

DID YOU KNOW?

TDS Telecommunications revealed a record \$308,000 was fundraised during this year's TDS Open charity golf event. The TDS Open first began in 2011 and has since generated more than \$1 million in total donations.

GREAT AMERICAN MEDIA LOOKS AHEAD AT FIVE

Faith and family entertainment programmer **Great American Media** turned five years old in July, but as nice as it is to look back at what's been achieved, the company is also full speed ahead on future expansion. That includes launching Spanish-language streaming platform **Pure Flix Familia** later this year, adding to a portfolio that already boasts two cable nets, multiple streaming offerings and a growing catalog of original films and TV series.

"We think there's a huge opportunity with our audience. It's a fantastic market [and] it's underserved," CRO/EVP, Programming *Kristen Roberts* told **CFX**. "The idea is to have a lot of our content that we're working on now and that we're dubbing available. We're also working with a company called **Minivela**, so we will have some verticals when we do launch."

While there isn't a launch date set in stone just yet, SVP, Advertising and Digital Sales *Paul Brennan* is excited about how serving Hispanic viewers will boost the business. "We've seen really good reception from the Hispanic audience, so we're going to lean into that, and I can't wait until it's there because I want to be the guy who sells it," he said.

The Texas-based company was launched and is still led by President/CEO *Bill Abbott*, who was previously CEO of **Crown Media** (now **Hallmark Media**), in 2021. The portfolio originally consisted of two linear cable nets: Southern lifestyle channel **Great American Country** and equestrian sports net **Ride TV**, rebranded as **Great American Family** and **Great American Faith & Living**, respectively.

Roberts, who also hailed from Crown Media, has been with Great American since the beginning, noting that the company launched at a time when the linear market was going through a lot of change as streaming grew. "We knew that we needed to expand outside of those linear networks, and I think we did really quickly while building franchises within those different platforms," Roberts said.

At the center of its streaming strategy is the SVOD **Great American Pure Flix**, which it acquired and rebranded after merging with **Sony Pictures Television's** Pure Flix business in 2023. The streamer offers a \$9.99/month standard plan and a \$14.99/month premium tier, which adds perks such as virtual events with talent and creators, behind-the-scenes access and giveaways. Roberts said that Pure Flix has not only boosted audience retention, but it also offers the programmer the space to explore new genres, as is the case with unscripted lifestyle series "Jep & Jess: Beyond the Bayou," which features "Duck Dynasty" stars and premieres first on the streamer on Aug. 13 before debuting on linear two days later.

Great American will launch an ad-supported Pure Flix plan next. Details on pricing are TBD, but the goal is to give subscribers more choice, including the growing num-

ber who are more cost-conscious, as nearly half of U.S. streaming users now subscribe to ad tiers, per analytics firm **Antenna**.

"If we can have an ad offering that's at a different price point and we can have advertising against it, we want to be able to do that," Roberts said, with Brennan adding that it's important to be thoughtful and not rush this sort of launch: "We're going to do it the right away with the right advertisers because our subscribers on the streaming platform have never seen a commercial on there before."

Streaming expansion is a clear focus for Great American five years later, including in the FAST ecosystem, which Roberts views as a great way to build brand awareness. But both execs stressed that linear pay TV remains an important part of the business. "We're not naive to the fact that we're seeing dollars shift out of linear and more into digital, which is the reason we're in FAST and we're launching ads on SVOD [but] for us it's still been growth," she said. "We're probably pretty unique in that in the last five years we've been growing our library and our ratings have grown."

Great American Family's viewership (P2+) has grown 61% since 2021, per **Nielsen**. The company has also expanded its linear distribution footprint to all the major MVPDs. In 2025, it finally inked a carriage deal with **Google** to put the linear nets on **YouTube TV**'s base plan following lengthy negotiations that even saw the **FCC** get [involved](#). Pure Flix is also available on **YouTube** Primetime Channels.

"That was a huge win for us. Obviously, that's huge distribution," Roberts said. "To get onto that platform, to bring those homes in on both networks, was crucial for us."

On the content side, the company is investing heavily in original programming, with a new piece of content dropping every single week for the rest of the year, including as part of its annual Great American Christmas programming block. When it returns in October, the holiday event will be headlined by a library of more than 150 original films, including the premiere of food-themed picture "Christmas By the Spoonful," across Great American Family, Pure Flix and a 24/7 Christmas channel streaming on its \$4.99/month **GFAM+** linear platform.

What do Roberts and Brennan want for the next five years? "Growing brand awareness and our library. We'd like to see subscriber growth on Pure Flix [and] to see our linear networks continue to thrive," Roberts said. "I don't know what the landscape will look like in five years, but we'll still be focused on who we are and on our audience." Meanwhile, Brennan sees more opportunities to expand ahead: "When you get into what's next, and you go down the line of Hispanic entertainment, podcasting, there are a lot of places we haven't gotten to yet."

NAT GEO, ESPN HIT BY DISNEY LAYOFFS

A **Disney** spokesperson confirmed to **CFX** that a wave of layoffs hit the company Tuesday morning. Cuts involved hundreds of positions across **ESPN**, **National Geographic**, Pixar, Disney Entertainment, Disney Studios and corporate functions. Although Pixar and Nat Geo are believed to be impacted the most by the latest round of cuts, ESPN's repositioning is being linked to the deal it finalized with the **NFL** earlier this year that exchanged a 10% stake for **NFL Network**, **NFL**

CFX Daily (ISSN 1069-6644) is published daily by Access Intelligence, LLC.
cablefax.com

EDITORIAL

Editor

Noah Ziegler, 301.354.1704,
nziegler@accessintel.com

Senior Editor

John Saavedra, 908.477.1758
jsaavedra@accessintel.com

Editorial Director

Amy Maclean, 301.354.1760,
amaclean@accessintel.com

Editorial Director, Ad Tech & Convergent Media

Sarah Sluis, 212.621.4706,
ssluis@accessintel.com

ADVERTISING/BUSINESS

Chief Operating Officer

Jennifer Schwartz,
jschwartz@accessintel.com

Chief Revenue Officer

Dave Colford
dcolford@accessintel.com

Advertising and Sponsorship

Vernesa Merdanovic,
vmerdanovic@accessintel.com

MARKETING

Senior Marketing Director

Jessica Dombrowski,
jdombrowski@accessintel.com

PRODUCTION/CLIENT SERVICES

Sr Production Manager:

Joann Fato,
jfato@accessintel.com

Group Subs: Vernesa Merdanovic,
vmerdanovic@accessintel.com

Subscription Questions:

Client Services: 301.354.2101,
clientservices@accessintel.com |
Annual subscription price:
\$1,999.00/yr

Access Intelligence, LLC,

9211 Corporate Blvd., 4th Floor,
Rockville, MD 20850

RedZone and other assets. In a memo, Chairman *Jimmy Pitaro* said “most of the job impacts are tied to the acquisition,” a majority of which worked on the production side—though a few notable on-camera personalities were affected. NFL analyst *Ryan Clark*, **MLB** commentator *Karl Ravech*, NFL insider *Tom Pelissero* and former NFL MVP *Cam Newton* were let go by ESPN. Disney made smaller layoffs earlier this year, most recently in April when *Josh D’Amaro* took over for *Bob Iger*.

DIRECTV’S NEXSTAR SIDECAR CASE LIVES ON

Last week, a federal judge denied a motion by **Nexstar**, **White Knight** and **Mission Broadcasting** to have **DirectTV**’s antitrust case against them dismissed. Don’t get this one confused with DirectTV’s challenge of Nexstar and **Tegna**’s merger. It pre-dates that, with DirectTV filing a [suit](#) in 2023 accusing Nexstar of engaging in an illegal conspiracy with Mission and White Knight to manipulate, raise and fix prices of retransmission consent fees for broadcast TV stations through sidecar arrangements. In March 2024, the **U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York** granted the broadcasters’ motion to dismiss the case, declaring DirectTV’s injuries too speculative since it didn’t actually enter into retrans deals with Nexstar’s partners Mission and White Knight. But late last year, the **U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals** [ruled](#) 2-1 that DirectTV had standing to proceed, finding it plausibly alleged that it lost profits from the alleged price-fixing conspiracy. The case went back to the Southern District of New York, with last week’s decision denying the broadcasters’ motion to dismiss for failure to state a claim. Nexstar, White Knight and Mission just got a one-week extension to answer the complaint, with their responses due Aug. 3.

FOX ONE BENEFITS FROM A WORLD CUP BUMP

The **World Cup** boosted **Fox** in a number of ways, TV ratings being a prominent one. However, another boon was the number of new eyeballs the tournament drove to Fox’s new DTC streamer **Fox One**. According to estimates from research org **Antenna**, Fox One saw 2.8 million signups in June, the most in a month since the SVOD launched in August 2025 and more than doubling the previous high of 1.1 million set back in January. Approximately 93% of June’s gross signups were new subscribers and the remaining 7% were folks who previously canceled their Fox One subscription within the prior 12 months. The World Cup’s opening day (June 11) contributed 400,000 signups alone. Direct distribution was the primary method of Fox One’s June adds (40%), while **YouTube**’s Primetime Channels assisted with 15%, despite only beginning to distribute Fox One on June 1. Although **Prime Video** Channels are the normal driver of signups—steering 58% from launch through May—it declined to 19% in June.

NANDY STAYS PUT AS PSKY-WBD DECISION LOOMS

Incoming U.K. Prime Minister *Andy Burnham* formed a new cabinet Monday. His appointments included a few shakeups, but one member staying put is Culture Secretary *Lisa Nandy*, who oversees the country’s media industry. That could be bad news for the \$110 billion merger between **Paramount Skydance** and **Warner Bros. Discovery**. Nandy said in June that she was “minded to intervene” in the merger, citing concerns about how the combo would impact plurality and access to programming in U.K. television. She has yet to decide whether to take action, which could see her escalate the matter to antitrust authorities, which are already conducting their standard review, with a decision to come by Aug. 7.

#AIRS ASKS FOR FCC INTERVENTION ON INCARCERATION TV

Vidal Guzman, co-founder of the Accountability in Incarceration Reality Shows (#AIRS) campaign, is asking the **FCC** to examine how incarceration is portrayed on television. “As a formerly incarcerated person, media justice advocate, and Executive Director of [America On Trial Inc.](#), I have witnessed firsthand how incarceration is too often transformed into entertainment while the humanity of incarcerated people, formerly incarcerated people, and their families is ignored,” he wrote in comments filed with the FCC this week. Joining him in writing the FCC is *Kwaneta Harris*, who is serving a 50-year prison sentence in Texas after [pleading guilty](#) to murder. “I am asking this commission to impose real regulation on the true crime industry that profits from incarcerated women’s lives without our consent and without our safety in mind. Six shows have been made about me. None asked permission,” Harris wrote in comments submitted Monday. “True crime is a multi-billion dollar industry built on people who cannot

consent, cannot correct the record and cannot opt out. We cannot even watch most of these shows about ourselves on prison TVs. But our families and our children cannot escape them.” AIRS is seeking stronger protections related to informed consent, participant rights, compensation, transparency and editorial accountability.

ADARA LINKS UP WITH AURORA

Adara Technologies is teaming up with **Vistance Networks’ Aurora Networks** to deliver hosted and managed Distributed Access Architecture (DAA) and Passive Optical Networking (PON) platforms. Under the partnership, Aurora Networks can lend broadband access solutions expertise to Adara, an **NCTC**-approved supplier, and its cloud-native hosted management platform and managed services capabilities. The Aurora Networks’ portfolio, now available through Adara, will be showcased at **The Independent Show**, July 26-29, Orlando.

In The WILD

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

Shark Week Reminder

Are you ready to go back in the water with Shark Week when it kicks off Sunday? Plenty of advertisers are with this year’s lineup of new sponsors including Disney Studios, Costa Sunglasses and Juggernaut Wines. They join a roster of returning fin friends, including Long John Silver’s, Universal Pictures and The Sherwin-Williams Company.

It’s the 37th anniversary of the programming stunt, which gets underway with “K-Pop Shark Heroes” at 8pm Sunday on Discovery Channel. The special promises that actor Ken Jeong and artist Rei Ami will use the power of the musical genre to change how sharks are viewed.



The Warner Bros. Discovery team has succeeded in



making the Shark Week press kit a yearly ritual—in part because they know to stick with a good thing. When the cherished gift box debuted the Aviator Nation Shark Week sweatshirt three years ago, journalists fell in love with the über-soft hoodie. WBD has continued to offer apparel from the 1970s inspired California lifestyle brand ever since, with this year’s kit upping our wardrobe with a matching pair of sweatpants.

And here’s why this sort of publicity is actually smart. After decades of Shark Week promotional gifts, I have lost count of the number of people who’ve stopped me and asked where I got my Shark Week shirt/hat/towel. Then they proceed to tell me how much they love Shark Week. Seeing their passion is a reminder that there’s a reason this annual programming tribute to all things shark lives on year after year.

In that spirit, we have some photos of Shark Week kits past—from a shark-themed gaiter during COVID to even the cardboard box being appreciated by our then-puppy. I’m already looking forward to Year 38!

– Amy Maclean

