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WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

New and Old: Arguments Ensur at FCC Over New Services in 12 GHz Band

Cable and satellite folks had plenty to say to the **FCC** this week as the agency examined expanding the 12 GHz band to new services and licensing models, and their feelings on how it should proceed range widely.

The Commission has already rejected proposals for a new mobile service to utilize the band, but now it is taking a look at the possibility of authorizing expanded fixed services or unlicensed operations.

NCTA said in comments submitted this week that advances in sharing technologies, shifts in the wireless marketplace and increased demand mean the agency should leave behind exclusive licensing models and adopt a spectrum sharing model in the 12.7 GHz band.

“A shared-licensed framework allows nationwide carriers the opportunity to supplement their cellular networks, while also making spectrum accessible to new and diverse entrants and use cases, such as the growing competitive wireless networks that NCTA members are building, thus promoting competition and innovation,” the association said. “This approach enriches and diversifies the Nation’s developing 5G wireless ecosystem in a way that addresses the needs of smaller wireless ISPs, innovators, community anchor institutions, and individual enterprises—while also allowing traditional coverage networks access to a band.”

NCTA didn’t take a position on the FCC’s ask on whether it

should allow expanded terrestrial use in the 12.2 GHz band, but others certainly did. **DISH** is asking the Commission to immediately authorize existing terrestrial licensees in the 12.2 GHz band to operate higher-power point-to-multipoint fixed service, and is pushing the Commission to okay such services by December 1 so that it and others could propose that fixed services in the 12.2 GHz band could be considered in states’ BEAD proposals to **NTIA**.

It also believes that through the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program, another NTIA grant initiative, the 12 GHz band could be used to support the launch of fixed wireless on Tribal lands. Applications for the recently-announced second round of funding through the program are due January 23. Separately, DISH said in its comments that it is willing to make up to 100 MHz of contiguous 12.2 GHz spectrum available for free to Tribal entities.

To fight against any potential complaints that such service would cause interference, DISH has already done testing and believes higher power two-way point-to-multipoint broadband service can share the band with satellite services.

“The static nature of fixed wireless, along with the capabilities of beamforming massive MIMO antennas, give operators new tools to support operator-to-operator coordination, manage interference and simplify co-frequency coexistence in the same geography,” it said.

DirecTV fought against the FCC making any moves, arguing that it was the only company in the first phase of the

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proceeding to answer the agency's call for specific proposals and technical data on new or expanded terrestrial services in the band. It also said the 12 GHz band is already a success in terms of spectrum sharing given that it is used nationwide by multiple operators in two different satellite services and is licensed for terrestrial use throughout much of the United States.

In its mind, there has been insufficient evidence thus far to support a shift away from how the FCC has already been managing the band and mitigating interference among its licensees.

"The Commission rightly does not want to jeopardize the balance struck in this band that has allowed deployment of such disparate services to the benefit of the American public," DirecTV said. "Proponents of new or expanded terrestrial operations in the band face a high hurdle to show that they will not disrupt service currently enjoyed by millions of Americans in all areas of the country."

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LIONSGATE PUSHES STARZ SPLIT BACK INTO 2024

The impending separation of Lionsgate and Starz has been delayed once again, with leadership now aiming for a transaction in the new year. "With the impact of the eOne acquisition on regulatory approvals, uncertainty surrounding the strike and our efforts to create the most efficient capital structure within a disruptive marketplace, we anticipate that the separation will now take place in the first quarter of calendar 2024,"

Lionsgate CEO Jon Feltheimer said on its 1Q24 earnings call late Wednesday. Lionsgate's recent \$500 million acquisition of eOne from Hasbro played a big role in the spinoff, with the company feeling the move would strengthen the value of its studio side upon separation. "I think bottom line, we're excited to have this. It puts us in a much stronger position both operationally and strategically," CFO Jimmy Barge said. "As we go forward into the new quarter of the calendar year, a lot of things will line up." For now, Starz will recalibrate its focus and Feltheimer revealed the platform is leaving the Latin American market by December 31 to further pivot toward the U.S., U.K., Canada, Australia and other English-speaking territories. Starz ended the quarter with 29.4 million total subscribers—a sequential decline of 300,000 subscribers—and 19.9 million global OTT subscribers, good for 9% YOY growth. As for the ongoing writers' and actors' strikes, Barge expects more clarity by the end of December. The company built in an assumption that the strike goes through the end of 2Q24, which has an impact of about \$30 million. Lionsgate ended the quarter with \$908.6 million in total revenue, with the media networks segment accounting for \$381.1 million as it continued growing domestic OTT and international ancillary distribution revenue, but was offset by domestic linear revenue declines.

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NFL+ GETS CABLE ADDITIONS

The NFL is adding NFL Network and NFL RedZone to its DTC product NFL+ ahead of the 2023-24 season, giving customers another way to access both channels without a cable subscription. The two will have livestreams available

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in the app as NFL Network is slated to air eight games exclusively this season. NFL Network will be available for regular NFL+ subscribers (which now runs for \$6.99/month or \$49.99/year), while RedZone is included in the NFL+ Premium tier (now \$14.99/month or \$99.99/year). RedZone is also available as part of YouTube TV's NFL Sunday Ticket package. Pricing for that package is \$339 for YouTube TV subscribers and \$439 for those purchasing through YouTube's Primetime Channels.

A+E NETWORKS PEOPLE SHAKEUP

Amy Winter, EVP/Head of Programming at **Lifetime**, has left **A+E Networks** and **A&E** EVP/Head of Programming *Elaine Frontain Bryant* is stepping in to lead the network in her stead. Frontain Bryant will become EVP/Head of Programming Genres for A&E, Lifetime and **Lifetime Movie Network** and add those responsibilities to her current responsibilities guiding original programming for the A&E brand. *Eli Lehrer* is also expanding his role and will become EVP/Head of **The History Channel** Programming Genres and Music Services as part of the transformation. Lehrer and Frontain Bryant will continue to report to A+E Networks President, Programming *Rob Sharenow*. Lifetime EVP, Scripted Content *Tanya Lopez* is also transitioning out of her existing role and into a production deal with A+E Networks that will see her package and produce original movies for the network.

RATINGS

MLB Network enjoyed its most-watched week of 2023 the week of July 31. The Astros vs Yankees telecast was the network's most-watched out-of-market game of 2023 with an average of 372,000 viewers. "MLB Tonight" had its most-watched trade deadline special since 2015, averaging 250,000 viewers and peaking at 371,000. MLB Network's two out-of-market telecasts for the Yankees vs Rays on July 31 and Aug. 2 averaged 275,000 viewers.

DOING GOOD

T-Mobile's Puerto Rico team won the company's quarterly Difference Maker Award, and the mobile operator has given donations of \$10,000 each to five area charities as part of the celebration. The honor is presented to the top-ranked area each quarter as ranked on the company's Un-carrier Leaderboard, and T-Mobile Puerto Rico employees had the opportunity to choose the charities to donate to. The five charities receiving donations are El Comedor de la Kennedy, Pediatric Hospital Foundation, Boys and Girls Clubs of Puerto Rico, San Francisco de Asis Animal Shelter and My Brother's Workshop in USVI.

ON THE CIRCUIT

Fox Entertainment and MarVista Entertainment CEO *Fernando Szew* will be featured in a fireside chat at **NATPE Global**. He'll discuss the strategies that have led Fox Entertainment to grow its global reach as well as trends, challenges and opportunities that impact the TV industry daily. The conference will take place January 16-18 at the InterContinental Miami.

PROGRAMMING

The 2023-24 **Premier League** season will have Spanish-language coverage in the U.S. on **Telemundo**. Friday's Burnley vs Manchester City match at 12:30pm will be on **Universo**, as will Saturday's Newcastle vs Aston Villa contest at 12:30pm. Manchester United vs Wolves will finish the opening weekend Monday at 3pm on **Universo**. – Spain is adding to the soccer fest as La Liga has its opening weekend coming up. All matches this season will be available in English and Spanish live on **ESPN+**, and a new one-hour weekly show "La Peña de LALIGA" will debut Friday on **ESPN Deportes** at 12:30pm. The season begins with UD Almería vs Rayo Vallecano on Friday at 1:30pm on **ESPN+** and **ESPN Deportes**, and the weekend's marquee match—Athletic Bilbao vs Real Madrid on Saturday—will be on **ABC**, **ESPN+** and **ESPN Deportes** starting at 3:30pm. – "Time of Essence," a five-part series highlighting the impact of *Essence Magazine*, will premiere Aug. 18 at 9pm on **OWN**. – **Peacock's** "The Gentle Art of Swedish Death Cleaning" will debut on **Bravo** on Aug. 17 at 10:30pm. Two additional episodes will be released on Aug. 24 and 31. – **ChimeTV** is partnering with FTF Sports to air Nippon Professional Baseball League games and other FTF Sports content in English in the U.S. ChimeTV will broadcast the Japanese baseball league's games Friday nights at 8pm starting Aug. 11.

PEOPLE

NAMIC unveiled three additions to its board: **TV One** SVP, Marketing and Creative Services *Charnelle Anderson*; **TelevisaUnivision** SVP/Head of Distribution Marketing *Elizabeth Asencio* and **Altice USA** VP, Legal *Gurinder Singh*. The three will each serve a two-year term. – *Tracy Pitcher* is the new SVP, **Comcast Business** at the company's Central Division HQ in Atlanta. She'll oversee innovating and implementing strategies to boost commercial business across the 12-state region. Pitcher originally joined the company in 2011 as SVP, Operations at the Corporate HQ and has held leadership positions at **Charter**, **AT&T** and **Time Warner Cable**. – **Nexstar** Chief Communications Officer *Gary Weitman* will remain with the company thanks to a contract extension. He'll continue to report to CEO *Perry Sook*. Weitman joined Nexstar after its merger with **Tribune Media** in 2019 and has been in the strategic communications field for nearly 30 years.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

HBO's 'Hard Knocks' Returns to the Jets

Few NFL franchises meet the level of passion New York Jets fans have for their team, which has been put to the test over the past seven years. Since 2016, the Jets have a total record of 34-80. But this year is different because the Jets have something that it hasn't had in over a decade: expectations. It's a perfect time for HBO's "Hard Knocks: Training Camp with the New York Jets" to revisit the team for the first time since 2010. With behind-the-scenes looks at a young team led by veteran QB Aaron Rodgers, it's easy to feel the excitement as early as when Rodgers walks onto the field at training camp to a raucous crowd chanting his name. The program puts an emphasis on his legacy and impact with soundbites and interviews from other Jets players, who exhibit enormous praise for the former Super Bowl champion. Of course, there are more storylines than that, but it's something the production crew reacts to on a daily basis as each narrative unfolds in real-time. "Every team has different storylines, but we're always looking for fresh ways to tell these stories," Hard Knocks Director Shannon Furman told CFX. "One of my goals has been quality over quantity. We've focused on throwing the best resources at everything we do in recent years, rather than over shooting content that will never be seen by anyone." Where Hard Knocks finds an extra level to resonate with football fanatics are its many glimpses into the lives of players off the field. On one end, the production crew traveled to Cincinnati to show Ahmad 'Sauce' Gardner walk across the stage to receive his college degree. But the crew also gave viewers a peek into how QB Zach Wilson dealt with the pressures of being one of the faces of the franchise since 2021 (which he says was "not always fun.") This year's edition of Hard Knocks is sure to encapsulate what an NFL team dealing with expectations amid high stakes, with Jets fans holding hope that it's the beginning of the end of its over 50-year championship drought. – Noah Ziegler

REVIEWS

"Billions," season VII premiere, 8pm, Sunday, Showtime, streaming Friday (Aug. 11). The last season of "Billions" begins with several bolts of lightning, including quicksilver dialogue and references worthy of Aaron Sorkin and several juicy plotlines. The stories feature a favorite former recurring character, a new one and the series' first protagonist (fans know who that is). Ep. 2 is not quite as compelling and 3 waddles even slower, though the payoffs deliver: a legendary athlete's cameo as well as a veteran actor who helps Dr. Wendy Rhodes (Maggie Siff) heal herself. And then there's a plotline with mega-rich Mike Prince (Corey Stoll) that seems pulled from recent history. Chuck (Paul Giamatti) alternates between dyspepsia and determined. Sprinkled throughout are establishing shots of NYC landmarks and you have a rousing final season. And not to worry, a bevy of spinoffs await, Showtime says. – "Hard Knocks: NY Jets," 10pm, Tuesdays, Max. You know the, er, knock, on ep. 1 of this weekly doc series: it was all-Aaron Rodgers-all-the-time. Perhaps. Still, there's a reason, several, why NFL Films has 133 Sports Emmys. Besides draping Rodgers, ep 1's cameras caught 2022's top rookies, Garrett Wilson and Sauce Gardner, battling each other during practice. It's spectacular, as is the opening, with head coach Robert Saleh drawing parallels between ornithology and the target on his team's back. – Seth Arenstein

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MSNBC	0.486	1517
HGTV	0.247	770
HALL	0.234	731
INSP	0.234	729
CNN	0.226	705
HIST	0.205	639
ESPN	0.201	627
USA	0.199	621
TLC	0.198	618
FOOD	0.168	525
DISC	0.163	510
ID	0.160	500
TBSC	0.158	494
TVLAND	0.150	469
PRMNT	0.123	384
A&E	0.122	381
REELZ	0.118	368
TNT	0.115	359
BRAVO	0.113	352
BET	0.111	348
WETV	0.111	347
LFIE	0.106	332
HMM	0.105	328
AMC	0.103	322
SYFY	0.097	301
OXY	0.095	298
GSN	0.092	287
NWSMX	0.092	287
FX	0.090	282
COM	0.085	265
NAN	0.083	260
APL	0.074	232
FRFM	0.073	229
FS1	0.069	217

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



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