

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

New Home: Allen Media Group Looking to Buy Black News Channel

Byron Allen's **Allen Media Group** has emerged as the leading candidate to purchase **Black News Channel** for \$11 million.

According to a filing submitted to the Northern District of Florida Bankruptcy Court last week, Allen Media Group and **Ebony Studios** were actively pursuing a purchase of BNC assets since the early stages of the sale process. BNC first sought a deal with Ebony Studios, an inclusive production platform launched in April aiming to develop content across film, television, audio and digital properties. The pair negotiated in good faith regarding its potential designation as a Stalking Horse Bidder, but weren't able to finalize an agreement and their limited exclusivity period was allowed to expire on June 3.

Now, BNC has asked the court to enter an order authorizing and approving the designation of Allen Media Group as the stalking horse bidder and its bid for substantially all of BNC's assets used or related to the conduct of its business.

"The Debtor and its advisors have spent the last several weeks engaging in robust discussions and negotiations with Ebony Studios, ESN, and other potentially interested parties, regarding their submission of bids for the Debtor's business and assets generally, and the Debtor's potential designation of a Stalking Horse Bidder," the filing said. "Those hard-fought negotiations have led the Debtor to a positive point in this

Chapter 11 Case: the Debtor now has a Stalking Horse APA in hand that represents a great outcome for the Debtor, its estate, and all of its stakeholders, and is optimistic that additional Qualified Bids will be forthcoming that may improve upon the terms of the Stalking Horse APA."

An acquisition by AMG would breathe new life into a network on its way to becoming defunct. Black News Channel announced it would be ceasing operations on March 25, shortly after celebrating its two-year anniversary in February. The channel is still up and running with up-to-date newscasts and a rainbow logo that seems to honor Pride Month. The network filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy at the end of March following financial woes and delays in the March 25 payroll. Employees took to [Twitter](#) in the aftermath of the closure announcement to tell their stories of unpaid wages and no severance. We'll know officially if BNC has found new ownership by the end of next month. A revised sale schedule sets the bid deadline for July 8 at 5pm ET, the auction (if necessary) for July 12 at 10am ET, a sale hearing for July 19 at 10am ET and the sale's closing for July 29.

Allen Media Group has had a busy 12 months when it comes to content, launching **Weather Channel en Español, Sports.TV** and acquiring **HBCUGo.TV**. Since the start of the year, it's also struck a partnership with Google that included expanded carriage on **YouTube TV** and a carriage deal with **Cox Communications** that brought **JusticeCentral.TV, Recipe.TV** and **Comedy.TV** to Contour customers nationwide. It's even recently

THE FAXIES

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Awards Celebration:
Wednesday, June 29 at 4pm ET

Cablefax is PROUD to announce 2022 finalists for **The FAXIES**, the ultimate awards program in the b2b media space. The FAXIES honor 2022's marketing & PR campaigns as well as the executives and teams who brought them to life. Join us when the winners will be announced.

View the Finalists and RSVP for Event at
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been on a bit of a hiring spree, Tuesday adding *Mike Nemetz* as Director, Content Distribution and Partnerships. Other people moves in the past month include the hiring of *Chris Malone* as EVP/Head, Corporate Development, the promotion of *Michael Senzon* to President, Digital, and the addition of *Matthew Lipson* to EVP, Marketing for Digital Platforms and Content.

MVPDS SPEAK ON POLE ATTACHMENT REFORM

Cable operators heard the call of the **FCC** when it asked for comments on pole attachment regulatory reform, and they're ready for the agency to understand their grievances with pole owners. **Altice USA** said it has seen some pole owners waiting until there are requests to attach before making any moves to replace old, weak poles and making necessary upgrades to their plant. "This practice ultimately delays much needed access to poles and unfairly shifts the utility's pole plant maintenance and upgrade costs to new attachers," Altice said. "It also dramatically increases the cost of deploying broadband facilities, thereby limiting the impact of public and private funding for deployment and disincentivizing companies from investing in the more expensive broadband buildout projects necessary to reach unserved and underserved areas." The Long Island-based MVPD argued that the Commission needs to add a definition of "Red-Tagged Poles" to its regulatory guidelines to clarify that attachers may never be charged the full cost of replacing poles already designated as needing to be replaced. It also asked the FCC to establish a mechanism for allocating costs equitably between attachers and pole owners when poles old and new are replaced during the make-ready process to accommodate

new attachments. **Charter** also chimed in, asking the Commission to make its Accelerated Docket available to disputes about pole access, particularly those that arise in unserved and broadband grant areas. It also asked the FCC to codify a presumption that utilities benefit from the replacement of old poles. The provider argued that pole owners gain a valuable long-term asset with tax advantages when they replace old poles as well as an improvement in their capital plant. "Since poles come in standard height increments, utilities also almost always gain additional unused capacity, above and beyond the space occupied by an attacher, that they can use for smart-grid upgrades or other utility facilities, or to rent to others," Charter said. "While there may be some rare exceptions, utilities almost always want—and benefit from—a new pole even if the old one could have remained in service absent the attachment."

CHAPEK CONTRACT RENEWED FOR THREE YEARS

The **Walt Disney Company** board voted unanimously to extend *Bob Chapek's* contract as CEO for three years. Chapek's contract was set to expire in February 2023. The news comes less than three weeks after *Peter Rice* was let go as Disney's Head of TV Content, allegedly due to a poor fit with the company's corporate culture. The move triggered a statement from Disney board chair *Susan Arnold* affirming the board's long-term support of Chapek, saying he and his leadership team had "the support and confidence of the board."

STARLINK SPEEDS UP YEAR OVER YEAR

Starlink median download speeds in the U.S. improved

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roughly 38% from 65.72 Mbps to 90.55 Mbps in 1Q22, but its upload speeds tell a different story. U.S. upload speeds dropped nearly 33% from 16.29 Mbps in 1Q21 to 9.33 Mbps in 1Q22, according to **Ookla's** latest insights. Latency rose marginally from 40 ms to 43 ms in the U.S. and from 51 ms to 55 ms in Canada. In other nations like Australia, New Zealand, Chile and Lithuania, Starlink emerged as a leader with higher median download speeds than fixed broadband providers.

FOX NEWS TOPS QUARTER RATINGS

Fox News wrapped up 2Q22 as the most-watched cable network in primetime and total day, marking 82 straight quarters as the highest-rated cable news channel in primetime. It averaged 2.27 million viewers P2+ in primetime and 1.45 million in total day. Boosted by the NBA Playoffs, **TNT** earned second in primetime with 1.79 million viewers. **ESPN** (1.64 million), **MSNBC** (1.13 million) and **HGTV** (991,000) rounded out the top five in prime. For total day, MSNBC was second at 684,000 as it continues coverage of the Jan 6 Committee hearings. ESPN followed at 612,000, and TNT and HGTV had 580,000 and 539,000 viewers, respectively.

NBCU LOCAL BRINGS NEWS CHANNELS TO ROKU

Starting today, eight **NBC** local news channels are available on the **Roku Channel** for users via the Live TV guide. Those markets are New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Washington, D.C., Connecticut and South Florida, and more channels will be available in the coming months. This is the first time local news channels are available on Roku.

INVIDI, DISH RENEW DEAL

Addressable ad solutions company **Invidi Technologies** and **DISH** renewed their partnership, allowing Invidi to continue providing its technology to the provider. Invidi offers solutions for programmers to deliver addressable advertising across premium video footprints, as well as a supply-side solution enabling distributors to deliver ads consistently across their footprint.

NATPE HEADING TO THE BAHAMAS

NATPE chose the Baha Mar Resort and Convention Center in Nassau, Bahamas, to host its international content marketplace and conference. Set for January 17-19, 2023, the theme for the event is "Content, Networking and Monetization." The event was previously held at the Fontainebleau Hotel in Miami since 2011.

FIBER FRENZY

AT&T is extending its fiber network to customers in Amarillo, Texas. The \$24 million project is contingent upon funding approval by the city, but if given the green light, it will reach over 22,000 customers.

RATINGS

Monday's Oakland Athletics vs. New York Yankees on **YES Network** game averaged 498,000 viewers, making it the most-viewed game in four years. The telecast peaked at 637,000 during the 10pm-10:15pm window, helping YES stay on track to have its best June for Yankees viewership

in 12 years. – "No Demo Reno's" Season 2 debut on **HGTV** pulled a .51 live plus three-day rating among P25-54 and a .72 live plus three-day rating among W25-54, attracting more than 3.2 million total viewers.

AMPED UP

TelevisaUnivision and **VideoAmp** announced a collaboration allowing the network to utilize VideoAmp's data to power its advanced advertising solutions. The partnership allows TelevisaUnivision to connect data to Hispanic households to fuel planning, targeting, cross-platform measurement and currency solutions that let advertising partners better reach the U.S. Hispanic audience.

PROGRAMMING

Hulu will stream the 2022 Essence Festival from New Orleans, the first time the event will be broadcast on a streaming platform. "Essence Fest Primetime" will stream Friday-Sunday from 8pm-12:59am, and SVOD subscribers will have access to select panel discussions and music performances at no additional cost. – **HBO** ordered "True Detective: Night Country," a drama where detectives seek to solve the case of six men in Alaska who vanished without a trace. – The semifinals and finals of the Native American Basketball Invitational will be available on **ESPN+** on July 22 and 23. This is the first time an all-Native American youth sporting event will be broadcast on a major sports platform. – Season 2 of "The Smurfs" will start July 18 on **Nickelodeon** in the U.S. and internationally in September. – A new docuseries is coming to **Showtime** in early 2023. A four-part series called "Confirmed" will study the modern impact and history of the Supreme Court, as well as the decisions that have shaped the U.S. – **FYI** and **History Channel** will broadcast 21 hours of live coverage of "Barrett-Jackson Live." Coverage begins Thursday from noon-6pm on FYI, then noon-7pm on Friday also on FYI. Then, the broadcast will shift to History Channel on Saturday from noon-5pm. Viewers outside of the U.S. can watch via BarrettJackson.tv. – **ID's** "Menendez Brothers: Misjudged?" will premiere August 7 at 9pm, available to stream on **discovery+** the same day. The two-hour special revisits the Menendez brothers' trial and features an exclusive interview with *Lyle Menendez*.

MCGRAW HILL, VERIZON LAUNCH LEARNING APP

Visual learners rejoice. **McGraw Hill** and **Verizon** teamed up with a new, free mobile app that brings AR learning activities to students and classrooms in the U.S. "McGraw Hill AR" is available on the App Store and Google Play and uses interactive features to bring various educational concepts to life. Currently, the app has three activities for algebra and geometry for grades 6-12, with the full suite of math-related activities to go live by fall.

AWARDS

Canela Media founder and CEO *Isabel Rafferty* was named the 2022 New York Entrepreneur of the Year by **Ernst & Young LLP**. The award was selected by an independent panel of judges and highlights leaders in high-growth companies. This year, Canela closed a \$32 million Series A funding round used to enhance marketing and product development for **Canela.TV** and **Canela Music**.