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WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

More Hurdles: Consumers Still Dislike and Distrust Subsidy Programs

The Affordable Connectivity Program has received a lot of praise as being a major success story when it comes to government action during the pandemic, but that doesn't mean it is perfect. More than two years after ACP's predecessor, the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, was established, households are still finding it cumbersome to sign up for the program.

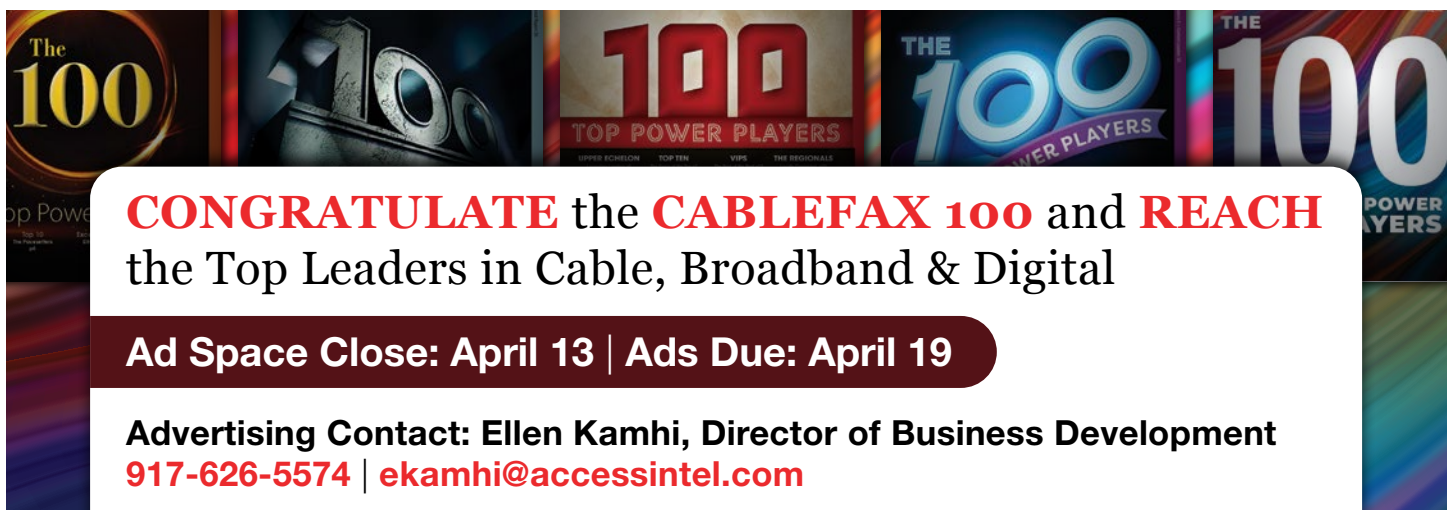
Panelists taking part in a roundtable hosted by the FCC's Communications Equity and Diversity Council said consumers still don't fully trust the program and don't think it is worth jumping through hoops to sign up if it will only be around for another year. "They don't want to give up the personal data required for it and they feel like the government is being intrusive just to be able to get this voucher," **Virgin Islands Next Generation Network** President and CEO *Stephan Adams* said. "People say 'I would rather forego the internet than give up personal data.'"

We don't know how long ACP will be around, but the good news is that plenty of other government and private initiatives have been established that hope to keep the momentum toward closing the digital divide that was jumpstarted during the pandemic going. The Digital Equity Act, for example, provides \$2.75 billion for **NTIA** to use to establish three grant programs aimed at digital equity and inclusion, and community organizations are watching the timelines on those programs closely to plan how long they can maintain the programs they established during the pandemic.

Beyond their programs, those organizations are key to building up the consumer trust that's needed to keep ACP sign-ups on the rise. **EveryoneOn** conducted a research study to examine the digital divide in the midst of the pandemic, and CEO *Norma Fernandez* said 65% of the survey participants said they trusted places like libraries, schools and non-profits when it came to learning about resources, including those from government entities or the private sector. When asked specifically about the Emergency Broadband Benefit program, upwards of 60% said they were actively learning about programs like that from those trusted organizations.

"My worry is that if there are delays or we have issues with appropriations to get that money out to localities and state governments, the community organizations, they don't get a lot of general operating dollars typically. They have to work grant to grant in many respects," **Kids First Chicago** Chief of Policy *Hal Woods* said. "So if we lose the staff because there's a gap in funding essentially that the city can't make up for, we lose the boots on the ground, the people that have been trained for the last three years to do this programming, and then we might lose momentum across the city in terms of being able to do digital divide issues as well."

Comcast EVP, Public Policy and Digital Equity *Broderick Johnson* said that while we're beyond the emergency state that came with the first year of the pandemic, there's still a need for a sense of urgency across the private sector, community organizations and government organizations to solve these long-running



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issues tied to broadband access, awareness and affordability.

“But we have to be patient because those who are the hardest to help, get awareness to and to get devices to and to learn how to be digitally literate are those Americans we can’t leave behind,” Johnson said. “We have to be patient in how we address their needs and their lack of trust for government or the lack of awareness.”

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CARRIAGE

The Opening Day fever has hit **Fubo**. The vMVPD added **MLB.TV** to its lineup and is expected to become available in the coming days before the first pitch of the 2023 MLB season March 30. Fubo already has **MLB Network**, **MLB Strike Zone**, RSNs and other local/national outlets that carry baseball games. Customers can add MLB.TV for \$24.99/month, which gives viewers access to every out-of-market MLB contest live. – **Sling Freestream** is adding 16 new channels to its lineup, ranging from Spanish-language offerings to anime and documentaries. Of those additions include **Anime X HIDIVE**, **Canela.TV**, **Documentary+**, **FLOU Cine** and **Canela Clasicos**, helping bring Sling Freestream’s lineup to over 230 channels and 41,000 on-demand titles.

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MORE THAN 600 BULK CHALLENGES IN ON FCC MAP

The **FCC** has received more than 600 bulk challenges to its national broadband map to date, according to an update from Chair *Jessica Rosenworcel*. In the last four months,

the Commission’s mapping team has processed challenges to availability data for more than four million locations, and 2.96 million broadband-serviceable locations have been added to the map. The most significant increases percentage-wise came in Alaska, U.S. territories and Tribal lands. Another 1.92 million locations have been removed thanks to data refreshes and tools that help remove buildings like garages and sheds from the total count. “While over time we expect future versions of the Fabric to require fewer refinements, these ongoing efforts to improve the Fabric outside of the challenge process will continue and will remain an important tool for the improvement of the National Broadband Map,” Rosenworcel said. “We remain on track to release new and improved maps later this spring.”

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CHATTANOOGA STARTS QUANTUM EDUCATION PROGRAM

Chattanooga has launched a new campaign to prepare for education, jobs and business opportunities that could be unlocked with the emergence of quantum technology. The initiative is called Gig City Goes Quantum, and the city will use **EPB Chattanooga’s** quantum network to accelerate the commercialization of those technologies by engaging in discussions with community leaders, universities, schools and companies. Educational resources will be available for students from 5th grade through university and all others curious about quantum networks through partners including the **National Science Foundation** and **Chattanooga 2.0**.

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The first community discussion will be held in person at and livestreamed from Chattanooga State Community College on April 14, World Quantum Day, with the goal being to engage folks of all ages in more than a thousand quantum learning activities by May 31.

FTC PROPOSES 'CLICK TO CANCEL' RULE

The **FTC** proposed a provision that would require sellers to make it as easy for consumers to cancel their enrollment as it was when they signed up. The "click to cancel" provision was introduced Thursday as part of the Commission's ongoing review of its 1973 Negative Option Rule. The proposal would implement a simple cancellation mechanism, new requirements for sellers before making additional offers and new guidelines regarding reminders and confirmations.

FIBER FRENZY

TDS Telecommunications is expanding its fiber-optic service to 10,000 residential and business addresses in Marshfield and Hewitt, Wisconsin. Customers will get access to speeds of up to 8 Gbps, with businesses being able to receive a dedicated connection of up to 10 Gbps. Construction is slated to start in the spring and won't involve burying conduit and cable in utility easement areas.

REPUBLICANS UNHAPPY WITH CHIPS ACT NOFO

A group of Senate Republicans sent a letter to Secretary of Commerce *Gina Raimondo* with concerns about how her agency is implementing the \$39 billion in funding tied to the CHIPS Act. They claim that a recently-released Notice of Funding Opportunity would actually make domestic chip production more expensive, less competitive and reliant on taxpayer subsidies rather than private investment. Additionally, they took fault with "extraneous environmental-social-governance (ESG) requirements" that are seemingly in line with policies introduced by progressive lawmakers that had previously not been passed in Congress. "These policies include liberal wish list items, many of which were removed from the White House's "Build Back Better" major spending package, H.R. 5376 (PL 117-169), because they did not have the votes to pass at even a simple majority in the Senate. To claim that these provisions are integral to the "national security mission" of the CHIPS Act and will "[result] in lower costs" defies reason," the letter read.

SYNDEO INSTITUTE RELEASES SECOND I&I REPORT

Agility is crucial in the modern working world, according to the **Syndeo Institute at The Cable Center's** second [Intrapreneurship & Innovation Report](#). It featured conversations and excerpts 21 leaders across the connectivity, media, entertainment and tech-

nology industries, touching on key areas that affect the workplace. The report cited a **Deloitte** study that showed 85% of business executives say organizations should create more agile ways of organizing work, which will help anticipate any sizable, sudden change. Approximately 19% of people leaders lack visibility into their organization's plans, but 88% of that same group believes it's important to align employee purpose with organizational goals. Of those featured in the report are **WOW!** CEO *Teresa Elder*, **Cox** President *Mark Greatrex*, **NCTA** President/CEO *Michael Powell*, **Boycorn** President/CEO *Patty Boyers* and more.

ATSC 3.0 LIVE IN ROCHESTER

Select TV stations in Rochester, New York, started broadcasting with NextGen TV. Those are WHAM-TV (**ABC**), WROC-TV (**CBS**), WUHF (**Fox**) and WXXI-TV (**PBS**). NextGen TV brings improved video and audio as well as advanced emergency alerts.

RATINGS

Starz's "Power Book II: Ghost" became the network's biggest premiere weekend ever in its first three days. According to early reporting from **Nielsen**, the Season 3 debut on March 17 delivered 5.8 million multiplatform viewers following its premiere weekend.

WINE AND DINE

There's nothing like a glass of wine with your favorite show. **A+E Networks** is introducing The **Lifetime** Network Movies Wine Club, a subscription program that delivers wine to viewers' doorsteps. It'll be promoted across Lifetime's linear and digital platforms as well as podcasts and social media. Wine Club members will be able to customize their package with various games and tie-ins to Lifetime programming. At launch, new subscribers will get 12 curated wines and two bonus bottles.

PROGRAMMING

Season 7 of **Starz's** "Outlander" will be split into two, eight-episode parts. The first iteration will begin June 16 at midnight on the Starz app and Lionsgate+ internationally, with its linear debut set for June 16 at 8pm in the U.S. and Canada. The second half will air in 2024. - To celebrate **Warner Bros.'** 100th anniversary, **Turner Classic Movies** will have 30 days of signature films throughout April. Starting April 1, movies can be found in the Classics Curated by TCM hub on **HBO Max**. Some of those include "East of Eden," "Land of the Pharaohs" and "Helen of Troy."

PEOPLE

Comcast NBCU named *Mona Dexter* its VP, Military & Veteran Affairs, replacing the recently retired *Carol Eggert*. Dexter will oversee military hiring, inclusivity programs and initiatives engaging military customers and communities. She joins from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation "Hiring Our Heroes."

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

'Great Expectations' – A Classic on Class

It's been more than 150 years since *Charles Dickens* introduced the world to an orphan named Pip, and though he didn't have to contend with the ills of TikTok or Instagram in his coming-of-age story, there's still plenty of relevance to today. Hence **Hulu's** six-part limited series "Great Expectations," with the first two episodes premiering Sunday. "I think any great work of literature is pretty timeless when it deals with the human condition and the way things are, but I think it's particularly timely in the sense that sort of quite unusually and unfashionably at the moment it's about class. It's about someone who is trying to escape from their destiny," creator *Steven Knight* recently told reporters. Knight, who is also the creator of "Peaky Blinders," has more in common with Pip than one might think. If you haven't dipped into the novel since high school English class, Pip wants to become a blacksmith like his brother-in-law until he gets the chance to escape the working class and imagine a different life. Knight's father was a blacksmith and had wanted his sons to take up the profession. But Knight said he never could shoe a horse. "My not becoming a blacksmith was a consequence of inability. Pip's decision to not become a blacksmith is sort of the opposite" since he was good at it, he said. "But I feel that situation where there is an expectation, which isn't great, that you will do this and that's what you're going to do. My only great expectation was to work somewhere I didn't get wet when it rained when I was a kid." The series stars a heavily made-up *Olivia Colman* as the eccentric Miss Havisham. The actress said she found inspiration from costume designer *Verity Hawkes* declaration that she didn't see Miss Havisham as "dusty, but as "rotting from the inside." For Colman, playing the role of the spinster who never removed her wedding dress after being left at the altar was a chance to sink her teeth into an interesting (to put it mildly) character. "I didn't necessarily find much personally to connect with, other than I know what it's like to love, and I know the pain she must've felt when that fell apart," she said. "But I mean to keep it for so long... I mean, if, if she'd had a good therapist, maybe she'd have a very different life!" – *Amy Maclean*

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*		
(03/13/23-03/19/23)		
MON-SUN	MC	MC
	US	US AA
	AA%	(000)
FNC	0.624	1949
TBSC	0.574	1792
TNT	0.460	1437
MSNBC	0.354	1105
TRUTV	0.321	1003
HGTV	0.299	934
ESPN	0.250	780
INSP	0.238	742
HIST	0.226	705
FOOD	0.210	655
HALL	0.209	651
USA	0.193	602
DISC	0.192	601
TLC	0.191	596
FS1	0.189	589
ID	0.171	534
TVLAND	0.154	481
HMM	0.142	444
A&E	0.132	412
BRAVO	0.131	409
REELZ	0.124	387
CNN	0.121	378
LIFE	0.114	356
GSN	0.111	346
WETV	0.111	345
BET	0.110	344
AMC	0.104	326
SYFY	0.103	321
OXY	0.096	301
ESPN2	0.088	276
NATGEO	0.088	275
NAN	0.086	270
FX	0.078	244
NBA	0.077	240
COM	0.077	239

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

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