

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Cooperation: States Ask FCC To Be Balanced

The FCC's Democratic majority wants to move forward with reinstating Title II regulation of broadband, but states have concerns about giving full regulatory control over all broadband matters over to a federal agency.

Comments on the issue were due Thursday, and bodies like the **Nebraska Public Service Commission** asked the agency to delegate certain authorities to the states to promote continued investment and closer oversight of network functionality. The hope is that broadband regulation will be a cooperative process between the states and the federal government.

"Because states often are the 'front line' to receive information or complaints about these services, they are in the best position to quickly and effectively respond to issues which arise," the NPSC said. "The FCC could set forth certain standards for items such as minimum speeds delivered, the number and length of outages, time to repair, or customer service. The FCC could also set forth recommended penalties or other remedial measures if these standards are not met. With that framework in place, the FCC could then delegate authority to state authorities to enforce the minimum standards."

It believes that consumers would benefit from being able to reach local authorities, and ISPs wouldn't face any additional burdens because standards would be uniform across jurisdictions. "However, additional scrutiny from state authorities on

large carriers would incentivize the carriers to increase investment into their networks and prioritize repairs—which, unfortunately, appears in many cases to have lagged significantly for some carriers operating in Nebraska."

The **New York State Public Service Commission** agreed, noting that a report made by the New York Department of Public Service following 2020's Tropical Storm Isaias unearthed inconsistent storm preparation and response among cable and telephone providers and the need for enhanced coordination amongst utilities and with state and local officials during restoration. Now, the NYPSC has a regulatory framework that requires emergency planning and reporting by cable television and telephone companies.

"The NYPSC supports the FCC's commitment to ensuring an open and accessible internet through its proposals in the NPRM," it said. "However, New York and other states should be recognized for their ability to regulate issues of state or local concern and, therefore, would oppose the NPRM's national framework and blanket preemption approach."

Of course, there were plenty of commenters from the industry that came out more vehemently against a Title II regulatory framework, urging the agency to instead focus on other areas where the Commission has been able to create positive change. In particular, **NTCA** said the agency should focus on persistent challenges of availability and affordability and how it can make a larger impact through the universal service programs, its mapping efforts, the Affordable Connectivity Program and the like.

Happy Holidays

FROM **Cablefax**

THE THREE PACKAGES OFFERED THIS YEAR INCLUDE:

1. Five awards entries to use for:
 - » The Faxies
 - » The Diversity List
 - » Most Powerful Women
2. Table of 10 at Most Powerful Women Awards Ceremony
3. Three 1-year Cablefax Daily Subscriptions

CLAIM MY
HOLIDAY OFFER

“Accordingly, NTCA recommends the Commission to focus on the lodestars of the broadband experience—universal service, consumer protection, and the ability of small ISPs to access middle mile, backbone, and other elements that are critical to serving rural spaces—and then to consider and implement narrowly targeted measures to address potential problems,” it said. “This approach will leave a successful market free to grow unfettered by unnecessary regulation, while ensuring guardrails that ensure continuing promotion of the public interest.”

TRIAN FUND NOMINATES TWO MORE FOR DISNEY BOARD

Trian Fund Management is once again attempting to have a foot into **Disney’s** door, nominating CEO *Nelson Peltz* and former Disney CFO *Jay Rasulo* to the board of the mouse house. The firm’s argument remains that Disney has significantly underperformed, especially since Bob Iger stepped into the CEO role in 2005. “Disney shareholders were once over \$200 billion wealthier than they are now,” Trian Fund Management said in a statement. “Unfortunately, the Board and CEO appear to have no conviction that things will get better.” Disney said its Governance and Nominating Committee will review the Trian nominees and provide a recommendation to the board. The company expects to file preliminary materials with respect to the 2024 Annual Meeting of Shareholders with the SEC, which will include the board’s recommended slate of director nominees.

PROJECT KUIPER ACHIEVES FINAL TECHNICAL HURDLE

Project Kuiper is one step closer to deploying its satellite-based broadband service, announcing that it has successfully tested the last critical system that will be onboard its satellites at launch. It has developed an optical inter-satellite link capability that uses infrared lasers to send data directly between satellites. “We have completed multiple successful demonstrations of that next-generation technology maintaining 100 gigabits per second links over a distance of nearly 621 miles for the entire test window,” **Amazon** said in a post. “These tests validated the final component of Project Kuiper’s advanced communications architecture, and the results ensure that OISLs will be operational on our first production satellites, slated for launch in the first half of 2024.” Project Kuiper is still planning its full-scale deployment in the first half of the year, and it expects to have enough satellites deployed to begin early customer pilots in the second half of 2024.

NBA LEAGUE PASS GETS BIG DISCOUNT FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The **NBA** is getting in the holiday spirit. It’s offering a hefty discount for yearly subscriptions to **NBA League Pass** as the season reaches a quarter of completion. The regular plan is currently discounted for \$49.99/season from the normal \$99.99/season and grants the ability to stream every out-of-market game, customizable broadcasts and access to **NBA TV**. The League Pass

Cablefax Executive Round Up

We asked **Cablefax’s Most Powerful Women** honorees what inspired them to pursue a leadership role.



Elizabeth Andrión

SVP, Regulatory Affairs

Charter Communications

“My tremendous interest in understanding people: what motivates them, what discourages them, how to get the best results from them. And my overwhelming urge to find solutions and fix things, which I have found to be much better

received in professional settings than personal settings.”



Ayo Davis

President

Disney Branded Television

“Leading Disney Branded Television is a tremendous honor. Since I had been at Disney for many years, I knew the rest of the leadership team was fantastic, and I was excited by the unique opportunity to continue the group’s legacy of bringing joy to kids and families with the next generation of beloved Disney stories and franchises. It’s also a very interesting time to be in kids and family programming, and I was inspired by the opportunity to play a leading role in creating the future of this dynamic industry.”



Jessica Epley

VP, Regulatory and External Affairs

Zipty Fiber

“Long ago, I was a claims adjuster. I often overheard my colleagues getting frustrated and ending calls with bitter language or yelling. Claims resolution with a focus on controlling the dialogue and an objective was infrequent.

I started suggesting a more collaborative approach with transparency and candor. Soon the anxiety reduced, and productivity increased. That was when I knew I wanted to guide others to succeed.”



Mary Kang

SVP, Chief of Staff, Ad Sales Strategy

A+E Networks

“My parents immigrated here so my sister and I would have more opportunities. They dreamed big for us and fueled our ambitions, so of course, I am inspired by my parents’ sacrifices and dreams for me. I would also like to show my colleagues and those under my leadership that the way it has historically been, or who was the typical leader, doesn’t have to be the only way. Representation is immensely powerful.”

Premium offering is available for \$74.99/season compared to the regular \$149.99/season pricing. That tier lets fans stream on three devices simultaneously, watch games commercial-free and see in-arena streams. The deal is available until Monday.

PARAMOUNT PLAYS HIDE AND PEAK

Paramount+ is rolling out a new interactive sweepstakes that'll give fans the chance to win two tickets to Super Bowl LVIII as part of a VIP package. The "Hide & Peak" campaign began Thursday and will run through noon on Jan. 8. Paramount+ placed hidden QR codes within the streamer's "A Mountain of Entertainment" feature, with the codes appearing before series and movies. They can be scanned to open a landing page with submission guidelines. Paramount+ will leave hints each week on its social media channels, and new codes will be released every Thursday. Winners will be unveiled Jan. 15 and receive a package that includes a pair of Super Bowl tickets, airfare, a three-night stay in Las Vegas, an "evening with a legend" cocktail reception and more. Super Bowl LVIII will be broadcast on **CBS** and **Paramount+** on Feb. 11 at 6:30pm.

RATINGS IN FOR 2024

The end of 2023 is near, and **Fox News** made it eight straight years ranking as the most-watched cable network according to **Nielsen**. Led by "The Five"—which became the first non-primetime program to be the highest rated in cable news in the A25-54 group—Fox News ended the year averaging 1.22 million viewers P2+ in total day and 1.86 million in primetime. **MSNBC** followed in the total-day category averaging 784,000 viewers, with **ESPN** (699,000), **CNN** (482,000) and **Hallmark Channel** (455,000) rounding out the top five. ESPN checked in at second in the primetime leaderboard with 1.74 million. MSNBC was the third network to breach 1 million with 1.23 million. **TNT** and **HGTV** earned 929,000 and 807,000, respectively.

FIBER FRENZY

WOW!'s Greenville County, South Carolina, journey took another step as the company added its first customers in the town of Mauldin. Businesses and residents can subscribe to fiber plans featuring residential symmetrical speeds of up to 5 Gbps. The Mauldin expansion continues **WOW!**'s goal of reaching 30,000 homes in Greenville County, in which the company has started construction in areas including Five Forks and Simpsonville. – **Hawaiian Telcom** turned on its fiber service for residents and businesses in Pahala, Hawaii, bringing its total locations in the state to 330,000. All customers will get access to download speeds of up to 1 Gbps and upload speeds of up to 500 Mbps. Starter plans begin at \$39.99/month. – **TDS** launched service in Niota, Tennessee, for half of the customers in the project area. Final addresses are set to get access in January, ultimately connecting around 1,000 addresses. Residents can get up to 8 Gig speeds while businesses can get up to 10 Gig with a service level agreement.

DOING GOOD

Following a series of storms that impacted Tennessee over the weekend, **Comcast** is donating \$100,000 to three nonprofit organizations to go toward disaster relief and recovery efforts. Comcast is giving \$50,000 to the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, \$25,000 to the United Way of Greater Nashville and \$25,000 to the United Way of Sumner County. The company has restored service to a majority of customers impacted by the storm. Comcast also opened its outdoor WiFi hotspots throughout the impacted areas, which are free to use even for non-Xfinity customers. – **Lifetime** usually honors one woman for its "Gift of a Lifetime" initiative, but this year it's partnering with **DirecTV** and the military-focused non-profit Blue Star Families to give the Gift of a Lifetime to 11 military spouses. The gift included an afternoon tea session, glam treatment and designer gowns before heading to the red carpet for a celebration of Lifetime's "It's a Wonderful Lifetime" holiday movie event.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL RATINGS

The 2023 college football regular season is all wrapped up, and **ESPN** marked the 30th year of "College GameDay" with its second most-watched season since 2011 and fourth-best all time. It appropriately reached 30 million viewers total in 2023. The show averaged 2 million viewers, which is 0.7% below the 2022 record-setting season which averaged 2.1 million viewers but up 8% compared to 2021. GameDay had its best-ever October with 2.1 million viewers across four shows. Additionally, playoffs have begun for the FCS. Saturday's Villanova vs South Dakota State bout on ESPN came in with 1.8 million viewers, the second most-watched FCS quarterfinal on record and the best FCS playoff game of any round since the 2019-20 Championship. The three other quarterfinal games on **ABC**, **ESPN** and **ESPN2** averaged 1.2 million viewers—up 29% YOY.

PROGRAMMING

The Unforgettable Gala, an event to celebrate the diversity and achievements of the API community from the past year, will be televised on **ChimeTV** in North America. The event—which was created in 2002—will take place Saturday, with the live-to-tape TV special airing Monday at 8pm.

PEOPLE

NCTC named **Windstream** SVP, IT *Chandni Thakrar-Woolam* to its Board of Directors. She'll serve a three-year term. Thakrar-Woolam has been with Windstream for seven years, having previously spent nine years at **Suddenlink** and five years at **Cox Communications**. – **FCC** Commissioner *Brendan Carr* is making some adjustments to his staff. *Greg Watson* was promoted to Chief of Staff, replacing *Ben Arden*, who was on detail for Carr's office for more than four years and is moving back to the FCC's Media Bureau. Watson has been Carr's Policy Advisor since 2021.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

Vegas Sphere an Experience To Remember

Las Vegas is filled with attractions that capture the eyes of the world, but the recent debutant to the Vegas itinerary is hard to miss. You've likely seen pictures and videos on social media of the Sphere that's situated just off the Vegas Strip. Originally dubbed the "MSG Sphere" after its owner **MSG Entertainment**, the company spun off from Sphere Entertainment Company and gave it ownership. The \$2.3 billion facility has snatched the attention of Vegas-goers with its bright external screens, but the main event happens within the 18,600-seat arena (20,000 if you include floor seating for concerts). The band U2 has headlined the Sphere with its concert residency, but the feature film "Postcard from Earth" made its Sphere premiere October 6. After a long walk through the Venetian, the Postcard from Earth adventure begins with holographic art installations and the chance to chat with interactive robots (which were astonishing yet frighteningly realistic). It set the tone for how technologically advanced the Sphere is even before taking a seat. It preceded an immersive 4D film that offers a 270° viewing experience, beginning with two characters Byron and Fang emerging from a long period of sleep. As the two return to consciousness, a computer takes them—and the audience—on a journey through the stages of Earth. From the earliest forms of life to breathtaking scenery and green pastures, the program took immersion to another level by utilizing climate and haptic features. The seats vibrate to bolster intense moments or mimic fast travel, for example, in addition to wind being blown at a steady speed to enhance all perception. With each display of landscape was an opportunity to feel as if you were standing among nature. The Sphere experience itself was more enticing than the storyline, but there are still themes sent throughout the journey. One, the Earth is filled with spectacular opportunities for humans to embrace. However, pollution, conflict and lack of care have damaged Earth's canvas. Byron and Fang end the program by stepping into their "new world," with a new opportunity to care for Mother Nature. – Noah Ziegler

REVIEWS

"May December," **Netflix**. Sometimes a film captures your attention by virtue of its cast. This short 2023 production from Netflix, starring *Julianne Moore* and *Natalie Portman*, certainly has star power. That *Samy Burch*, who wrote the story, and *Todd Haynes*, who directed, give it even more cred. Indeed, **AFI** named it one of 2023's Top 10 films and it received four Golden Globe nominations. Still, after a very promising start, it drags a bit and the storytelling gets blurry. We admit watching it without any idea of the story it's based on might be a mistake. We'll skip plot details except to say that it's based on a true story and if Moore's character's husband (played effectively by *Charles Melton* of "Riverdale" fame) seems a tad young, you're not wrong. On the other hand, if you are interested in an insider's look at how some actors research their roles, "May December" will hold your attention. Unfortunately, in the end, there's little payoff for your time spent viewing. – Top 5: It's that time of year. We'll begin our Top 10 shows of 2023 with 5 favorites and add 5 in our next installment. Our admittedly subjective list begins with **FX**'s "The Bear," Netflix's "Beef," **HBO**'s "Succession" and "The Last of Us" and a sentimental choice, **Showtime**'s "Billions." Let us know your faves. – Seth Arenstein

BASIC CABLE		
P2+ PRIME RANKINGS*		
(12/04/23-12/10/23)		
MON-SUN	MC	MC
	US	US AA
	AA%	(000)
FNC	0.567	1788
ESPN	0.501	1579
MSNBC	0.373	1175
HALL	0.343	1080
TNT	0.217	684
HIST	0.214	676
HMM	0.210	662
HGTV	0.210	661
USA	0.193	608
INSP	0.183	578
DISC	0.183	576
TLC	0.178	560
FOOD	0.171	539
CNN	0.152	478
TBSC	0.144	454
TVLAND	0.138	434
ID	0.134	422
AMC	0.133	420
FX	0.132	415
LIFE	0.131	415
ESPN2	0.131	412
FRFM	0.131	412
BRAVO	0.115	363
GSN	0.101	320
A&E	0.100	316
REELZ	0.096	304
OXY	0.095	299
WETV	0.092	289
BET	0.091	286
NWSNTN	0.086	272
NATGEO	0.076	240
NAN	0.076	238
FETV	0.070	220
ADSM	0.069	218
PRMNT	0.063	200

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

Cablefax
MOST POWERFUL WOMEN

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.

JUST RELEASED