

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Golden State: CalBroadband Head Reflects on First Year, Rebrand

Janus Norman encountered the digital divide for the first time while serving as SVP of the **California Medical Association**. As the organization scored wins that gave doctors in the state more tools to offer services via telehealth, the lobbyist was shocked to hear that some practitioners didn't have broadband powerful enough to transfer large amounts of data or host video calls.

His interest in high-speed broadband sparked, and he became President of **CalBroadband** (formerly **CCTA**) last spring in the hopes that he could help its member companies improve the lives of all Californians. "I don't want entire geographic areas that can't get telehealth. That to me, from a career standpoint, would be soul-crushing," he told **CFX**. "But if we can make the availability of high-speed broadband as a whole more ubiquitous throughout the state and increase that ability for people to utilize telehealth... that's a tremendous opportunity that I see and I want to make sure we get that accomplished."

He's still pretty fresh to the job, but Norman's learned a lot since those early days. His first lesson—there are a lot of major issues to tackle and no one-size-fits-all solutions. But he fully believes that if California can crack the codes around availability, adoption and affordability, anyone can. "If California can solve for it, it really does provide a blueprint for the rest of the country," he said. "We've got this mixture of urban and rural geographic areas that really can be a template for success on how do you roll out to hard-to-reach areas and what do

you do in highly dense areas in terms of increasing adoption if the infrastructure is already there?"

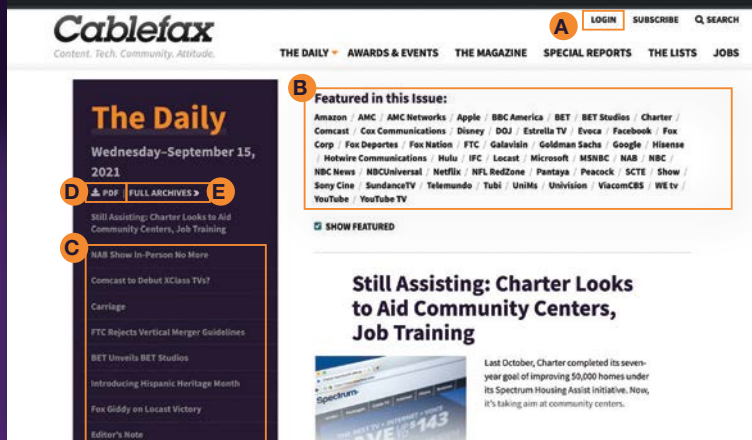
California is home to the largest state broadband association, and that coupled with the hot-button issues its lawmakers take on naturally positions it as a leader when it comes to questions regarding data privacy regulation, net neutrality and more. It also has a unique regulatory structure under the **California Public Utilities Commission**, and Norman said he's been fielding a lot of questions about how to establish strong relationships with bodies like state broadband offices.

The association's recent refresh to CalBroadband, complete with a new site and logo, was also a move meant to position it as an educational resource for lawmakers, other state officers, providers of all sizes and the public. "We are the leaders in terms of number of households served amongst our membership in the providing of broadband and so we want to be that place that policymakers look to, legislative staff looks to, media outlets look to when they're trying to get an understanding of what is broadband and what does it mean to our society at large," Norman said.

Norman's focus right now is on a bill introduced in February to the **California State Assembly** by Democratic Assembly member **Jim Wood** that would define and regulate broadband service providers as a public utility. He argues that regulation would allow for the enforcement of functions like network resiliency, reliable backup power, blackout prevention, network replacement and emergency preparedness.

Norman is having conversations with state lawmakers now to

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create a better understanding of the potential impacts of such legislation on private industry and to inform them that this could prove distracting as broadband providers prepare to put dollars from **NTIA's** BEAD programs and funding from state grants to work. The California Public Utilities Commission has already crafted a plan that hopes to bring broadband to every Californian by 2032, dividing the state into regions and issuing a challenge for availability in each of those regions to exceed 98%. If the state's providers are able to deliver service to every address, then all energy can be put toward issues like adoption and affordability.

"California's got a moment to solve one of the two major buckets when it comes to closing the digital divide. We've got an opportunity to solve that accessibility bucket," he said. "We really need to focus on that and do it in a way that quite frankly connects to all the goals that have been set statutorily about what should availability be in the different regions of California. If we accomplish that in this moment, utilizing all the state and federal resources, it is the domino that falls and allows us to make faster progress related to adoption."

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**ALJ DENIES STANDARD GENERAL MOTION TO BYPASS HEARING**

The **FCC's** Administrative Law Judge on Thursday rejected a request from **Standard General** to skip holding a hearing over questions around its proposed acquisition of **TEGNA**. It had asked the ALJ to instead allow the full Commission to review the Media Bureau order designating a hearing over concerns in the record related to how the proposed transaction could artificially raise prices for consumers and result in job losses. Standard General had previously suggested it may take the matter to the courts. "We are disappointed by this ALJ finding, which we believe to be erroneous. We remain committed to seeking all available avenues to both vindicate our rights, and promote the public interest which is best served through a full Commission vote to approve this transaction which any three Commissioners can request. We urge the FCC to act swiftly since in this matter a decision delayed is a decision denied," the company said Thursday. FCC Chairwoman *Jessica Rosenworcel* declined to comment on the issue during a press conference Thursday. Commissioner *Brendan Carr* said he hadn't looked at the ruling yet, but added it's hard to identify a merger of that size going through the process and ultimately reaching a timely favorable decision.

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**GIGI TELL-ALL BOOK COMING?**

*Gigi Sohn* gave *The Washington Post* her first interview after bowing out of consideration for an **FCC** commissioner seat, hinting that she has a lot more to say about the process. "I definitely

feel like I've got a book to write," she told the Post in an exclusive hour-long [interview](#). "There's been a bunch of stuff that's happened over the past 16 months ... that is going to make people's eyes bug out." It was certainly an interesting 16 months that included a billboard on the Vegas strip declaring her "too extreme" and a *Daily Mail* article [headlined](#), "Biden's FCC nominee Gigi Sohn sits on board of nonprofit that wants to uphold online sex work and that honored an OnlyFans dominatrix who boasts about urinating on faces." Sohn would have been the FCC's first openly gay commissioner. She told the publication the implication in some of the articles were "clearly tied to QAnon themes about LGBTQ+ people

**Cablefax Executive Round Up**

**We asked some of our past FAXIES PR Exec of the Year honorees how social media has changed their relationship with reporters. Check out their responses and don't forget to enter the best PR & Marketing people, campaign and events in the 2023 FAXIES at [TheFAXIES.com](http://TheFAXIES.com) by the March 24 Best Price Deadline.**



**Chris Delhomme**  
VP, Communications  
**Paramount Media Networks and MTV Entertainment Studios**

"Social media allows communications professionals to have constant contact with journalists. It also provides crucial insights into a reporter's interests and current beats, as well as helping to create a personal connection through commenting on relatable posts."



**Ted Hearn**  
VP Communications  
**ACA Connects - America's Communications Association**

"At its finest, social media is an unrivaled means of sharing facts, ideas, and insights—building blocks that every diligent reporter wants to have in abundance. As a pervasive resource, social media has clearly increased the potential to engage in new ways with the many reporters who live and work in some of the thousands of communities served by ACA Connects members. In dealing, say, with a subject as vast and complex as rural broadband deployment, thoughtful reporters greatly appreciate having ready access to the many studies, charts, and surveys that ACA Connects makes available for free on its website and posts to its Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook accounts."



**Trish Niemann**  
VP, Corporate Communications  
**Cable One**

"With the news cycle moving faster than ever before, social media has become a highly effective tool for sharing news—with both journalists and consumers. Journalists are continuously looking for news and information and social media enables public relations professionals to meet that turnaround time quickly and effectively. Social media also enables more finely targeted media outreach and is a great platform to connect with and pitch to journalists!"

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as groomers, as perverts, as sex traffickers” and she was worried her family was at risk. Sohn said her decision to withdraw ultimately came after speaking with the White House and a top Senate Democrat who said there was no way forward for her nomination.

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## YOUTUBE TV PRICE HIKE

**YouTube TV** is upping its monthly cost from \$64.99 to \$72.99 in response to the increasing cost of programming, the vMVPD announced in a tweet. New members will see the price increase immediately while existing members will see a rise on their bill starting April 18. Additionally, it is lowering the price of its 4K Plus add-on from \$19.99/month to \$9.99/month.

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## ROSENWORCEL'S ROBO MISSION

Just call **FCC** Chairwoman *Jessica Rosenworcel* the Robocall Cop. While the agency took action to prevent robotexts Thursday, she wants to do more and is leaning on Congress to update the FCC's powers to fight the nuisance of spam calls and texts. Speaking to reporters after Thursday's open meeting, Rosenworcel said she just met with **Senate Communications Subcommittee** Chair *Ben Ray Lujan* (D-NM) on the matter. “We need to expand the definition of autodialer. There was a Supreme Court decision a year and a half ago that makes it a lot harder to go after bad actors who are flooding our phone lines with those calls,” she said. That unanimous 2021 decision (*Facebook vs Duguid*) clarified that equipment dialing from a list of numbers doesn't qualify as an autodialer under the Telephone Consumer Protection Act unless it uses a random or sequential number generator. It's notable that any broadening of the definition of autodialer would have an impact on businesses with telemarketing, such as ISPs. Rosenworcel also touched on the issue of fines. The FCC can announce fines, but has to rely on **DOJ** to enforce them in court, “I would very much like to be able to have this agency go prosecute those fines. I want to make it a priority,” she said. On Thursday, the FCC unanimously approved an order requiring mobile providers to block texts that appear to come from phone numbers that are unlikely to transmit text messages.

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## CABLE CENTER UNVEILS SYNDEO

**The Cable Center** pulled the curtain on its new operating brand that'll serve as an education and collaboration hub for the connectivity, media and tech industries. Called the Syndeo Institute, it'll feature intrapreneurship and innovation programs, collaboration events and leadership workshops to further focus on workforce development. The Institute targets employee retention, intrapreneurship to accelerate innovation and talent pipeline development, all pillars in The Cable Center's Vision 2025 initiative.

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## ROCCO ON '60 MINUTES'

Sunday's “60 Minutes” (7pm ET on **CBS** and **Paramount+**) will profile **Mediacom** CEO *Rocco Commisso*, who also owns the New

York Cosmos and Italian football club ACF Fiorentina. The segment is called “Only in America,” which sounds like something *Commisso* would say. He has frequently spoke about coming to the U.S. when he was 12 years old, hustling a gig playing the accordion that helped him gain entrance into the prestigious Mount Saint Michael Academy. He earned a soccer scholarship to Columbia (despite not playing in high school) and went on to become a billionaire.

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## COMCAST TO APPEAL XFINITY MOBILE NAD DECISION

**Comcast Cable** is appealing recommendations from the **National Advertising Division** to modify certain claims surrounding its **Xfinity Mobile** service following a challenge by **AT&T**. Among the claims NAD recommended changing are statements in ads that Xfinity Mobile is the “fastest mobile service.” NAD found that while Xfinity Mobile has the fastest combined WiFi and cellular speeds, those speeds are limited to Comcast's WiFi footprint. It recommended that Comcast disclose that limitation of its network in advertising. It also suggested that Comcast should discontinue its “most reliable” and “highest ranked” claims as there wasn't sufficient evidence in the record to support those statements. NAD took a look at how Comcast discloses that consumers must purchase Xfinity internet service to receive mobile service, and ultimately found those disclosures insufficient. Comcast is choosing to appeal the decision “because it believes that the challenged advertising conveys truthful messages about the unique benefits of the Xfinity Mobile service, delivered through the combination of two networks.”

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## TUBI RISES IN NIELSEN'S GAUGE

While total usage of TV was down 5.1% in February compared to the previous month, **Tubi** found its way into **Nielsen's** monthly viewership report “The Gauge” for the first time. It's the second **FAST** platform to grab 1% of total streaming viewership, joining **Pluto TV** as the only ones spun away from the “Other” category. The streaming category makes up 34.3% of TV usage after gaining 1.5 share points from January. **YouTube** led with 7.9% of viewing, followed by **Netflix** at 7.3%. **Hulu** and **Prime Video** had 3.3% and 3%, respectively, and **Disney+** (1.8%), **HBO Max** (1.3%) and **Peacock** (1%) all followed suit. Usage for broadcast and cable was down 9.2% and 5.7%, respectively, with sports viewing on broadcast down 64.7% after the **NFL** Playoffs concluded in January. Cable was the second largest category for TV usage with 30.2%, with broadcast third at 23.8%.

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## DOING GOOD

As part of its initiative to invest \$30 million in 100 community centers and job training programs in rural areas, **Charter** is launching Spectrum Community Center Assist programs in 15 new locations. The first will open in Tampa Bay, Florida, on March 25 before unveiling locations in 10 other states over 2023. To date, SCCA has helped around 7,500 people in the company's 41-state footprint.

# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

## 'Ted Lasso' Takes Underdog Mentality in Season 3

It's been nearly a decade since the character Ted Lasso was first introduced by **NBC Sports** as part of the network's promotion campaign for the **Premier League**. The unequivocally positive coach has been crafted from the beginning by *Jason Sudeikis*, and Lasso's own **Apple TV+** series debuted its third and potentially final season Wednesday with two episodes. The season begins with AFC Richmond being back in the top division of English soccer, but pundits are quick to unanimously label the team as the predicted last-place finishers. It's obvious Lasso and his team will play the role of the underdog as the long grind of the Premier League season unravels, but as he's been doing for more than nine years, Lasso meets the criticism with confidence and a little bit of self-deprecation. Lasso's trials and tribulations in learning the beautiful game and defying the odds has driven a revitalized interest in U.S. soccer. Both **MLS** and the **NWSL** are setting viewership milestones each season, helping the U.S. men's and women's national teams receive immense support when it comes time for the World Cup. What Ted Lasso has accomplished is making soccer a mainstream topic, giving many an incentive to wake up early on Saturdays and don their favorite team while having a popular show to accompany a discussion. The U.S.' growing passion for the sport is still new compared to Brazil, France or England, but Ted Lasso exemplifies the country's curiosity about a new game. From inspiring a craving for biscuits to teaching the idea of promotion and relegation, Lasso and his everlasting motto of "Believe" are easy to root for. Luckily for fans, the door is open for potential spinoff series, but for now they'll have to wait for the fate of AFC Richmond in what's set to be another whirlwind campaign. — *Noah Ziegler*

### REVIEWS

"Red Election," streaming on **Hulu**. As in so many TV series, this well-done political thriller asks viewers to suspend reality and accept certain things. The first is that Moscow would never interfere in a foreign election. Oh, never mind. Here the election is a UK referendum that, if approved, would allow Scotland to break from London. As you can imagine, the story seems all too real. Speaking of reality, one of the series' strengths is that almost no one is exempt from flaws or entanglements. For example, the UK prime minister may be hiding a daughter he had with a woman who's not his wife. Making it more complicated, the mother was Scottish. In addition, the man (the always wonderful *Stephen Dillane*) leading MI-6's investigation of the assassination of a Russian mole also has a daughter in the squad. Should he favor his daughter (*Lydia Leonard*) or be harder on her? He does both. Owing to several plot twists and shifting alliances, "Red Election" is lean-in viewing. Yet, for viewers thirsting for garden-variety spy vs. spy material, it's a strong choice. — "Independent Lens: Storming Caesars Palace," premiere, check local listings for time, Monday, **PBS**. Fabulous doc for "Women's History Month" about *Ruby Duncan*, a grassroots organizer who took on the Vegas mob and created an anti-poverty movement of mothers. — *Seth Arenstein*

BASIC CABLE		
P2+ PRIME RANKINGS*		
(03/06/23-03/12/23)		
MON-SUN	MC	MC
	US	US AA
	AA%	(000)
<b>FNC</b>	<b>0.704</b>	<b>2199</b>
<b>ESPN</b>	<b>0.424</b>	<b>1324</b>
<b>MSNBC</b>	<b>0.349</b>	<b>1088</b>
<b>HGTV</b>	<b>0.296</b>	<b>924</b>
<b>HIST</b>	<b>0.246</b>	<b>767</b>
<b>INSP</b>	<b>0.229</b>	<b>714</b>
<b>TNT</b>	<b>0.215</b>	<b>670</b>
<b>FOOD</b>	<b>0.214</b>	<b>667</b>
<b>DISC</b>	<b>0.212</b>	<b>660</b>
<b>HALL</b>	<b>0.207</b>	<b>646</b>
<b>USA</b>	<b>0.199</b>	<b>622</b>
<b>TLC</b>	<b>0.189</b>	<b>589</b>
<b>ID</b>	<b>0.184</b>	<b>575</b>
<b>TBSC</b>	<b>0.166</b>	<b>518</b>
<b>ESPN2</b>	<b>0.151</b>	<b>471</b>
<b>TVLAND</b>	<b>0.148</b>	<b>463</b>
<b>CNN</b>	<b>0.142</b>	<b>442</b>
<b>A&amp;E</b>	<b>0.131</b>	<b>409</b>
<b>LIFE</b>	<b>0.123</b>	<b>383</b>
<b>GSN</b>	<b>0.118</b>	<b>369</b>
<b>REELZ</b>	<b>0.117</b>	<b>366</b>
<b>BRAVO</b>	<b>0.116</b>	<b>363</b>
<b>WETV</b>	<b>0.111</b>	<b>346</b>
<b>BET</b>	<b>0.111</b>	<b>346</b>
<b>AMC</b>	<b>0.107</b>	<b>334</b>
<b>HMM</b>	<b>0.105</b>	<b>328</b>
<b>FS1</b>	<b>0.097</b>	<b>302</b>
<b>NATGEO</b>	<b>0.094</b>	<b>293</b>
<b>OXY</b>	<b>0.093</b>	<b>290</b>
<b>SYFY</b>	<b>0.093</b>	<b>289</b>
<b>FX</b>	<b>0.090</b>	<b>280</b>
<b>BIG TEN</b>	<b>0.083</b>	<b>260</b>
<b>NAN</b>	<b>0.082</b>	<b>257</b>
<b>COM</b>	<b>0.082</b>	<b>255</b>
<b>TRAVEL</b>	<b>0.080</b>	<b>250</b>

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

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Magazine Publish Date: **May 15**

Ad Space Close: April 13  
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