas in the Bay Area that we might be able to expand from there.”

The ISP offers symmetrical speeds ranging from 500 Mbps to 10 Gbps, plenty of juice for most of today’s online tasks and applications. But while we’ve heard many in the industry say that high speeds are just table stakes in 2026 and that the focus should be on improving reliability, Alcaraz thinks speed is still vital for enabling the applications of tomorrow, especially as AI matures.

“I remember when we first started offering 100 Mbps and the current product was like a 20 Mbps product. People didn’t think that there was a need for 100 and we stuck to our guns. This was before the days of Zoom, and sure enough, you needed that speed to provide a good experience,” Alcaraz said. “Fast forward. Here we are with the days of AI. We don’t know what the future needs are going to be. It’s part of Race’s goal to stay on the leading edge of products and services. We are deploying 10 Gig today, and we’re looking at what’s even faster.”

Broadband will play a pivotal role in our AI future and Alcaraz sees fiber as the “future-proofed” technology to serve as its foundation. “The ability to just change the electronics on each side of that glass makes for a very easy upgrade path versus cable having limitations with their copper or fixed wireless having limitations with spectrum,” he said. “I do think that the competitive products are out there, but I feel very confident in what fiber offers for markets.” – *John Saavedra*

AWS-3 AUCTION WRAPS UP

The AWS-3 auction closed Tuesday with winning bids pushing north of \$3.5 billion, according to the **FCC**. Stay tuned to see who specifically came out on top. The auction opened earlier this month as 17 bidders participated in what became a 72-round saga. Approximately 200 spectrum licenses that were subject to bid defaults or withdrawals in the 1695-1710 MHz, 1755-1780 MHz and 2155-2180 MHz bands were made available. Up to \$3.3 billion of the proceeds will be used to pay debts incurred to support the Commission’s Rip and Replace program and other initiatives operated by the **Department of Commerce**. Next up is the Upper C-band auction. The FCC must open at least 100 MHz for bidding by July 2027.

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DEMS CRITICIZE FCC'S RATINGS SYSTEM REVIEW

A chunk of legislators are getting in the mix of the **FCC's** review of the voluntary ratings system for TV and streaming programs and the TV Oversight Management Board (TVOMB) that manages it. In a letter sent to Chairman *Brendan Carr* on Monday, 68 members of Congress said they "strongly oppose" any effort to censor transgender characters or topics from programming, adding that the existing system has given parents ample ability to determine what their children should or shouldn't watch "for decades." The reps cited a 2024 TVOMB [study](#) that showed 96% of responding parents were satisfied with the ratings system's accuracy. They think the FCC should abandon its review. "This request for comment appears to be an unlawful attempt by FCC to pressure broadcast licensees to censor content, including representation of transgender people, in their programming and just the latest political attempt of FCC to censor content the Administration does not agree with," the letter read. Reps. *Jamie Raskin* (D-MD), *Yvette Clarke* (D-NY) and *Rashida Tlaib* (D-MI) were among those who signed the letter. Sen. *Ed Markey* (D-MA) wrote his own letter to Carr and slammed the proceeding, labeling it "discriminatory" and "cruel." In April, the agency began collecting comments after citing concerns raised by parents that "controversial gender identity issues are being included or promoted in children's programs without providing any disclosure or transparency," prompting the FCC to seek input on changes that could give parents more control over their children's TV viewing. Organizations like **NCTA** and **NAB** have since cautioned the agency from overstepping its regulatory boundaries, while others such as **Free Press** have initiated campaigns and petitions to protest the FCC inquiry.

VAR: TELEMUNDO'S WORLD CUP RATINGS NEEDED FIXING

Like a referee going to the monitor to review a play, **Nielsen** revised **Telemundo's** audience data for the 16 **World Cup** games that took place June 11-15. However, despite the adjusted figures, all of the network's previously set World Cup milestones remain intact, and the changes stem from a snag with **Peacock** data. The tweaks were led by the Mexico-South Africa opener having its total audience delivery across Telemundo, Peacock and other digital platforms decline from 13.4 million to 10.1 million, per Nielsen Big Data + Panel and **Adobe Analytics**. That's still good for the most-watched opening match regardless of language, most-watched men's World Cup game in Spanish-language TV and most-watched group stage game not featuring the U.S. Brazil-Morocco shifted from 11.2 million to 7.9 million, while the U.S.' opening bout against Paraguay came in at 7 million instead of the previously reported 9.5 million. Additionally, Ivory Coast vs Ecuador dropped from 9.2 million to 6.8 million.

PBS TAPS LTN FOR CONTENT DISTRIBUTION MIGRATION

As the **FCC** moves closer to a July 2027 deadline to establish an Upper C-band auction, **PBS** is enhancing content distribution and contribution for its more than 330 public stations. The network signed a multiyear agreement with **LTN** to install a managed IP network that offers end-to-end connectivity, ISP services and two-way video transferring throughout station locations and service sites. PBS said the collaboration will bring forth new content sharing and audience reach opportunities, in addition to reducing costs and improving reliability. LTN, which has conducted nearly 2,000 satellite-to-IP migrations with companies such as **TelevisaUnivision**, **Tennis Channel**, **Scripps** and **MSG Networks**, will enable PBS to deliver up to nine linear feeds to member stations. It'll manage contribution workflows for OTT platforms like pbs.org as well. Deployment will get underway soon and continue throughout the remainder of the year.

MORE WORLD CUP RATINGS

The **World Cup** audience metrics keep pouring in as the tournament nears the knockout stage. The latest highlights saw England vs Croatia garnering 6.78 million viewers on **Fox** last Wednesday, peaking at 8.31 million during the 5:45-6pm window. The Portugal vs D.R. Congo audience on the broadcast net topped at 6.67 million earlier in the day, though its full-match average was 4.94 million. Colombia vs Uzbekistan checked in with 4.04 million on **Fox Sports 1**, while Ghana vs Panama had 3.86 million. Through Monday (24 matches), Fox, FS1 and **Tubi** have combined to average 5.7 million viewers during World Cup broadcasts, up 116% compared to the same point at the 2022 World Cup.

PROGRAMMING

“The Big Bang Theory” spinoff “Stuart Fails to Save the Universe” is set for a July 23 premiere on **HBO Max**. The 10-episode debut season will begin streaming at 9pm, the same time new episodes will drop on subsequent Thursdays. -- Elsewhere in the **HBO** world, “The Man Will Burn” will begin its four-episode run July 9 at 9pm. The series explores the rise of Burning Man, a large-scale desert festival that labels itself as “a global cultural movement” centered on community and self-expression. HBO Max will handle streaming duties. -- The second season of **NASCAR** docuseries “Rising” will stream exclusively on the **Xumo Play** FAST platform for six months following the release of the final installment, with episodes also releasing on NASCAR’s YouTube channel 14 days after their original air date. The season kicks off in August. -- Two new series are headed to **Tubi** this summer. Comedy game show “Substitute Teacher” will debut Thursday, before “House Rules” puts couples to the test starting July 16.

In The WILD

A CFX feature highlighting industry doings spotted in the real world.

Netflix’s American Experiment

Netflix got a head start on celebrating America’s 250th anniversary with a screening last week at the U.S. Navy Memorial in D.C. for its upcoming historical docuseries “The American Experiment.”



Produced by studios Luminant and Tom Hanks’ Playtone, the five-part series covers the American Revolution through the drafting of the Constitution and the first American presidency. Along the way, politicians—from Mike Pence and Ted Cruz to Hillary Clinton and Al Gore—along with historians share their perspectives on American democracy. Woven throughout the series is the title question of whether it will continue.

“It’s tough to look at the front page of the *New York Times* and not see the words ‘constitutional crisis.’ But one of the things that I started feeling when we were doing all of these interviews was an emotion I hadn’t identified for a long time, which was frankly optimism,” Director Brian Knappenberger said during a panel discussion at the event. “We’ve been through some of these challenges before. Our

country has been through some really, really difficult moments, and somehow we’ve always... been able to use this mechanism that was created in order to come out of it.”

The American Experiment covers some familiar ground, but brings the fresh perspective of the founders’ humanity while addressing the paradox of slavery and liberty, integrating Native American perspectives throughout. At its core is the radical idea that the people are king.

“We’ve been forged by those ideals in an era where it’s so easy to focus on what divides us. We were excited to show what unites us—and I’m not going to lie, it’s good television,” said Sara Edelson, Director of Original Documentary Series at Netflix. “There are battles, betrayals, debates, hardship, life and death stakes that all lead to the question that is as true now as it was then. Can this experiment endure?”



The American Experiment premieres on Netflix on June 24.

— Amy Maclean