

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Come Together: Arkansas Co-ops Making a Middle Mile Difference

Arkansas may not come to mind when you think about the most-connected states in the U.S., but a group of electric cooperatives are trying to change that story. They're doing it by stepping forward to lead the conversation on the importance of middle mile networks.

**Diamond State Networks**, a wholesale broadband provider created by a group of more than a dozen Arkansas electric cooperatives, was unveiled in May. It was formed through a \$1.66 billion investment from the cooperatives in broadband communications infrastructure. It promises to cover more than 64% of Arkansas and 72 of its 75 counties through its fiber-optic middle mile network, eventually delivering service to over 1.5 million residents with its more than 60,000 fiber miles.

"We're on a mission to make Arkansas the most significantly connected state in the country, and that's a relatively audacious statement being that we're usually one of the least-connected states in the country," Diamond State Networks Executive Director *Doug Maglothin* said during a webinar hosted by the **Fiber Broadband Association** Tuesday. "We seek to serve best-in-class, wholesale broadband to every corner of the state... and we want to make sure that not only are electric cooperative companies distributing broadband, but all broadband service providers, whether it be telephone cooperatives, ILECs, cable companies or municipalities as it may be that are putting in broadband networks get access to the best

upstream services available for the most competitive rates."

One of the desired effects of the project is to keep the price of delivering broadband down across the board. The rest of Diamond State's goals Maglothin described as a three-legged stool: serving residential customers, offering a long-ignored SMB segment additional options and making Arkansas a more attractive place to be for the large businesses that call it home. For instance, **Verizon** has a significant tower presence in Arkansas with one cooperative potentially serving as many as 40 towers.

"How can we create sort of a single pane of glass through which we can serve as many of those opportunities as possible so that large businesses, whether it be Verizon or banks or other multi-site businesses, can serve as many locations as possible through a single relationship as opposed to having maybe 13-14 different relationships with our members?" he said.

The cooperatives that formed Diamond State are all aiming to offer 10 gigabit service to their subscribers, and Maglothin said the impetus of the Diamond State middle mile network is to create high volume, tier one traffic aggregation for all of those networks within the state of Arkansas. "Instead of being dependent on the out-of-state or national companies that aren't really interested in seeing our mission of making Arkansas the most affordable, most connected state in the country play out, we've now essentially created an ecosystem where the money being spent on broadband in Arkansas stays here," he said. "It goes toward leveraging our pricing down for as long as possible."

## DON'T MISS THIS EXCLUSIVE OPPORTUNITY!

Cable Center Hall of Fame special issue featuring interviews with the 2022 Honorees

- PATRICIA JO BOYERS – President/CEO & Co-Founder, BOYCOM Cablevision, Inc.; Chairman of the Board of Directors, ACA Connects
- KEVIN CASEY – President, Northeast Division of Comcast Cable
- CHRIS LAMMERS – COO Emeritus and Senior Executive Advisor, CableLabs
- TINA PERRY – President, OWN TV Network & OTT Streaming
- JOHN C. PORTER II – CEO, Telenet Group Holding
- MICHAEL K. POWELL – President & CEO, NCTA-The Internet & Television Association; Former Chairman of the FCC

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Print Issues Distributed at the Hall of Fame Dinner on Sept. 15

Other states are taking notes and may be looking to create their own Diamond State Networks in the future. Maglothin said it is in talks with six or seven states about partnerships where Diamond State could provide resources to help them supercharge their middle mile deployment plans. It's good timing with federal grants dedicated to middle mile deployments coming down the pipe. Applications for **NTIA's** \$1 billion Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program are due by September 30, and Maglothin expects this is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to funding opportunities for groups like Diamond State.

As for the future of the network, there are enhancements scheduled on the product roadmap, but don't expect any huge jumps in the near-term. **EPB** launched symmetrical 25 Gig service to all residential and commercial customers in its footprint last week, but Maglothin doesn't see a need for an option like that in Arkansas yet.

"The electric cooperatives so often are primarily rurally focused where the densities maybe aren't as high. Maybe there's not as many business corridors, certainly not like a metropolitan downtown in a large city," he said. "For now, those services don't seem all that realistic or cost-effective for us. But eventually as our reach expands and we start to encroach on larger metro areas... I could easily see more densely populated corridors like that would necessitate higher bandwidth services being offered."

**A+E SUES OVER REELZ'S 'ON PATROL: LIVE'**

In a federal lawsuit filed Tuesday **A+E Networks** accused **Reelz**, **Big Fish Entertainment** and **Half Moon Pictures** of "brazen theft of AETN's intellectual property" by launching "On Patrol:

Live." The show debuted on Reelz in late July, with A+E alleging that it's virtually identical to its series "Live PD." "Without any authorization from AETN, Big Fish (the show's former producer) created a clone of Live PD featuring the same primary hosts, content, format, segments, and more, and sold that virtually identical show to REELZ, a cable network seeking its first breakout hit, which then aired the show over AETN's repeated and vociferous objections," the suit said. Reelz said has not been served with nor had an opportunity to review the complaint in detail, and thus "has no comment at this time beyond denying liability and expressing its ongoing commitment to On Patrol: Live." Live PD aired on A&E from 2016-2020, with the channel removing it in the aftermath of *George Floyd's* murder. A+E said it suspended production, but never relinquished its rights to create episodes.

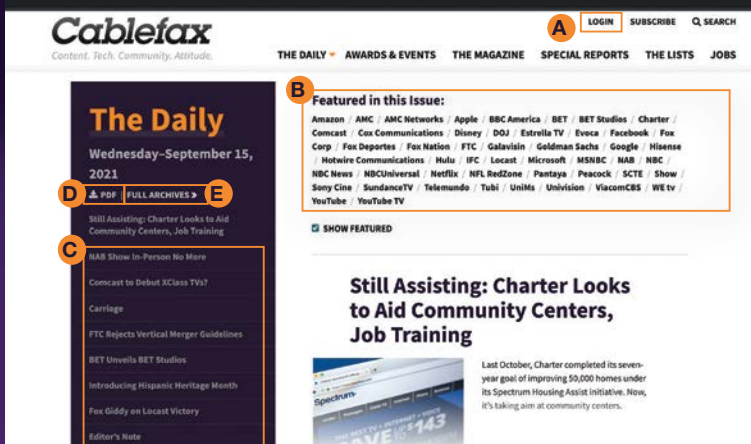
**CORNING OPENING OPTICAL CABLE PLANT**

**Corning** is bolstering its manufacturing capabilities, unveiling plans Tuesday to build a cable manufacturing facility in Gilbert, Arizona. The location will add approximately 250 jobs to the community and nearly double Corning's ability to serve the U.S cable market with optical cable. It is expected to open in 2024 and, upon opening, will become the industry's westernmost U.S. manufacturing site for optical cable. It's all part of an expansion of Corning's partnership with **AT&T**, and the provider made a splash of its own Tuesday by revealing it is bringing its fiber network to the Mesa, Arizona, area. Service is expected to become available to local residents in 2023.

**STARLINK'S LIGHT GOES DARK**

**Starlink** suffered a global outage Tuesday for at least four hours with many customers reporting reduced speeds when their ser-

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vice returned. Reddit users in the r/Starlink community reported lack of service in Germany, France, New Zealand, the United States and more with little to no feedback from **SpaceX** on what was going on. Downtetector also caught the outage, reporting the height of the problems from 2:30-7am ET. Meanwhile, the satellite broadband service continues to gain traction, with **Royal Caribbean** announcing Tuesday that it will deploy Starlink on all Royal Caribbean International, Celebrity Cruises and Silversea Cruises ships, along with all new vessels. Installation will begin immediately and is expected to be completed by the end of 1Q23.

#### CARRIAGE

**RetroCrush**, Cinedigm's digital channel dedicated to classic anime, will be part of **Philo**'s base package for subscribers, marking the first distribution deal made between the two. RetroCrush has over 100 series and 40 films and can also be found on iOS, Android, Amazon Fire TV, **Roku** and smart TVs.

#### NTIA GRANTS MORE TO TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

**NTIA** awarded more than \$105 million in grants to five Tribal entities in Arizona as part of its Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program. The Navajo Tribal Utility Authority won the largest share, \$50.83 million, for a proposal to install fiber and fixed wireless networks to connect nearly 21,000 unserved and underserved Native American households. Also scoring grants for fiber and/or fixed wireless deployments are the White Mountain Apache Tribe (\$24.369 million), Hopi Telecommunications Inc. (\$13.855 million), Triplet Mountain Communications, Inc. (\$9.928 million) and the Pascua Yaqui Tribe of Arizona (\$6.862 million). NTIA has made 69 awards thus far totaling more than \$726 million in funding through the program.

#### WIRELESS EMERGENCY ALERT TESTING

The **FCC** is linking up with 42 state and local government agencies to assess the geographic accuracy of Wireless Emergency Alerts with tests to the public planned Sept. 12 and 13. The agency also sent letters to **AT&T**, **Verizon** and **T-Mobile** asking them to provide information on their performance in those tests.

#### THINK QUICK

**Firstlight Media** is rebranding to **Quickplay**. The name, derived from when the company purchased **AT&T**'s Quickplay service in 2020, is meant to symbolize the shift in focus and dedication to the cloud-native streaming space and give it enhanced recognition with a brand name that was already known for its innovation in streaming. Quickplay's new logo still features the flame that has become synonymous with the Firstlight brand. The company will leverage the new name at IBC, where Quickplay will preview tools such as personalized FAST channels using Google Cloud and scalable CTV monetization with Google Ad Manager.

#### PEACEFUL HARMONI

Mission-critical telecom infrastructure company **Harmoni Towers** acquired **Parallel Infrastructure**, a tower platform and build-to-suit provider. The deal—expected to wrap in 3Q22—creates the second largest private independent tower company in the U.S. Terms weren't disclosed, but the sale is the first result of **Apollo Global Management**'s second flagship infrastructure

fund. Harmoni's parent company Palistar Capital LP expects to provide over \$1 billion in equity to the combined platform.

#### RATINGS - VMAS, PREMIER LEAGUE & MORE

**Fox News** finished the week on top of the total day and primetime ratings. The channel averaged 1.44 million viewers P2+ in total day—slightly down from 1.48 million the previous week. **MSNBC** checked in at second with 820,000, followed by **CNN** with 524,000, **HGTV** at 499,000 and **ESPN**'s 466,000. In prime, Fox News had 2.2 million viewers, followed by MSNBC's mark of 1.31 million. ESPN saw an 18% weekly increase as it had 1.04 million viewers during primetime. **HGTV** and **NFL Network** rounded the top five with 944,000 and 769,000, respectively. For the month, Fox News was the highest-rated cable network in primetime and total day, followed by MSNBC. – The 2022 Premier League opening match between Crystal Palace and Arsenal on **USA Network** garnered a total audience delivery of 526,000 viewers, making it **NBC Sports**' most-watched weekday opener on record. USA also enjoyed the Aug. 21 NASCAR race at Watkins Glen having six consecutive YOY viewership gains. – The 2022 **MTV VMAs** saw 4.1 million total linear viewers, boosting the channel to the No. 1 cable network spot in prime Sunday. That's up slightly from 4 million viewers last year. The show saw increases in the P18-34 (8%), P18-49 (1%) and P25-54 (4%) demos, and total minutes consumed across all platforms reached 1.59 billion—up from 2021's 1.4 billion. – With local elections and midterm primaries in swing, **Spectrum News** averaged over 2.3 million daily viewing households across linear and digital platforms throughout August. The Austin, Texas, market saw an 18% month-over-month bump, with Orlando getting a 9% increase compared to July.

#### HONORS

Plenty of tech stars will get a round of applause during the **SCTE Awards Luncheon** during Cable-Tec Expo on Sept 21 in Philly. **NCTA** VP, Engineering *Andy Scott* is the Excellence in Standards Award Winner, while **Midco** Chief Technology Innovation Officer *Jon Pederson* will receive the Chairman's Award. Other honors include **Mediacom**'s *Nathan Sidlinger* (Excellence in Learning & Development) and **Harmonic**'s *Andrii Vlydyka* (Wilt J. Hildenbrand Jr. Rising Leader Award). **Cox Communications** Director of Access Engineering and Architectures will be inducted into the Hall of Fame. The lunch will feature a keynote from **Food Network** star *Robert Irvine* of "Restaurant: Impossible."

#### PEOPLE

**Mediacom** promoted *Jon Coscia* to SVP, Customer Service and *Jack Griffin* to SVP, Finance and Treasurer. Coscia will oversee the centers for sales and retention, field support and the company's digital customer service tools. Griffin will continue to contribute to the company's finance and treasury group, including debt financing, banking relationships and investments. – *Zoe Rogovin* was upped to SVP, Programming for **Showtime**. She'll oversee the development and production of Showtime's non-fiction content as well as manage the network's returning series. – *Christine Maiorano* joined **UP Entertainment** as VP, Pricing & Planning. Reporting to EVP, Ad Sales *Lisa Fischer*, Maiorano will manage all pricing parameters and revenue for ad sales.