

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Shifting Gears: Speedvision Gets Ready to Return

Nearly 27 years ago, the automotive-focused network **Speedvision** embarked on its cable and satellite TV journey to serve motorsport enthusiasts across the country. In 2013, the network—then owned by **Fox**—closed its doors and was made into **Fox Sports 1**. Now, Speedvision is turning on the ignition again, returning as a FAST network this fall.

The revived network is led by *Bob Scanlon*, who was one of the co-founders of the original Speedvision back in 1995. It has plenty of backing from the other members of its leadership team: former **Discovery** President of Ad Sales *Joe Abruzzese*, Hendrick Motorsports owner *Rick Hendrick* and former **WWE** wrestler *Bill Goldberg*.

Speedvision will have nine series out of the gate, with 95% of that content being exclusive to the network. It'll initially be available on nine platforms including **Plex**, **TCL Channel**, **MyBundle.TV**, **Redbox** and **LocalNow**, but Scanlon told **Cablefax** the network is in negotiations with six more services. Beyond its current negotiations, Scanlon wants to make Speedvision available “everywhere” and eventually become the go-to automotive entertainment brand around the globe.

Scanlon said he's thrilled to be part of the network's return, especially considering how well-known the original Speedvision brand became. The idea to bring the network back to screens happened over time as he kept tabs on the Speedvision trademark, which eventually became abandoned in January 2017 after no longer

being in use. As someone who helped craft two motor networks before (the other being Discovery's **Velocity**, now **MotorTrend**), Scanlon has a keen eye for spotting openings in the automotive TV marketplace, and he believes now is the time to strike.

“I recognized an opportunity now in the marketplace where there is a segment of the population that does not have access to our blue chip, high-quality programming that focuses on automotive enthusiasts and the automotive lifestyle,” he said.

The decision to return as a FAST network didn't have to do with the cars that'll appear on the network's more than 500 hours of programming. Scanlon said the advertising base in the automotive category is “enormous” and that he witnessed the viability of a motorsport FAST channel when he developed Velocity. Plus, not requiring viewers to pay a monthly subscription to access the content is an added bonus.

“We think that is a big advantage to adding Speedvision, because this is such an attractive category for advertising and one where their sales teams are going to be able to go out and actually get more revenue, perhaps at a higher CPM than just doing programmatic ad sets.”

The network's new look will pique the curiosity of its original audience, which is expected to be mostly aged 50 or older now, but Speedvision is building roads to connect with a younger demographic. It will still have the classic cars that have been loved across generations, but it also plans to offer programs relative to electric vehicles and other recent automotive innovations.

For someone like Scanlon who's been in the industry for



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multiple decades, he's learned a thing or two on how to make sure Speedvision stays in first place. The main lesson he's learned is to create content that's fulfilling to viewers, giving them more reasons to become frequent visitors.

"First lesson is to treat the audience with respect. Don't talk down to them, don't insert a bunch of artificially introduced issues like throwing tools at each other in a shop or a ticking-down clock where 'Oh, my God, are we going to get this done?'" Scanlon said. "That's the biggest lesson, and the audience will respond to that."

SOHN SUPPORTERS AGAIN CALL ON SENATE

The call to consider the nomination of Gigi Sohn to be an FCC commissioner has been renewed with a group of nearly 250 organizations sending a letter to the Senate Friday urging lawmakers to give her a chance. Sohn was nominated by President Biden in October 2021, but it has been in a state of limbo over the last year with Republicans expressing concerns about previous posts on social media and her involvement in the now-defunct Locast. Those that joined together for the letter, including the Consumer Technology Association, INCOMPAS and the National Digital Inclusion Alliance, now say those who oppose Sohn aren't giving her enough credit for her lifetime of service to the cable and telecom industry. "We call on the Senate to give the consideration that is due to this highly qualified individual, who has dedicated her career to ensuring consumers have access to communications services available to everybody, regardless of income, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, geography or political viewpoint," the letter said. "Her life's work is the embodiment of

the FCC's mission and we simply cannot have a less-than fully functioning FCC to persist any longer."

FOX CORP + NEWS CORP

Rupert Murdoch is exploring re-combining Fox Corp and News Corp, the WSJ reports (and it seems like the News Corp-owned publication should know!). Special board committees have been established by both companies to explore the move, the paper reports, though it warns discussions are in the early stages.

TICKING CARRIAGE CLOCK

Set your alarms—we're still watching Altice USA/Fox Corp. and Verizon Fios/Nexstar to see if the pairs are able to strike new distribution agreements before their current deals expire later tonight. We checked in with all the players today, and negotiations on all sides are ongoing. What's at stake for Altice USA and Fox is the drop of local O&O stations, FS1, FS2, Fox News, Fox Business Network and the Big Ten Network. For Verizon, 15 East Coast Nexstar stations and access to NewsNation could be booted from its Fios lineup.

RATINGS

MSNBC drew 3 million viewers during Thursday's Jan. 6 hearing, topping CNN (2.2 million) and Fox News (800,000). MSNBC's special coverage, led by Andrea Mitchell, Katy Tur and Hallie Jackson from 12pm-4pm, was also #1 across cable news.

STARLINK NEEDS HELP FOR UKRAINE SERVICE

SpaceX CEO Elon Musk is looking for help in paying for Starlink service in the Ukraine, according to a CNN report. Documents reviewed by CNN include a letter Musk sent to the Pentagon last month saying the company cannot continue

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The advertisement includes a smaller image of the Cablefax Daily magazine cover. The cover features the headline "Deal Talk: RCN/News/Grande CEO" and "Dissect \$6.1bn Stargate Deal". Other articles on the cover include "SpaceX CEO Elon Musk is looking for help in paying for Starlink service in the Ukraine" and "MSNBC drew 3 million viewers during Thursday's Jan. 6 hearing". The cover also mentions "WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST" and "Cablefax Daily VOLUME 31 | NO. 211".

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funding service in the country. He asked for the Pentagon to take over the funding of the military's use of Starlink. "In addition to terminals, we have to create, launch, maintain & replenish satellites & ground stations & pay telcos for access to Internet via gateways. We've also had to defend against cyberattacks & jamming, which are getting harder," Musk tweeted on Friday. "Burn is approaching ~\$20M/month." Starlink has been supporting internet access in Ukraine since days after Russia's invasion in February.

FOX PICKS INNOVID

Fox Corp entered a multi-year partnership with the cross-platform TV measurement company **Innovid**. Fox will use Innovid's "Innovid XP" solution, one that takes data from smart TVs, ACR and CTV ad impressions and provides a deduplicated view of audiences for Fox networks and AVOD service **Tubi**, which has been partnered with Innovid

DOING GOOD

Verizon is donating \$250,000 to support small businesses impacted by Hurricane Ian. Through a partnership with **Collaboratory**, a non-profit community-centric organization in Southwest Florida, and taxpayer nonprofit **Florida TaxWatch** to create \$10,000 grants designed to offer relief to those businesses that were the heaviest hit. Verizon has also dedicated engineers to focus on adding capacity to the network in order to support increased data traffic following the storm. Data traffic on the network has increased by more than 70% in some locations.

-- **WOW!** donated \$30,000 to the American Red Cross to support its Hurricane Ian relief efforts across Florida. The company recently started building its fiber network in Seminole and Orange Counties and has employees and facilities in Pinellas County and Tampa Bay.

PROGRAMMING

"Cribs" is returning to **MTV** on Oct. 27 at 9pm. This season will feature celebrities like *Ariel Winter*, *Kristin Cavallari*, *Michael Strahan*, and past seasons of the show are available on **Paramount+**.

CABLEFAX DASHBOARD

Twitter Hits



Research

- (Source: Samba TV and HarrisX)
- > A survey of more than 2,300 U.S. adults registered to vote in November revealed just 49% have traditional linear TV subscriptions.
 - > 1 in 4 of those who do still have traditional TV plan to cancel in the next 6 months.
 - > More than 80% of registered voters nationally and in key battleground states stream programming.
 - > Independents, key swing votes, are the least likely to have traditional TV with 42% having it.
 - > Across social media, Facebook remains the most used platform by registered voters nationally, but has less of an impact in battleground states.

Up Ahead

- OCTOBER 17-20:** [NAB Show New York, NYC](#)
- OCTOBER 18-20:** [NetworkX, Amsterdam](#)
- OCTOBER 19:** [Media Institute Free Speech Gala, Virtual](#)
- NOVEMBER 3:** [Fiber Broadband Association Regional Fiber Connect, Columbus, Ohio](#)

Quotable

"At ESPN, we use sports terminology all of the time, and we use it as analogies... We say diversity is about being on the team, and inclusion is about who gets to play. I'll stretch that analogy a little bit. James was passionate about making sure that people had a chance to play in meaningful situations, and if you knew him, he would encourage you to step up when he saw opportunities for you. He would coach you to do that because he actually felt very strongly and when he believed in someone, he wanted them to succeed. Stepping up is not always easy to do, especially for people of color and women... Find an opportunity in the next three days or seven weeks to lift someone up."

- ESPN SVP, Programming and Scheduling **Freddy Rolón** honoring the late **James Hendricks** during **NAMIC's Annual Awards Luncheon**