

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Dial Tone: TVS Cable First NCTC Member to Launch Mobile

NCTC kicked off the 2024 Winter Educational Conference in Las Vegas with the reveal of which of its members will be the first to launch mobile services through its MVNO partnerships with **Reach Mobile** and **AT&T**. Kentucky-based **TVS Cable** is bearing the torch, and service is already available to customers. TVS Cable General Manager *David Thacker* told **CFX** that he's been on the network since September and the coverage and experience have exceeded his expectations.

"We knew whenever mobile was going to be an option, we knew we really wanted to be one of the first because I think it's a product that if you're not one of the first to offer it, your competitor is going to be offering it. And in some cases, some of our competitors are already offering it," Thacker said.

TVS Cable is going to begin marketing the service to its customers soon. Thacker said Reach's solution really has been turnkey, with the biggest challenges so far largely being the logistics in terms of training employees on selling the product. NCTC VP, Technological Innovation *Jared Baumann*, who was able to receive 500 Mbps download speeds through the TVS Cable mobile service in the middle of a crowded conference room in Las Vegas, said the cooperative has gone to great lengths to ensure that member companies that launch mobile service are able to launch a service that feels individualized for them. That means everything from ensuring small technical details are not forgotten, like seeing TVS as the provider

in the top left corner of your iPhone, to giving small providers the option to offer the localized customer service their subscribers have come to know and trust. Thacker sees that as a huge advantage his company has over larger carriers that utilize call centers to manage customer needs.

"The only thing we have to sell is service. We don't have internet service, they can get that stuff elsewhere. We have customer service to sell, and we've got to have better service than anybody else," Thacker said.

A number of NCTC members will be watching TVS Cable's early results closely as they continue to consider whether they want to step into the mobile arena. NCTC CEO *Lou Borrelli* said the cooperative has engaged with close to 100 members who are interested in the opportunity, and that includes those who are ready to set a launch date and those who are still uncertain. But he believes that those that are able to celebrate successful launches later this year will have AT&T, Reach and early adopters like TVS to thank for making it all possible.

"When you start to look at how the sausage gets made, it is totally complex, but we've managed to put it in a context where it's doable and it doesn't need to be a heavy lift," Borrelli said. "I honestly think this will be something that will redefine how NCTC is perceived, not just within our membership, but with the outside industry as well."

As for the next steps for NCTC to take the mobile offering to the next level, Baumann said much of the work is around filling out the service and making it feel comprehensive. That

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includes the ability to offer device insurance. His team has already made significant strides with TVS subscribers being able to finance their devices, and Baumann said ongoing work is being done to improve NCTC's relationship with **Apple** and make more of their devices available to potential subscribers.

All of these will be discussion points over the next day of programming at WEC, which is back this year for its first edition since 2020. Borrelli characterized attendance as slightly less than what the cooperative saw pre-pandemic, but certainly robust enough to warrant the gathering. The agenda was packed with perhaps more technology-focused sessions than ever before as members contemplate their cybersecurity needs and how to leverage AI for the future of their businesses.

"It's all about how do we bring solutions that really just help our members do what they are trying to do already, but do it maybe better with better background information, or a lot quicker," Baumann said. "Instead of going out and doing a lot of manual survey and studies for which areas you want to go build or where you want to expand your network, there are fantastic tools out there that can help you understand. And with the right inputs, with the right data fed in, those models can really accurately depict where it is best to build."

The mobile announcement wasn't the only big news coming out of the conference. NCTC also announced a new partnership with communications and broadband services provider **TAK Communications**. The deal will see TAK offer end-to-end project management from engineering to construction and door-to-door sales for NCTC members as part of the cooperative's Premier Partner program.

NCTC has announced a number of new deals since the start of the year with partners like **Actifai** and **Vertex Wireless**, and Borrelli said they are all in line with the ongoing mission of the cooperative to provide essential service, strategy, guidance and support to the membership.

"If we're doing our job, we should be evolving. Members who are focused on the business today and where the business is headed, getting them to engage with us is our most important initiative," he said. "We're just trying to provide value and expertise that the smaller guys don't necessarily have the ability to have in-house."

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## CHARTER REPORTEDLY EYEING ALTICE USA

The rumors of deals aren't all just about **Paramount Global**. *Bloomberg* [reported](#) Monday that **Charter** is exploring a take-over of **Altice USA**, citing "people with knowledge of the matter." Neither operator offered any comment to **CFX**, with an Altice spokesperson adding the company doesn't comment on "rumor or speculation." Investors certainly were excited

by the rumblings, with ATUS shares closing up 36% to \$2.49. Charter shares dipped 2.26%. It's not the first time Altice USA has been linked to a possible sale. In 2022, the operator contemplated possibly selling the assets that were once known as Suddenlink, but the board ultimately determined that the best course was to continue operating the business. The Suddenlink systems, which were rebranded to Optimum in August 2022, have some overlap with Charter. And of course, Charter is the primary cable operator in Manhattan, with Altice USA providing service in the New York tri-state area, including New Rochelle and Trenton.

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## MORE TIME TO WEIGH IN ON POLE ATTACHMENTS AT FCC

The **FCC** extended the deadline for reply comments pole attachment proposed rulemaking until March 13 instead of Feb. 28. The extension was sought by the **Utilities Technology Council** and the **Edison Electric Institute**, which sought the additional time because the comments were due around the same time as oppositions to a petition filed by EEI to reconsider certain aspects of the pole attachment rules adopted in the FCC's Fourth Report and Order. In December, the FCC adopted a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on whether it should take further action to hasten the pace of processing of pole attachment applications that are submitted in large numbers. It also asks whether the Commission should modify its self-help rules to allow prospective attachers to access poles more quickly, and about the impact of contractor availability when attachers are looking to use their own contractors for self-help or one-touch make-ready. The [first comments](#) came in earlier this month.

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## FOX PHILLY LICENSE LIMBO

Pennsylvania Senators *John Fetterman* and *Bob Casey* are urging the **FCC** to act swiftly to conclude its review of Philadelphia station WTXF. This broadcast station, owned by **Fox Corp.**, is the subject of a **Media and Democracy Project** petition asking the FCC to deny the renewal of its license. "WTXF-TV has provided a platform that uplifts Philadelphia's diverse voices and supports local journalism, and we hope that its delivery of local news and local programming to the community is not disrupted," the two Democrats wrote in a letter date Feb 23. The FCC opened a docket on the station's license renewal in August, with MAD's challenge focused on allegations that senior management of Fox Corp. manipulated its audience by knowingly broadcasting false news about the 2020 election. Former Fox and **Disney** lobbyist *Preston Padden* has been lead-

ing the charge against WTXF's renewal. "With due respect to Senators Casey and Fetterman, in a 120-page opinion based on extensive record evidence, a Court held that the *Murdochs/Fox* (applicants for license renewal of WTXF) repeatedly presented false news about the 2020 election. Emails among the *Murdochs* and *Fox* executives show conclusively that they presented false news to protect their profits. These actions do not reflect the character required of broadcast licensees," Padden said in a statement Monday.

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## TIVO BROADBAND ADDS FOUR OPERATORS

TiVo Broadband, TiVo's new solution created for operators' broadband-only customers, has signed for operators: **Buckeye Broadband**, **Blue Stream Fiber**, **Blue Ridge Communications** and **Bluepeak**. Those customers will now get enhanced streaming video quality as well as various SVODs, FAST channels via **TiVo+** and customer-specific linear channels to an operator's broadband-only customer. TiVo Broadband integrates with existing broadband infrastructure, meaning it can be deployed quickly without major infrastructure overhauls. Operators can also use it as a turnkey solution.

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## INTRODUCING BLKFAM

A new Black-owned, Black-focused family streaming platform launched Monday. **BLKFAM**, which was founded by *Larry Adams* and has *Whoopi Goldberg* as an equity partner, hits the market with more than 20 syndicated series, over 1,000 hours of new animated titles and hundreds of hours of original, music-driven content. It has 10 new original live action and animated series in development set to debut throughout 2024, also signing content partnership agreements with **The Africa Channel**, **PLAYWATCH KIDS** and **ATTN:**, who will develop educational shows. BLKFAM can be found on **Prime Video Channels**, **Apple TV**, **Roku**, **Amazon Fire TV**, **YouTube TV**, **Samsung Smart TVs**, **Vizio** as well as iOS and Android devices.

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## AT&T OFFERING \$5 CREDITS TO MANY HIT BY OUTAGE

AT&T CEO *John Stankey* shared a letter he sent to employees regarding last week's nationwide network outage, and the company is issuing an automatic \$5 credit to many affected by the interruption. Consumer and small business customers most impacted by the outage will receive that credit, and AT&T said prepaid customers will also have options available if they were impacted. The company is reaching out and working with its mid-market and enterprise customers to address any concerns in individual discussions. Stankey said he believes crediting customers for essentially a full day of service is the right thing to do due to the impacts the outage may have had, and he believes that approach is still manageable while achiev-

ing 2024 business objectives and the company's previously stated financial guidance. "Our frontline employees demonstrated expertise under pressure as our network teams took immediate action to restore service for our customers. Teams across the company from retail and call centers to product, marketing, communications and technology continue to work tirelessly to live up to our commitment to serve customers first and fulfill our responsibility as one of the nation's critical infrastructure providers," Stankey said in the letter. "I commend the effort and collaboration in this challenging moment, and I am appreciative of all the extra effort and hard work."

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## COX MOBILE SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS SCREEN SAFETY FOR KIDS

The topic of phone safety in regards to usage among children has been discussed more and more as risks continue to arise. **Cox Mobile** conducted its first "Generation Screen: Parenting and Mobile Safety" survey, sharing the results at Mobile World Congress Monday. Cox found that 56% of parents said their children's location sharing is turned on. Approximately 31% of parents claim their children have been contacted by a stranger on their mobile device and 28% say the stranger even referenced their child's location. While 65% talk about mobile device safety with their children several times per week, 73% still say their children can hide their online activity. That has led to one in seven survey respondents admitting to creating a fake social media profile in order to monitor their child's activity. As for what specific things parents are concerned with, the top three issues were predatory or inappropriate behavior, inappropriate content and cyberbullying. However, it's not all "in the dark." About 73% of parents are connected with their children on social media and 64% of them interact on those platforms. Parents have taken preventative steps too, with 75% checking screen time and text messages daily to a few times a week. That number is 73% when it comes to checking phone calls daily to a few times a week.

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## FAXIES DEADLINE APPROACHING

There are just a few short days until Friday's [final deadline to submit 2024 FAXIES](#) nominations. The FAXIES has recognized those who have gone above and beyond in marketing, communications and PR for more than 20 years, honoring individuals and teams in categories like Best Live Event Activation, Digital Team of the Year and New Product or Launch. Nominations for multiple categories are encouraged and there's no limit on how many can be entered.

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## PEOPLE

*Gemma Garcia* was named Head of **Telemundo's** news division **Noticias Telemundo**. She'll oversee the network's news programming across all platforms in the U.S. and Latin America while also leading coverage of the 2024 U.S. presidential election and the production of election-related news specials.