

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## AT OUR DEADLINE: DIRECTV COULD LOSE NEXSTAR STATIONS

**Cablefax** [hinted](#) earlier this week that **Nexstar's** retransmission consent renewal could be coming up soon with **DirecTV** and it was confirmed late Thursday when the broadcaster began warning DirecTV and legacy U-Verse customers online that they could lose stations. "We have presented a proposal for fair value compensation, based on the importance and value our programming brings to our viewers. Despite our tireless efforts, DirecTV/U-Verse has refused our fair offer and doesn't seem to care if you must go without [station ID]," reads Nexstar's [website](#) messaging. No deadline was given, but deals usually expire around the end of the month. A nearly two-month long blackout started on July 3, 2019 between Nexstar and former DirecTV majority owner **AT&T** that impacted 120+ stations in 97 markets. DirecTV didn't return a request for comment by deadline.

## Challenge Accepted: NTIA Final BEAD Challenge Process Released

**NTIA** trickled out more information on how the BEAD program will operate Wednesday, releasing the official BEAD model challenge process which entities receiving funds can choose to use to run their own challenge processes.

Each of those entities is required to run a challenge process for local government, nonprofits or broadband service providers to challenge determinations on whether a particular location or community anchor institution is unserved, underserved and/

or eligible for BEAD funds. What **NTIA** released Wednesday is a suggested blueprint for how to run it.

Under the suggested process, challengers will have 30 days to submit a challenge through a portal created by the state or territorial broadband office. It will be visible to the service provider whose service availability and/or performance is being tested, and the portal will verify the address is on the **FCC's** broadband location fabric. Service providers will have an opportunity to rebut that challenge, and the broadband office will make a final challenge determination within 30 calendar days of the rebuttal's submission.

Some 61 stakeholders chimed in during the **NTIA's** public comment period from April 25-May 5 on the agency's proposed guidelines. They brought forth a plethora of concerns and suggestions on how to finetune the initial plan, but of course not all of those were incorporated into the final BEAD model challenge process.

For instance, **NCTA** unsuccessfully argued that the forms of evidence **NTIA** proposed could be used for availability challenges had the potential to be too stale or superficial to prove sufficiently that broadband isn't available at a given location. One of those pieces of evidence is a provider failing to schedule a service installation date within 10 business days of a request. **NCTA** asserted in its comments that just because a provider doesn't meet that 10-day standard doesn't mean service is unavailable.

"There could be other, legitimate reasons for a provider failing to timely schedule a service installation, especially during a time-

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period that includes the pandemic. For example, there could have been a miscommunication with the customer, particularly concerning whether the household was COVID-free, or some type of weather event in a location that delayed installation,” the organization said.

It also tried to prevent the use of subscriber speed tests alone as evidence of service unavailability, claiming that would result in the use of faulty data and a number of frivolous challenges. “In general, online speed tests are not designed in a manner that accurately measures the network performance delivered by the provider, which is why the FCC only uses speed test data as a supplemental source of information, not as the sole basis for a challenge to a provider’s reporting of a location as served,” NCTA said.

That’s not to say NTIA didn’t make any changes through the revision process. ACA Connects and NCTA both urged NTIA to extend the challenge process timeframe to be completed within 120 days. The agency didn’t go quite that far but did extend the deadline for service providers to rebut a challenge from 15 business days to 30, making the process more equitable to operators.

“ACA Connects appreciates NTIA’s diligence in reviewing the many comments and revising the proposed guidance on the BEAD State Challenge Process. All stakeholders agree that this process is critical to ensure that the limited BEAD funds are targeted to bringing high-performance broadband to locations that are truly unserved and underserved,” the association said in a statement.

States, D.C. and territories will receive their formal notice of allocation on Friday, and they’ll then have 180 days to submit their initial proposals on how they plan to run their individual grant programs. Those eligible entities must indicate in their initial proposals whether or not they plan to adhere to the BEAD model challenge process.

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**DIAMOND SPORTS, DIAMONDBACKS OPTIMISTIC ON NEW DEAL**

A bankruptcy hearing focused on the rights agreement between **Diamond Sports** and the **Arizona Diamondbacks** has been pushed back as the two continue to negotiate. Last week, Diamond filed an emergency motion in the Bankruptcy Court of Southern Texas seeking to break down its existing deal with the Diamondbacks to air the team’s games on **Bally Sports Arizona**. That deal is set to last through Dec. 31, 2035, but Diamond argued that the costs associated with seeing that contract to completion outweigh the revenues it would bring in through broadcasting the MLB team’s games. Now, the two have agreed to postpone the hearing due to “ongoing and positive discussions toward finding a solution,” according to a joint statement from Diamond Sports CEO *David Preschlack* and Diamondbacks President/CEO *Derrick Hall*. For now, Bally Sports Arizona will continue to broadcast games as it has since the start of the season. The hearing is now set for July 17 at 2pm CT.

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**AD-TIER SUBS ON THE UP**

The plethora of streaming options made it difficult for many to sign up for multiple subscriptions, but the rise of lower-cost ad-supported tiers has alleviated those pain points. Measurement firm **Antenna** revealed in its State of Subscriptions Report that as of the end of 1Q23, ad-supported plans accounted for 1/4 of all premium SVOD subscriptions. While most services still see more

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subscribers on their respective ad-free tiers, **Peacock** and **Hulu** have most of their users on an ad-tier plan at 69% and 58%, respectively. “The services that offer both tiers warrant a choice from the consumer: should I take the cheaper, ad-supported plan or the more expensive ad-free plan?” Media & Entertainment lead *Brendan Brady* said. “And as such, we actually see that these complexions of the subscriber base is really varied.” Antenna’s keeping its eyes peeled on the performance of **Netflix** and **Disney+**’s ad tiers as they both navigate the early stages of their existence. But another trend it noted was the rise of “ad managers” or viewers who have both ad-free and ad-supported tiers across different services. “If we go back two years ago, our ad manager segment represented under 10 million total subscriptions. Just two years later, they’re over 40 million, so almost a fivefold increase in their number of subscriptions in just two years,” CEO *Jonathan Carson* said.

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## MSG+ GOES LIVE

It’s launch day for **MSG Networks**’ new DTC offering **MSG+**. It’s available to fans in the New York market and includes all MSGN-produced games from the Knicks, Rangers, Islanders, Devils and Sabres for \$29.99/month or \$309.99 annually. Viewers can also purchase single games for \$9.99, and those with a pay TV subscription that includes MSGN can access MSG+ at no cost. The monthly price is the same as what **NESN** set when it rolled out its own DTC product **NESN 360**, but MSG+’s yearly rate is \$20 cheaper than NESN’s (\$329.99).

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## YES OFFERS REWARDS PROGRAM

It pays to watch when it comes to the **YES Network** app. **YES** and **LiveLike** teamed up to launch the “YES Rewards” loyalty program, which lets fans earn prizes by engaging with content and features on the YES app. Fans can earn points based on the number of games and programs they watch, the amount of time spent interacting with that content and how often they utilize the app’s Pick-N-Play and Pick-N-Play Live features. Accumulated points can then be redeemed for gift cards. Fans can start building up points with today’s Yankees-Athletics game at 3pm, and YES expects to include Nets and Liberty telecasts for rewards in the future.

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## SOUTH BEND GETS NEXTGEN TV

Five stations in the South Bend-Elkhart market in Indiana are next up to begin broadcasting with NextGen TV. Those are WSBT-TV (**CBS** and **Fox**), WNDU-TV (**NBC**), WSJV (**H&I**), WNIT (**PBS**) and WHME-TV (independent). Starting today, viewers will see improved video and audio quality as well as advanced emergency alerts. NextGen TV is currently live in more than 60 cities in the U.S.

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## CARRIAGE

**NBCUniversal** is giving its FAST channel portfolio a hefty boost. The company signed deals with **Amazon Freevee** and **Xumo**

**Play** to have its entire FAST library on the two platforms. The new channels will go live in July and center around famous TV franchises like “Saturday Night Live,” “Top Chef” and “Keeping up with the Kardashians.” It’ll also have Spanish-language offerings from **Telemundo**, which includes “Historias de Amor” and “Telemundo al Día.” – While the recent chatter surrounding **LIV Golf** has mostly been about its merger with the **PGA Tour**, LIV is still moving forward—at least for 2023. The **LIV Golf+** app launched on **LG** Smart TVs around the world ahead of the tour’s tournament in Spain that runs Friday-Sunday. LIV Golf+ recently added new features, including interactive leaderboard enhancements and improved personalization. – **The Weather Channel** is expanding its partnership with **VIZIO** to bring the 24/7 Weather Channel app to TVs. The app comes with customizable local weather information, on-demand programming, real-time weather observations and a suite of full-screen maps that users can control. – **Sling Freestream** is adding four new channels to its lineup: **Fuel TV**, **Preston & Brianna**, **Travelxp** and **Foodxp**. The platform now has more than 400 channels and over 41,000 titles available on demand. – The live shopping channels **QVC** and **HSN** are headed to **Amazon Freevee**’s lineup, but **Qurate Retail Group** is also launching its first FAST channel on the platform as well. **The Big Dish** will feature a mix of culinary programming from QVC and **QVC2**, and in the summer it’ll add culinary content from HSN and the **QVC+** and **HSN+** streaming app.

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## QUARTERLY RATINGS BRAGS

It was a quarter of growth for **Newsmax** that was marked by the influx of viewers following the departure of *Tucker Carlson* from **Fox News**. Newsmax had 126% YOY growth in weekday primetime and a 71% increase in weekday total day, which are both the biggest increases among major cable news networks. Newsmax still has a ways to go to catch up to the No. 1 network in news, though. It averaged 247,000 viewers P2+ in primetime and 153,000 in total day for 2Q23 when also accounting for viewership from weekends; Fox News averaged 1.69 million P2+ in prime and 1.16 million in total day. – **Fox Business** ended 2Q23 as the highest-rated business network in business day and market hours for a fifth straight quarter, according to **Nielsen**. The network averaged 193,000 total viewers and 13,000 A25-54 during the 9:30am-5pm window. For market hours (9am-4pm), FBN averaged 187,000 total viewers and also had 13,000 for the A25-54 group.

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## PROGRAMMING

It’s all hands on deck for **Telemundo** ahead of the 2023 FIFA Women’s World Cup. All 64 matches will be broadcast live (33 on Telemundo and 31 on **Universo**), and Peacock will stream all matches in Spanish. Peacock will also have a dedicated Women’s World Cup section that’ll house live matches, on-demand match replays, extended highlights and more. The late-night program “Zona Mixta” will run on weekends at midnight on Telemundo.

# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

## 'Kizazi Moto' Offers Peeks into Future Africa

Prepare for a trip to several different futures in **Disney+**'s first series from Africa. "Kizazi Moto: Generation Fire," a 10-part collection of short films presenting different futuristic views from Africa, premieres July 5. The idea for the series came out of a question asked in 2019 by *Kevin Kriedemann* of **Triggerfish Animation Studios**. He wondered what would follow in the footsteps of "Black Panther," and how Africans born on the continent could take their own steps to define their futures in a different way than the American writers did when they drafted the script for the box office hit. Once **Disney** gave the greenlight to the pitch for the anthology series, the production team reached out to 73 up-and-coming animation voices from across the continent including concept artists and music video directors and asked them to pitch a story. It had to be set in a future Africa of their choosing, have an optimistic take, be science fiction and be able to be told in 10 minutes. "The stories, styles and visions were astoundingly unique. They were fresh but had incredible thematic overlaps which spoke to where Africans intersect in world views but also where we diverge and that's exciting," EP *Tendayi Nyeke* told **CFX**. "The image you have of the African person expands as a result, even as an African person." While she's a believer that media can have the power to expand the way that others think, Nyeke ultimately thinks it is up to the audience to be curious enough to watch the series and open enough to walk away with perhaps a great understanding of African culture and views. There's hope that programs like Kizazi Moto can nurture empathy and connection, but the individuals that view it have to take the short films in, embrace the stories told and to seek out more knowledge. "Africa has always existed, its people have always expressed themselves, and have always been beautiful, complex, messy and wonderful," Nyeke said. "Our stories are here, and we invite the world to enjoy them and even hold hands in making them, the way this anthology was made—but it is up to the audience to hold their own curiosity and be open to exciting discoveries that might challenge misconceptions." – *Sara Winegardner*

### REVIEWS

"Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan," premiere, Season 4, **Amazon Prime**. Ah, the timing. You can't switch on a TV without seeing an ad touting *Harrison Ford* as Dr. Indiana Jones in "The Dial of Destiny." Of course, Ford played at least two other doctors, Richard Kimble ("The Fugitive, 1993) and CIA analyst and reluctant field operative Dr. Jack Ryan (as did *Alec Baldwin*, *Ben Affleck* and *Chris Pine*). So, you think the vibe coming off Ford doesn't play perfectly into the debut of Season 4 of "Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan"? Indeed, while *John Krasinski* has played Ryan longer than anyone, his work, certain elements, and themes in this final season certainly remind one of Ford's best Ryan film, "Clear and Present Danger" (1994). The way this season develops and most importantly ends, provides Krasinski a fitting farewell in a role he's shared well. And speaking of sharing, a fond adieu for *Wendell Pierce* and *Michael Kelly* too. Yes, quibble with several plot holes and moments of wonky logic. Yet this finale includes enough action, diverse locations, and twists for any viewer. Enjoy. – **Errata**: Last week we identified *Jon Bernthal*'s character Mikey as *Carmy Berzatto*'s (*Jeremy Allen White*) uncle. It's his brother. And if we didn't recommend it enough, "FX's: The Bear" is tremendous. Episode 4, mostly Denmark based, is our fave. – *Seth Arenstein*

BASIC CABLE		
P2+ PRIME RANKINGS*		
(06/19/23-06/25/23)		
MON-SUN	MC	MC
	US	US AA
	AA%	(000)
<b>FNC</b>	<b>0.480</b>	<b>1500</b>
<b>ESPN</b>	<b>0.438</b>	<b>1366</b>
<b>MSNBC</b>	<b>0.419</b>	<b>1309</b>
<b>HGTV</b>	<b>0.257</b>	<b>802</b>
<b>INSP</b>	<b>0.243</b>	<b>758</b>
<b>CNN</b>	<b>0.221</b>	<b>690</b>
<b>DISC</b>	<b>0.214</b>	<b>667</b>
<b>TLC</b>	<b>0.187</b>	<b>584</b>
<b>HALL</b>	<b>0.186</b>	<b>581</b>
<b>FOOD</b>	<b>0.183</b>	<b>571</b>
<b>HIST</b>	<b>0.182</b>	<b>568</b>
<b>USA</b>	<b>0.179</b>	<b>558</b>
<b>TBSC</b>	<b>0.174</b>	<b>542</b>
<b>BET</b>	<b>0.165</b>	<b>516</b>
<b>ID</b>	<b>0.157</b>	<b>491</b>
<b>HMM</b>	<b>0.145</b>	<b>453</b>
<b>TVLAND</b>	<b>0.140</b>	<b>438</b>
<b>LIFE</b>	<b>0.133</b>	<b>414</b>
<b>PRMNT</b>	<b>0.129</b>	<b>402</b>
<b>A&amp;E</b>	<b>0.121</b>	<b>377</b>
<b>FX</b>	<b>0.120</b>	<b>374</b>
<b>BRAVO</b>	<b>0.119</b>	<b>373</b>
<b>TNT</b>	<b>0.119</b>	<b>371</b>
<b>WETV</b>	<b>0.112</b>	<b>348</b>
<b>REELZ</b>	<b>0.105</b>	<b>327</b>
<b>GSN</b>	<b>0.100</b>	<b>311</b>
<b>NATGEO</b>	<b>0.095</b>	<b>296</b>
<b>AMC</b>	<b>0.093</b>	<b>291</b>
<b>NWSMX</b>	<b>0.092</b>	<b>287</b>
<b>OXY</b>	<b>0.092</b>	<b>287</b>
<b>COM</b>	<b>0.079</b>	<b>245</b>
<b>TRAVEL</b>	<b>0.077</b>	<b>240</b>
<b>SYFY</b>	<b>0.077</b>	<b>239</b>
<b>LMN</b>	<b>0.074</b>	<b>231</b>
<b>NAN</b>	<b>0.074</b>	<b>231</b>

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

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