

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Data Delays: Lawmakers Criticize FCC on Flawed Maps, Communications

House Commerce's Communications subcommittee convened its first FCC oversight hearing in seven months Thursday, but the commissioners received a chilly welcome from lawmakers that were far from happy with the agency's progress on broadband deployment and spectrum management. Subcommittee members from both sides of the aisle criticized FCC Chairman *Ajit Pai's* announcement Wednesday of a new \$9 billion 5G Fund that would replace the Mobility Fund Phase II. Subcommittee Chairman *Mike Doyle* (D-PA) paid particular attention to a recommendation from Commission staff that all coverage data submitted by carriers be audited due to the unreliability of 4G LTE coverage data submitted by carriers as part of the Mobility Fund Phase II proceeding. "It seems that you have finally realized that the data you collected is garbage and that you need to go back and do this all over again," Doyle said. "Everyone has been telling you that for years, and instead of acting decisively, folks in rural America will have to wait even longer to get broadband as you finally connect the data that you need." Democratic committee member *Jessica Rosenworcel* agreed with Doyle's assessment of the FCC's failings in the last seven months, saying the Commission has "set out on a path that would distribute billions of dollars in universal service support for broadband based on data we all know is faulty because our maps have so many inaccuracies that they are not meaningful." Doyle also admonished Pai for not taking action against the carriers that have submitted fraudulent coverage data in the past. House Commerce ranking member *Greg Walden* (R-OR) was unimpressed that the subcommittee received no notice before a press release was issued announcing the fund, and while it might sound good, he still has plenty of unanswered questions as to how the fund will operate and how the Commission can move forward when its maps remain far from accurate. "We expect to have a little more notice, a little more communication on some of these big announcements," Walden said. "That would be helpful and probably alleviate some of the questions that will come today." The FCC's communication issues have extended to spectrum discussions, according to Walden. He has been vocal in the past about the need to retain T-band spectrum for public safety uses, and introduced a proposal at a May FCC oversight hearing that would delay the start of the T-band auction process for three years to 2024. He said Thursday he'd heard nothing

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back from the Commission on that proposal. “So I must say that I find it interesting that just last week, chmn Pai called on Congress to repeal the T-band auction mandate, which was not coordinated or discussed with me or my staff despite our efforts to find a solution,” Walden said. Not all was doom and gloom as Doyle applauded Pai’s determination that an FCC-led public auction was the proper way to proceed in clearing C-band spectrum. Doyle encouraged other committee members to work together and work quickly on legislation that would allocate C-band auction revenues to combat issues like rural broadband development and the homework gap.

Comcast’s Cohen Stepping Back: Huge news out of Philly Thursday as an SEC filing revealed **Comcast** senior evp *David Cohen* will be transitioning from operational duties come Jan 1. His key role for the next 12 months will be to ensure a smooth transition of the functions he’s overseen, which include corporate administration, government affairs, communications and diversity. At the end of 2020, Cohen will move into the role as senior counselor to the CEO, where he will advise the company. “It has been extraordinary to work with Brian and our senior leadership team for the past 18 years to help grow Comcast into one of the largest media and technology companies in the world,” Cohen said. “After a great deal of discussion with Brian and after much thought, I’ve decided to transition my operational roles and make way for the many talented executives who I have had the privilege of working with at Comcast and provide the opportunity to lead and growth their careers.” Cohen has held one of the media giant’s top roles for more than a decade, helping the company close its **NBCU** and **Sky** mergers. He also had a few defeats, including the government rejection of Comcast’s attempt to acquire **Time Warner Cable**. Currently, Comcast is fighting a racial discrimination suit filed by *Byron Allen*. As Comcast’s chief diversity officer, Cohen has made diversity and inclusion a priority. He is a frequent speaker at **NAMIC** and **WICT**’s annual town hall. Last month, Cohen touted that 71% of Comcast’s new hires in 2018 were diverse and now 53% of the company reports to a diverse leader. Cohen also has been the face of Comcast’s Internet Essentials program, which provides low-cost broadband to low-income households. The Washington powerbroker has hosted high profile fundraisers for presidential candidates *Barack Obama* and most recently *Joe Biden*, with Thursday’s retirement news sparking questions over whether he’ll be more active in Biden’s campaign. That’s just speculation at this point. Cohen said he’s excited about the next chapter of his career, adding he’s looking forward to dedicating time to civic and charitable activities.

STELAR Countdown: Last minute wrangling over STELAR continues with the legislation allowing satellite to import distant broadcast signals in some markets set to expire Dec 31. The latest has the **Council for Citizens Against Government Waste** teaming with **Public Knowledge** to speak out against House Judiciary chmn *Jerold Nadler*’s

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RESUMES

(D-NY) bill, which would have the distant signal license expire in six months in some markets. Satellite could import distant signals to RVs, truckers and short markets if they offer local stations in all 210 DMAs. **DISH** does, but **AT&T's DirectTV** doesn't offer locals in 12 markets. "Given the current offerings of the two satellite providers, consumers in these markets will either have to go without certain broadcast network television, or seek programming from **DISH**, the only provider this legislation would currently permit to serve satellite customers using distant signals," Public Knowledge and CCAGW said in a letter Thursday to lawmakers. "Creating a virtual monopoly for one company for certain customers does nothing to protect consumers."

Cablefax Honors Powerful Women: *Ruth Bader Ginsberg* may not have been there, but strong women in cable were at the forefront in NYC on Wednesday at **Cablefax's** 2019 Most Powerful Women Luncheon. Hosted at 583 Park Avenue, cable folks from across the country came together to celebrate the top women in the industry. Three women were honored with the inaugural Wake Makers Award, celebrating women who have created ripples of change. "It's amazing that an old farm gal from Missouri, the most inland state in the Union, can be chosen to be a Wave Maker, more than a thousand miles from the sea," said *Patricia Jo Boyers*, pres & vice-chmn of **Boycom Vision** and the chmn of **ACA Connects**. Boyers is only the second woman to chair the organization, something she said "means that all those white balding men are in for a wild ride." She also said that as a woman in a predominantly male profession, "we start earlier, stay later, work harder and smarter just to be given an even playing field. And all it really takes daily is a little coffee in the morning, a little vodka at night and a whole lot of Jesus all day long." Wave Maker and pres of **Comcast NBCUniversal Foundation** *Dalila Wilson-Scott* was introduced by her 13-year-old daughter Kayla, who couldn't agree more that her mother deserved the award. "Many times in our history, our industry has been on the front lines of positive change," said Wilson-Scott. "But there are many more waves we need to make to create the change we all wish to see. That not only my daughter deserves to see, but that all children in our future deserve to see." *Jana Winograde*, pres, entertainment for **Showtime Networks**, is hoping for a future where more women mentor women, and also mentor men. "I expect from the next generation of leaders standing up here and elsewhere, there will be an unprecedented outpouring of thanks to the women who mentored them," she said while accepting the Wave Maker Award. This year, Cablefax handed out surveys to each attendee, asking questions such as who they would most like to have dinner with, what their typical New Year's Eve looks like, and how many streaming services they use in a week. A whopping 61% of attendees would love to have dinner with the notorious RBG, and 16% are spending the night of the 31st in carriage negotiations. Keynote speaker *Sara Haines*, co-anchor of **ABC's** daytime talk show "Strahan, Sara and Keke," also hit on the importance of mentoring upcoming leaders. "As I stand here looking out, I see brilliant, visionary women changing the industry. And a major part of that change comes from just being an example. Whether you're mentoring someone younger than you, or maybe a family member who sits around listening to some of your stories from work, at least one person is seeing possibility through what you're doing," she said. All the honorees gathered on stage for a group photo holding their Most Powerful Women awards.

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PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

ID Tackles Dark Underbelly of NXIVM

In 2017, “self-help” group NXIVM was exposed as a world of sex, money laundering and exploitation, leading to the arrests of founder *Keith Raniere* and actress *Allison Mack* on charges including racketeering and sex trafficking. Former NXIVM publicist turned investigative journalist *Frank Parlato* first revealed that NXIVM was branding women, and **Investigation Discovery** teamed up with Parlato for the two-hour doc “The Lost Women of NXIVM,” premiering Sunday at 9pm. It dives into the stories of four women involved with the cult, starting with Parlato’s investigation into the missing persons case of *Kristin Snyder*, who disappeared in 2003, leaving behind a suicide note. “There’s more to the story than a ‘cult,’ said *Ari Mark*, ep on the series and co-founder of production company **AMPLE Entertainment**. “This is calling into question what really happened to these women, and are there voices who have gone silent?” The doc includes interviews with Snyder’s wife *Heidi Clifford*, who originally only agreed to participate on the condition of anonymity. “It was a real journey getting Heidi to talk at all, because certainly she’s been through trauma herself,” said ID ep *Eugenie Vink*. “She came to trust the filmmakers so much that she reached out and said she was ready to go on camera. And that just doesn’t happen very much, particularly in a story like this,” she said. Mark was introduced to Parlato, quickly realized there was a story to be told, and started filming the doc before even taking it to market. “We just started rolling, and we realized this guy is the real deal.” The doc also looks at the deaths of *Gina Hutchinson* and two additional women who mysteriously developed terminal cancer. “I hope it’ll make it a little easier for [other women] to come out and talk and start to heal, and just reveal what happened. There’s still a lot of deep secrets circulating, and a lot of people who are frightened, shamed and are still controlled by Raniere,” said Vink. -- *Mollie Cahillane*

Reviews: “Moonlight Sonata: Deafness in Three Movements,” premiere, 9pm, Wed, **HBO**. This is an incredible short film. It’s a story within a story within a story. It begins with the birth of Jonas, whose mother is the filmmaker, *Irene Taylor Brodsky*. He fairly quickly loses his hearing by age 4. We learn his siblings and parents hear well. His maternal grandparents, though, are deaf. Jonas gets a cochlear implant and does well. Eventually Jonas develops a love of music, piano, specifically and, not coincidentally, gets hooked on Beethoven. More ironically, he loves the composer’s “Moonlight Sonata,” which Beethoven composed while he was losing his hearing. It’s an inspiring story and perfect for family viewing. It premieres on the eve of Beethoven’s 250th birthday. – “The L Word: Generation Q,” series premiere, 10pm, Sunday, **Showtime**. Besides the fun of having three members of this gang reunited (*Jennifer Beals*, *Katherine Moennig* and *Leisha Hailey*), it’s a hoot to marvel at how great Beals looks in her mid 50s (the original series featured Pam Grier, still gorgeous in her 50s). Another hoot is seeing Moennig leave “Ray Donovan” last Sunday and emerge here, wearing what looks to be the same outfit. Is the series a worthy child of the original? Oh, yes, especially with new character Finley, played wonderfully by *Jacqueline Toboni*. -- *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable P2+ Prime Rankings* (11/25/19-12/01/19)		
Mon-Sun	MC US	MC US AA
	AA%	(000)
ESPN	0.848	2,607
HALL	0.716	2,201
FNC	0.696	2,139
MSNBC	0.405	1,244
A&E	0.334	1,025
TBSC	0.324	995
HGTV	0.312	960
DISC	0.308	948
USA	0.289	887
HIST	0.287	883
FRFM	0.282	867
FOOD	0.266	819
ID	0.253	776
LIFE	0.252	773
TLC	0.245	753
AMC	0.234	719
HMM	0.228	701
ADSM	0.220	677
CNN	0.208	638
NICK	0.189	582
INSP	0.187	575
BRAVO	0.187	574
TVLAND	0.183	562
TNT	0.173	533
NAN	0.164	504
FX	0.159	490
CRN	0.144	442
SYFY	0.138	426
MTV	0.131	404
BET	0.130	400
E!	0.128	392
COM	0.125	385
VH1	0.123	378
HBO	0.122	376
WETV	0.121	371
NATGEO	0.120	370
DSNY	0.118	362
GSN	0.115	354
NKJR	0.110	339
SCI	0.109	336
PARA	0.107	330

*P2+ L+SD rankers are based on national Nielsen numbers, not coverage.



WHO'S IN?

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