

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Rules of Engagement: Brand Value Boosted by Fan Activations

The world opening its doors after the height of the COVID-19 pandemic was cause for celebration, and brands are taking that to heart. The overwhelming desire among fans for live activations is still going strong as 2023 wraps up, a sentiment that's continued since in-person events made their returns in 2022.

Absence makes the heart grow fonder, and brands have had to step up to the plate to meet the demand for in-person events. Networks like **Hallmark Channel** have gotten creative with how they connect with their passionate fans, including a partnership with Hilton Hotels earlier this month to immerse fans with custom-designed "Countdown to Christmas" holiday suites, with "Hallmark's Holiday Sweetest Suite" at the Hilton New York Times Square, "Haul Out the Holly" at Hilton Americas-Houston and a "Santa Summit" suite at Hilton Chicago.

Another event Hallmark has on its schedule is its Christmas Cruise in 2024. **Hallmark Media** CMO *Lara Richardson* said the company has about 41,000 people who are interested and have signed up to receive updates about future cruises. She added that the sales benchmarks Hallmark set for three and six months were hit within days, helping the company rely on a core set of fans to follow wherever the Hallmark brand goes.

"We have some very fanatical, loyal fans who get excited just to see the words 'Hallmark' on something," Richardson told **CFX**. "They will be attracted to it, they will buy it, they will talk about it, they will watch it. They surround themselves with

all things Hallmark, which is really exciting as a marketer."

Location is a critical component of these in-person experiences. **Paramount** and **Bravo** have turned to Las Vegas to capitalize on the opportunities the city provides, with Paramount having a heavy presence at the recent **Formula 1** Las Vegas Grand Prix. The company had its first integration on the new MSG Sphere featuring its most popular IP and franchises, trackside banners during the race and over 33 screens in two terminals at the Vegas airport displaying digital advertisements.

Those are planned in elaborate detail, but sometimes it's a matter of luck. Paramount wanted to be where fans—and non-fans—would be looking. It struck gold when a photo was captured at the Grand Prix with SpongeBob and Patrick looking on as a Ferrari car makes a turn. The Ferrari F1 team [posted the photo on Instagram](#) to its 12.6 million followers, accumulating 300,000 likes in under 24 hours.

"Visually, I thought it would be amazing for folks on the ground in Vegas at the race, that Paramount+ wouldn't be missed," *Domenic DiMeglio*, EVP/CMO of **Paramount Streaming**, said. "Then [we] hoped and expected that we would get a lot of fans taking photos, sharing on social—certainly our social team was on the ground and ready to do the same—but something like the Ferrari post."

But what about those non-fans? DiMeglio said Paramount and Paramount Streaming are careful to continue honoring the fandom of a franchise and its canon, but in-person activations serve as a chance to catch new eyes and potentially cultivate

## NAMIC Now Accepting Nominations for the 2024 Vision Awards



VISION AWARDS

NAMIC

The National Association for Multi-ethnicity in Communications (NAMIC) has officially launched its awards season, calling for nominations for the 30th Annual NAMIC Vision Awards.

These annual awards recognize outstanding original, multiplatform programming that best reflects the growing diversity, multi-ethnicity, and multicultural preferences of today's viewers.

Nominations are open across 18 categories, with the submission window extending from now until January 31, 2024.

Entries will undergo evaluation by a distinguished panel of media and entertainment industry executives, assessing overall imagery, sensitivity, writing, and acting.

For additional details, please visit <https://namicvisionawards.com/>.

a new audience.

“If what you’re doing, whether it’s a piece of creative or how you’re showing up and activating, as long as it’s sort of true to the essence of that fandom and that IP, then you’re going to be fine in that balance that you’re striking between making sure you’re being true to that core fandom, while also trying to be approachable and finding new fans to help it grow,” DiMeglio said.

For **Bravo**, its annual BravoCon—which returned last year in NYC after a COVID-induced two-year hiatus—made the move to Las Vegas to further connect with its West Coast fans. However, the location seemed to not matter with the top five places attendees came from spanning California, Texas, Illinois, Florida and New York.

**NBCUniversal** EVP, Creative Partnerships, Advertising & Partnerships *Jamie Cutburth* told CFX that the move to Vegas also unlocked a new audience for the network’s brand partners to engage with. BravoCon’s brand partnerships from this year included **Amazon’s Freevee** having scannable QR codes onsite throughout the “Bravoland Museum,” Clorox writing memorable quotes on mirrors as well as stalls with “The Real Housewives” trivia and Lay’s offering a pop-up experience with *Ariana Madix* and *Katie Maloney* from “Vanderpump Rules,” where fans got to try food from the pair’s anticipated sandwich shop called “Something About Her.”

“We make sure that everything was seamless and authentic with the storylines from a storytelling perspective,” Cutburth said. “Everything that we do with our brand partners is designed to be additive to the fan experience. When you look at Lay’s, we created these food moments. We created a new opportunity for them to engage with their audience partners ... all of our brand partners are additive to the fan experience. At no point do we look at this as just a direct marketing opportunity.”

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## TEGNA BALKS AT DIRECTV'S LATEST PROPOSAL

**TEGNA's** blackout on **DirecTV** stations hit the one-week mark, and there are still no signs of a deal. TEGNA complained that the MVPD’s proposal on Wednesday would have returned stations only to military and government facilities, a move the broadcaster dismissed as a “stunt.” The timing would be ahead of Saturday’s Army-Navy game, with DirecTV for Business serving 500 military bases and government installations. “TEGNA is concerned for all our viewers. That is why we submitted our first proposal to DirecTV back in September—to provide ample time to reach a fair agreement. It is unfortunate that DirecTV chose to not engage with us seriously throughout that time, and waited until nearly a week after our contract expired to reply to our last offer,” TEGNA said in a statement.

## Cablefax Executive Round Up

We asked Cablefax’s **Most Powerful Women** what industry conference or event is a must-attend for them.



**Anju Ahuja**  
VP, Product Strategy & Insights  
**CableLabs**

“Every year, I pick a technology trend around which influencers and innovators are converging. This year, I’ve focused on extended reality (XR) and Metaverse, as I believe media will become increasingly immersive and interactive, and it’s critical to get ahead of requirements to create and deliver this type of content experience. The Economist Impact Metaverse Summit and World Economic Forum Metaverse gatherings have brought together many thought leaders, business leaders and technologists, and both forums continue to facilitate learning and thoughtful debate.”



**Patrice Carroll**  
CEO  
**ImOn Communications**

“The ACA Connects Summit is an absolute must-attend for me. Public policy has a profound influence on our industry, making it imperative to stay involved. By attending the Summit, I connect with my industry peers to discuss the challenges ahead and the need for united advocacy. Attending Summit always reminds me of the transformative power we have when we work together.”



**Kim Godwin**  
President  
**ABC News**

“The affinity journalism conferences are always a must for me. I’ve attended NABJ, NAHJ, AAJA and NLGJA every year since I’ve been president, and most years for the last 10. I’ve attended NABJ for more than 30 years. It’s important for me to look people in the eye, give handshakes and hugs, and personally encourage and share knowledge with journalists of color, who are often still fighting to feel seen and heard in our nation’s newsrooms. I hope my presence, accessibility and honesty help to inspire them to keep going and growing in our noble profession. The world sees because we report, and we must make sure our representative voices are heard around the nation’s editorial tables. It can be hard and lonely sometimes. I know this because they share it with me. But I want them to know it’s worth it and that the communities they represent count on them.”



**Teresa Ward-Maupin**  
SVP, Digital and Customer Experience  
**Comcast Business**

“I have been attending South by Southwest (SXSW) for a long time. It is one of the most valuable experiences for those in the technology, media, and music industries. I attend specifically to see the latest tech advancements, innovations, and other cutting-edge developments, and to think about how I can apply them to my work leading Digital and Customer Experience organizations. The people I have met at SXSW have been excellent resources for networking and collaboration. And on top of all that, it’s a fun and enjoyable event.”

“Nevertheless, we are prepared to work around the clock to reach a deal and have shared an updated offer to DirecTV that can allow us to achieve that goal.” If the blackout extends into the weekend, it could impact not only NFL but TEGNA local broadcasts about severe weather expected to hit the eastern half of the country. TEGNA said it continues to remind DirecTV subscribers that stations remain available on virtually all other cable and satellite services nationwide and are always available free over-the-air.

## PRIME VIDEO ADDS BOXING

Amazon’s **Prime Video** expanded its sports rights portfolio Thursday, striking a multiyear agreement with **Premier Boxing Champions**. The boxing organization, which debuted in 2015, features more than 150 active fighters across various weight divisions. Prime Video will now distribute PBC’s pay-per-view events in the U.S. with the first expected to come in March. The fights will be available for purchase to all viewers, whether or not they have a Prime subscription. Prime Video will also exclusively stream a PBC Championship Boxing series of events, and will expand its Original sports offerings with behind-the-scenes docuseries, live weigh-ins and on-demand access to previous events and archival footage.

## MERIT STREET MEDIA FINDS HOME

**Merit Street Media**, a news and entertainment cable network coming from *Dr. Phil McGraw*, has found a distribution partner in **Trinity Broadcasting Network**. The partnership gives Merit Street Media a base from which to grow, and Trinity Broadcasting Network has carriage on **Comcast, DirecTV, DISH** and more. The network, set to make its debut on Feb. 26, will launch with “Dr. Phil Primetime,” a talk show airing nightly at 8pm ET. Its full prime-time lineup is expected to be announced in the coming months.

## CARRIAGE

**Local Now** is adding two FAST channels from **VICE Media Group: VICE NEWS** and **VICE FAST**. VICE NEWS offers a unique spin on news storytelling, while VICE FAST covers culture, entertainment, food, tech and sports.

## RATINGS

The holiday spirit is flourishing at **Freeform**. The first three days of the network’s “25 Days of Christmas” lifted it to its most-watched week of the year in primetime and total day. Freeform came in as the top entertainment cable network in primetime in December to date among A18-49, A18-24 and W18-34. Though there’s still plenty of December left to fight over the holiday crown. The airing of “Home Alone” on Friday at 7pm was the No. 1 movie all week on cable for A18-49 and M18-49. – **NewsNation** and **The CW** came together to deliver more than four million view-

ers Wednesday night during the final GOP presidential primary debate ahead of Iowa caucuses. NewsNation saw the largest audience in its history with nearly 1.6 million total viewers and more than 350,000 A25-54, according to **Nielsen** Fast Nationals. The CW, which simulcast the debate, delivered more than 2.5 million viewers and nearly 500,000 A25-54. The debate is The CW’s most-watched primetime program since 2018.

## IAB TECH LAB LAUNCHES EFFORT TO BRIDGE VIEWERSHIP GAP

Digital ad standards-setting body **IAB Tech Lab** unveiled its new Advanced TV Initiative, designed to bridge the gap between traditional linear TV, digital video and livestreaming. The program was masterminded by the Advanced TV Commit Group, and its first focus will be on implementing a creative ID framework. It will include information about advertisers, represented products and technical specifications as well as details relevant to multiple ad placement scenarios like frequency capping and measurement. The Commit Group also plans to hold a dedicated workshop on the Advanced TV Initiative in the near future.

## VIAMEDIA PARTNERS WITH PERPETUAL MEDIA

**Viamedia** is teaming up with the digital out-of-home advertising platform **Perpetual Media**, becoming the exclusive local and regional direct advertising sales company in all of Perpetual Media’s 60+ DMAs and locations beyond Viamedia’s DMAs. Perpetual created the first people-based, one-to-one, programmatic real-time bidding omnichannel platform, which allows brands to work with consumers with premium video content at any place-based asset.

## ON THE CIRCUIT

**The WICT Network** is expanding its Executive Development Series in response to participant feedback, and its latest program focuses on managing layoffs, restructuring, consolidation and more. Called “Leading Through Transition,” the course promises to help participants create a roadmap for how to lead during those challenging times, addressing personal, team and organizational needs. Registration for the course, to be hosted April 2-4 in San Diego, and others in the Executive Development Series is open [now](#).

## PEOPLE

**Outdoor Sportsman Group** EVP, Advertising Sales **Jason Brist** has departed the company after more than 16 years. Brist—who previously spent a decade at **Fox Cable Networks** and led ad sales efforts for **FX, National Geographic** and **ESPN Regional Television**—played a role in OSG’s partnerships and ad sales for its brands, including **Outdoor Channel, Sportsman Channel** and **World Fishing Network** as well as **MOTV**.



# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

## NY1 Diving Into Migrant Crisis in New Specials

**Spectrum News NY1** and **Spectrum News NY1 Noticias** have been working around the clock to cover the significant influx of migrants to NYC since last spring, but they're diving even deeper with a set of coordinating specials in English and Spanish. Premiering Thursday night at 8pm ET on their respective networks, NY1's "Crossing Borders: Inside the Migrant Crisis" and Noticias' "Desafio Migratorio" aim to both humanize the immigrants that have survived treacherous journeys across areas like the Darien Gap between Panama and Colombia in search of better lives and address the concerns of those already entrenched in the communities in and around the city. "NY1 and Noticias, it's a quaint concept, but we are a public service. With the specials, we're giving the stories more room to breathe, but we're also humanizing these families and we're also providing important information," Noticias Anchor/Producer *Philip Klint* told **CFX**. Klint's reporting appears in both specials and examines the impact the influx of migrants has had on the NYC healthcare system and how that strain complicates the process of seeking medical care for longstanding residents. While the specials do take some different approaches to the same issue, Klint's story isn't the only one to appear in both specials. *Kelly Mena* follows a Venezuelan family of four, including two young children, who traveled through the Darien Gap's dangerous jungles to seek asylum in the U.S. That story will also be featured in both pieces. "Getting parents and families to sit and trust you with their story is not an easy thing and it takes time to do it. Their ability to pursue these stories, to speak to these folks, to tell their stories honestly and openly is a real triumph," NY1 Senior Director, News *Michael Kurtz* said of the reporters that contributed to the specials. "The entire team coming together, it's just a testament to teamwork." – *Sara Winegardner*

### REVIEWS

"*Fargo*," Season 5, 10pm, Tuesday, **FX**. These are salad days for *Jon Hamm* fans. He seemingly is everywhere, including a small role in *Tom Cruise's* "Top Gun Maverick," a larger part as an *Elon Musk*-like love interest for *Jennifer Aniston's* Alex Levy on the recently ended "The Morning Show" (TMS) on **Apple TV+**. And now a co-starring slot in *Noah Hawley's* new, fine season of *FX's* "Fargo" franchise. Hamm plays Sheriff Roy Tillman, a lawman and rancher who presides largely unchecked over his family as well as a sizeable patch of N. Dakota. In several ways, Tillman is like Paul Marks, Hamm's Muskian billionaire whose handsome exterior attracted Aniston's independent Levy, until she and several others discover troubling issues in Marks's past and present. In *Fargo*, there's also a past-and-present situation in play. The past connects Tillman with Dot Lyons (a wonderful *Juno Temple*), who seems your typical housewife, a doting mother and loyal wife. Indeed, we discover Dot is not who she appears to be, so there's plenty of storyline material for her. We'll leave it there. Yet we must give props to the ensemble as well as the series' density and exploration of isolation. So, how is Hamm? He's not quite Don Draper good, but it's arguably his best recent work. As TMS watchers know, he plays smug and privileged well. – *Seth Arenstein*

BASIC CABLE P2+ PRIME RANKINGS* (11/27/23-12/03/23)		
MON-SUN	MC US AA%	MC US AA (000)
<b>FNC</b>	<b>0.592</b>	<b>1867</b>
<b>ESPN</b>	<b>0.573</b>	<b>1806</b>
<b>HALL</b>	<b>0.365</b>	<b>1150</b>
<b>MSNBC</b>	<b>0.338</b>	<b>1065</b>
<b>HIST</b>	<b>0.218</b>	<b>686</b>
<b>HGTV</b>	<b>0.214</b>	<b>674</b>
<b>USA</b>	<b>0.199</b>	<b>628</b>
<b>HMM</b>	<b>0.192</b>	<b>604</b>
<b>DISC</b>	<b>0.182</b>	<b>574</b>
<b>TLC</b>	<b>0.177</b>	<b>559</b>
<b>INSP</b>	<b>0.173</b>	<b>547</b>
<b>TNT</b>	<b>0.169</b>	<b>532</b>
<b>FOOD</b>	<b>0.161</b>	<b>509</b>
<b>CNN</b>	<b>0.156</b>	<b>493</b>
<b>TBSC</b>	<b>0.155</b>	<b>489</b>
<b>ID</b>	<b>0.136</b>	<b>430</b>
<b>TVLAND</b>	<b>0.133</b>	<b>421</b>
<b>FRFM</b>	<b>0.121</b>	<b>382</b>
<b>BRAVO</b>	<b>0.118</b>	<b>370</b>
<b>LIFE</b>	<b>0.116</b>	<b>367</b>
<b>AMC</b>	<b>0.113</b>	<b>356</b>
<b>FX</b>	<b>0.107</b>	<b>338</b>
<b>GSN</b>	<b>0.106</b>	<b>334</b>
<b>BET</b>	<b>0.103</b>	<b>325</b>
<b>A&amp;E</b>	<b>0.094</b>	<b>295</b>
<b>REELZ</b>	<b>0.093</b>	<b>293</b>
<b>OXY</b>	<b>0.090</b>	<b>283</b>
<b>WETV</b>	<b>0.084</b>	<b>266</b>
<b>NATGEO</b>	<b>0.078</b>	<b>246</b>
<b>FETV</b>	<b>0.074</b>	<b>234</b>
<b>NAN</b>	<b>0.071</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>SYFY</b>	<b>0.071</b>	<b>224</b>
<b>ADSM</b>	<b>0.070</b>	<b>221</b>
<b>NWSMX</b>	<b>0.063</b>	<b>198</b>
<b>PRMNT</b>	<b>0.059</b>	<b>185</b>

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



**Cablefax**  
**MOST POWERFUL WOMEN**  
DECEMBER 6, 2023

**JUST RELEASED**

[www.CablefaxWomen.com](http://www.CablefaxWomen.com)

The Cablefax team is thrilled to announce this year's honorees for The Most Powerful Women Awards, recognizing the distinguished women leaders who are innovating and inspiring in the media and broadband space.