

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Tell Me More: FCC Seeks Retrans, Jobs Info for Standard General-Tegna

Friday marked Day 162 of the **FCC's** merger review of **Standard General's** \$5.4 billion acquisition of **Tegna**, and the agency wants more information.

FCC Media Bureau Chief *Holly Saurer* sent a letter Thursday asking for additional info by Oct. 13. Specifically, the FCC wants all documents, including presentations to **Apollo Global Management** and any other financial lending or investment institutions, addressing each company's evaluation of the transaction (as well as alternative transactions considered among the companies). The missive also asked for docs discussing cutting of staff, diminution or displacement of local content and the expansion of national content. Also part of the request are docs related to Standard General's review of **Cox Media Group's** current retransmission agreement (or a statement that it hasn't reviewed such agreements).

American hedge fund Standard General announced its plan to acquire TEGNA's 64 stations in 51 markets, but the deal has faced its share of detractors, with some questioning whether Apollo's involvement in the deal equates to a workarround of the FCC broadcast ownership cap.

The **News Guild-Communications Workers of America** and the **National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians** have filed a petition to deny the transaction. Counsel for the groups met with FCC staffers this week and argued that more information is needed on record about

the deal and until it's supplied, the FCC should suspend its voluntary 180-day shot clock for reviewing a merger. The clock is a guideline for completing a merger review, not an obligation.

The two groups claim to have found "considerable information" in the confidential record indicating that if the applications are granted, Standard General intends to cut jobs at Tegna. Standard General has said repeatedly that it doesn't intend to reduce station-level staffing post-closing. In their heavily redacted filing, News Guild-CWA and NABET write: "Applicants attempt to rebut Petitioners' claims that Applicants intend to cut station-level jobs post-closing by explaining that 'Standard General's mid-2021 estimates of operating costs reflected personnel measures that TEGNA management was already planning to implement (and has since implemented)...' However, 'synergies' necessarily define actions that would be taken post-closing. The word 'synergy' refers to financial effects that occur after, not before, a transaction closes. The Applicants appear to be contradicting themselves when they say that post-closing job cuts ('synergies') already have happened."

Cable has also expressed concerns over the deal. Last week, **NCTA** reps met with Saurer and other FCC staffers to urge the agency to adopt binding conditions if it approves the deal that will ensure that the parties to the transaction comply with the ban on joint retransmission consent negotiations. "The proposed transaction creates a web of interlocking interests among the companies that raises concerns about information-sharing and coordination of retransmission consent negotia-

Guide to Your Online Cablefax Daily Issues

The screenshot shows the Cablefax website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'THE DAILY', 'AWARDS & EVENTS', 'THE MAGAZINE', 'SPECIAL REPORTS', 'THE LISTS', and 'JOBS'. Below this, the main content area is titled 'The Daily' for Wednesday, September 15, 2021. On the left, there's a sidebar with a list of headlines, including 'Still Assisting: Charter Looks to Aid Community Centers, Job Training'. A 'PDF' icon and 'FULL ARCHIVES' link are also visible. The main article featured is 'Still Assisting: Charter Looks to Aid Community Centers, Job Training', with a sub-headline 'Last October, Charter completed its seven-year goal of improving 50,000 homes under its Spectrum Housing Assist Initiative. Now, it's taking aim at community centers.'

- A** Subscriber Login: Gain access to every Cablefax Daily story PLUS the archives
- B** Every issue includes a list of companies featured. Easily navigate to the stories by clicking on the company name.
- C** The issue headlines are featured on the left nav bar.
- D** Access the pdf version quickly from the website.
- E** Missed an issue or doing some research? Search Cablefax Daily archives

Subscriptions Available for Groups and Corporate Site Licenses.

Contact Ellen Kamhi at ekamhi@accessintel.com or www.cablefax.com/subscribe

tions. Although the parties have made certain representations to the Commission regarding their post-merger plans, without binding conditions designed to prevent such coordination there is a risk that if and when the Commission approves the merger the parties could enter into agreements or arrangements leading to information-sharing and coordination among the parties,” NCTA said in an ex parte filing.

NCTA has said that while the broadcasters have said pending transaction does not currently contemplate post-merger sidecar agreements between TEGNA and Apollo-backed Cox Media Group stations, the parties have yet to agree not to enter into these agreements post-merger.

WEATHERSCAN SIGNING OFF

Weather Channel plans to discontinue its **Weatherscan** service by Dec. 9. Launched in 1999, the network offered localized weather in graphic form on a continuous loop. Novel at its time, people can find similar info these days via smartphones, computers or digital personal assistants. **Comcast** dropped the service in 2017. **Allen Media Group**, which owns Weather Channel and Weatherscan, said it is actively developing the next generation of localization within The Weather Channel product, including enhanced graphics and maps, additional weather information, and increased granularity to localize.

CBRS PROTECTION WAIVERS SOUGHT DUE TO IAN

The **FCC** has seen a flurry of emergency waiver requests of CBRS incumbent protection rules because of Hurricane Ian. “Strict application of the Incumbent Protection Rules would be unduly burdensome, as **Federated Wireless** has no reasonable alternative means to reliably operate the Impacted Systems in compliance with the Incumbent Protection Rules until power is fully restored,” Federated Wireless wrote in its waiver request. **CommScope** also filed an emergency waiver. FCC rules require Environmental Sensing Capability systems to detect and protect federal incumbent users in the 3.5 GHz CBRS band from harmful interference. CommScope listed various sensor sites that have lost commercial power and exhausted backup sources following Ian’s landfall in Florida. “These [CBRS devices] serve hundreds of customers who are located in areas that remain directly affected by the hurricane by providing critical broadband, telephone and television services to homes and businesses. Many customers rely on these services to receive updates about ongoing dangers and the status of restoration of water, electricity, and other critical services,” CommScope wrote.

GOP SAYS KEEP BEAD SIMPLE

House Commerce Republican Leader *Cathy McMorris* (R-WA) and **Senate Commerce** Ranking Member **Roger Wicker** (R-MS) want **NTIA** to require states and territories participating in the \$42 billion BEAD program to work with

local governments on streamlining the permitting process. “As you know, broadband providers must obtain permits to access the poles, rights-of-way and appropriate infrastructure needed for deployment. Burdensome and costly permitting requirements, lengthy review timelines, insufficient staff to review and process permitting applications, and other regulatory red tape can drastically delay and even discourage deployment, which may foreclose access to affordable broadband services,” they wrote in a letter to NTIA Administrator *Alan Davidson* Friday. “Without action, we worry that deployments will take longer and be more expensive, leaving more Americans on the wrong side of the digital divide.”

NOAH TO LEAVE ‘THE DAILY SHOW’

After hitting the seven-year mark as host of **Comedy Central**’s “The Daily Show,” host *Trevor Noah* announced Thursday he will be leaving the show. The South African comedian took over for *Jon Stewart* in 2015 and was a new name to many. In his announcement, however, he mentioned being able to travel post-pandemic made him want to spend more time doing standup. “When I got back out there again, I realized there’s another part of my life I want to carry on exploring. I miss learning other languages. I miss going to other countries and putting on shows,” Noah said in his [announcement](#). It’s unclear when his final episode will be or who will take over the show’s reins.

GOOGLE FIBER COMING TO OMAHA

Google Fiber revealed plans to bring its FTTH network to Omaha, Nebraska. It needs to obtain a license agreement from the Omaha City Council to allow Google Fiber to build in the city’s right of way, and that process could begin as soon as Tuesday at a Council meeting. More information [here](#).

TDS STORE OPEN FOR BUSINESS

TDS Telecommunications opened a retail store in Billings, Montana, the first TDS retail building in the state. The provider began building its fiber network in the city earlier this year and has connected 500 customers so far. When construction is complete, TDS will connect over 50,000 residents. TDS also donated \$3,000 to the Big Sky Economic Development Authority at the store’s ribbon-cutting ceremony Tuesday.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

ID is rolling out a new campaign “No Excuse for Abuse” to raise awareness of domestic violence. The initiative starts Saturday in conjunction with Domestic Violence Awareness Month and will come with PSAs and resources for viewers to be able to identify different forms of domestic violence. ID is also encouraging viewers to donate to its nonprofit partners by texting “NoExcuse” to 707070.

DOING GOOD

Sports Video Group and **YOSY Media** have teamed to launch

HBCU Bridge, a new initiative that connects more than 100 Historically Black Colleges and Universities to internships and careers in the sports TV production and broadcast industry. – **Cable One** gave more than \$115,000 in grants to 29 nonprofit organizations in need across 24 states through its Charitable Giving Fund. The Fund—made up by **Sparklight, Fidelity Communications, Hargray, ValuNet Fiber** and **CableAmerica**—focuses on supporting education and digital literacy, food insecurity and community development. Organizations that received grants include the Valley House Homeless Shelter in Twin Falls, Idaho, and Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, Mississippi.

AWARDS

National Geographic won eight Emmys at the documentary portion of the 43rd News and Documentary Emmy Awards. It took home Outstanding Current Affairs Documentary for “The Rescue” and Outstanding Historical Documentary for “9/11: One Day in America.” **HBO** and **PBS** had four apiece and **CNN** and **Netflix** each earned two. **Apple TV+**’s “Fathom” took home Outstanding Sound and Hulu’s “WeWork: Or the Making and Breaking of a \$47 Billion Unicorn” won Outstanding Business and Economic Documentary. Filmmaker *Sir David Attenborough* was given a Lifetime Achievement Award.

PROGRAMMING

Peacock ordered a movie based on the **NBC** comedy “Community” and is also non-exclusively acquiring the series’ full library. The movie’s premiere date is yet to be announced. – **National Geographic** signed a first-look deal with *Chris Hemsworth* and *Ben Grayson*’s production company Wild State. Wild State will develop scripted and unscripted content across film, TV and digital. The agreement comes ahead of the debut of “Limitless with Chris Hemsworth,” a six-part Disney+ series that looks into the potential of the human body.

PEOPLE

Janet Meahan was upped to SVP, Communications at **Aitice USA**. – *Mary Shaw*, a familiar and friendly face for **TCA** members, was promoted to VP, Communications & Strategic Alliances at **CTAM**.

CABLEFAX DASHBOARD

Twitter Hits

Inside Verizon @InsideVerizon

Verizon frontline emergency response vehicles began rolling into areas impacted by #HurricaneIan. It'll be lending support to keep our customers, first responders and communities connected.

Learn more: vz.to/VZlan



Linda Yaccarino @lindayacc

As a founding member, together with my friends Lynda Clarizio, Joy Marcus and all the other advisors and investors of this fund, we're doing more than cutting a check. We're backing great ideas to support women and their businesses at every stage—from start-up to scale. Bravo!



Doreen Bogdan-Martin @ITUBDTDirector

Humbled & honored to be elected @ITU Secretary-General & grateful for the trust & confidence Member States placed in me. Ready to lead an ITU that will inspire, include & innovate, so that everyone, everywhere can harness the power of #digital to transform their lives. #Penipot



Research

(Source: [S&P Global Market Intelligence](#))

- > Worldwide smartphone shipments are expected to decline 2.4% in 2022 as inflation, component shortages and lengthening replacement cycles drive down demand.
- > Many markets have reached, or are approaching, smartphone saturation with penetration rates above 80%.
- > Annual smartphone shipments are expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of less than 1% through 2026 from 2021 to 1.36 billion units.

Up Ahead

OCTOBER 10-11: [The WICT Network's Annual Leadership Conference](#), NYC

OCTOBER 11-12: [36th Annual NAMIC Conference](#), NYC

OCTOBER 12: [Kaitz Dinner](#), NYC

OCTOBER 17-20: [NAB Show New York](#), NYC

NOVEMBER 3: [Fiber Broadband Association Regional Fiber Connect](#), Columbus, Ohio

Quotable

“It is one of the great honors of my life to have the honorary Knight of the British Empire conferred on me by Queen Elizabeth II before she passed. I have great affection for the people of the UK and have always appreciated and been inspired by their extraordinary contributions. And special congratulations to John Williams. It is an honor for me to join him as an Honorary Knight! I have always been in awe of his work. May the force be with him!”

Former Disney CEO **Bob Iger** [commenting on Twitter](#) on being named an Honorary Knight of the British Empire by the United Kingdom government.