

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Finding Harmony: Independent Show Ready to Roll in Nashville

For a city as busy and bustling as Nashville, there won't be a shortage of topics for attendees to dive into at this year's Independent Show. **NCTC** and **ACA Connects'** annual event gets underway this week as the two organizations and their respective members descend upon Music City to begin mapping out the future of mobile, video, AI and more.

This year's show is happening a few weeks later than its usual run after the **Fiber Broadband Association** held Fiber Connect 2024 in late July. NCTC CEO *Lou Borrelli* confirmed the show will return to its normal schedule for 2025 and 2026, with next year's TIS hitting the slopes of Salt Lake City before a 2026 return to Disney in Orlando.

While the show's format will be familiar to previous attendees, it'll have its fair share of updates from NCTC regarding its MVNO program and [imminent Broadband TV service](#) that'll roll out to customers soon. Borrelli said there will be changes and improvements to NCTC's mobile offering that he thinks members will be excited to learn more about. The MVNO has been rolling out at a steady pace led by **TVS Cable**, **Breezeline**, **TDS** and **Schurz Communications**, and Borrelli thinks it's in a place where things can be kicked up a notch.

There's a lot to cover to get the co-op's members in alignment amid a period where everything seems to be changing, but change has been a theme at NCTC since Borrelli took over in 2021.

"We are three years into a pivot where we moved from an

organization that was primarily doing just content, programming deals, and we've moved into mobile, we've moved into AI, we're moving into broadband, wholesale and retail, IPTV," Borrelli told **CFX**. "There's a lot happening, and I think that the point is our members aren't always fully aware of everything that we do ... The show is meant to effectively showcase, if you will, everything that we are doing on their behalf and trying to answer the questions they need answered so that they can move forward."

The other side of the equation—video—is where the Broadband TV bundle will come into play. It's a way for NCTC to help its members get a grasp of where the real place of video is going forward, even for those still selling cable bundles at a high rate. The other big-ticket item for TIS 24 is AI and how it can fit within businesses to help them bolster operations.

ACAC members have a surplus of regulatory and policy subjects to ponder, but a bulk of that hinges on the results of the 2024 election. ACAC President/CEO *Grant Spellmeyer* sees three potential paths for the election in which each has a unique outlook regarding policy: all control by either party in the House and Senate or split control of the government. That's in addition to the differences in what the **FCC** would look like if controlled by presidential candidates *Kamala Harris* or *Donald Trump*.

"I don't know that I'll be in a position to predict the outcome of the presidential election in a couple of weeks, but to put that first and foremost in [members'] minds and to give them a little feeling for the implications of that as we head into next

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year,” Spellmeyer said to CFX. “From a policy perspective, I think most of it will be forward-looking ... There’s going to be a lot of talk about the Fifth Circuit USF [decision](#) and a lot of talk about the [Supreme Court decision on Chevron](#).” Not to mention the Sixth Circuit’s [decision](#) to [grant a stay](#) on Title II rules as well as the FCC’s proposed bulk billing proceeding and the anticipated rollout of BEAD funding.

This year’s panels will include a mixture of industry veterans, subject experts and members tackling topics like AI, policy and the path forward for video. Technology marketing strategist *Crystal Washington* will deliver the first keynote on Tuesday on how to harness generative AI technology like ChatGPT before media veteran *Evan Shapiro* follows with an assessment of the future of programming.

Even with the breadth of issues folks will discuss, it’s still a time of celebration as NCTC observes its 40th anniversary. This year’s theme of “Faster, Farther and Together” fits right into the impact Borrelli and Spellmeyer want to have when everything is said and done in Nashville.

“We’re really the last bastion of what we would call old-school cable shows, right? We have technology, we have content, we have innovation. It’s all in one place and I think that’s what makes it special,” Borrelli said.

## FUBO RISES ON VENU SETBACK

**Fubo** shares ticked up more than 17% to close at \$1.80 Monday following Friday’s court ruling temporarily blocking the launch of **Disney**, **Fox Corp.** and **Warner Bros. Discovery’s** sports streaming service **Venu Sports**. In a blog post Monday, **LightShed** said the antitrust problem appears to be that Venu is the only distributor that could offer such a product due to bundling and minimum penetration guarantee practices. “While there are still portions of the decision redacted, it appears that DirecTV’s filings were meaningful to the Court. Judge Garnett agreed with DirecTV “and finds the JV Defendants’ denials of the existence of their bundling practices to be entirely incredible and completely belied by the ample evidence before the Court that bundling is pervasive in the industry,” the firm wrote. “We are pleased with the court decision and believe that it appropriately recognizes the potential harms of allowing major programmers to license their content to an affiliated distributor on more favorable terms than they license their content to third parties,” a **DirecTV** spokesperson said. Besides the court’s concerns with bundling, LightShed noted that Venu wouldn’t have to split advertising with an MVPD (typically two minutes per hour is retained by the distributor), meaning that the programmers would be able to grab a higher share of ad time on their most valuable-to-advertiser networks.

## TITLE II OPPONENTS PICK UP SOME FRIENDS OF THE COURT

Petitioners opposing the **FCC’s** Title II order got some backing Monday from former FCC commissioner *Michael O’Rielly* and senior technology executive *Richard Bennett*. The two filed separate amicus briefs supporting objections to re-classifying broadband as a telecommunications service instead of an information service. “Congress’s repeated rejection of bills that would have granted the FCC expansive regulatory authority over broadband, and its enactment instead of a ‘distinct regulatory scheme’ comprised of only targeted grants of authority, create a ‘plain implication’ that Congress did not intend for the FCC to exercise Title II authority over broadband,” O’Rielly wrote in his brief. Bennett, who was vice-chair of the **IEEE 802.3** task group that devised the original Ethernet over Twisted Pair standard, said that to the best of his knowledge he’s the only amicus for the petitioners presenting information regarding the technical underpinnings of the software that controls the flow of information on the internet and the details of how broadband internet access (BIAS) service as an information service maps onto this architecture. “The Commission’s finding that BIAS is a telecommunications service ignores the technical proof that the internet is best classified as an information service because it is managed collaboratively and the DNS, CDN, and other services are inherently integrated with information processing functions,” wrote Bennett, who also rejected the argument that today’s internet is too different from the internet evaluated in Brand X for that decision’s conclusion to be relevant. “By the time of Brand X, the DNS was the backbone and that remains true today,” said Bennett, who also filed an amicus supporting the FCC’s 2019 Restoring Internet Freedom Order that rescinded Title II classification.

## JUST RELEASED – CABLEFAX’S 2024 TOP OPS MAGAZINE

**Cablefax: The Magazine’s** annual Top Ops issue hit the streets Monday (pick up a copy at **The Independent Show** in Nashville). Congratulations to **Midco** (MSO of the Year), **Schurz Communications** (Independent Operator of the Year) and **Shentel Glo Fiber** (Fiber Provider of the Year). Exclusively in our issue is the ranking of the Customer Satisfaction All-Stars, recognizing the three cable operators with the highest scores in the CTAM/HarrisX Internet Service Satisfaction Survey. Also new this year are awards for AI Workforce Innovation and Mobile Momentum, as well as a look back at **NCTC’s** 40-year history. Check out [CablefaxTopOps.com](#) to see all the winners and read a digital copy of the magazine.

## BIG ENERGY SAVINGS FROM VOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS

National set-top box annual energy consumption has been reduced by more than two-thirds since 2012, saving consumers more than \$18 billion and avoiding more than 93 million metric tons of CO2 emissions, according to a new report by **D+R International**. The environmental consulting firm also said that the weighted average power of modems, routers and other home internet access equipment decreased by 89% relative to broadband speed since 2015. The energy savings follow two voluntary agreements developed with energy efficiency advocates and supported by the **Consumer Technology Association, NCTA** and **CableLabs**. Under the agreements, participants commit that at least 90% of their annual new set-top box or small network equipment purchases will meet energy efficiency levels. In 2023, 99.7% of new set-top boxes and 98.6% of new home internet devices met these efficiency levels, with all participants meeting the 90% commitment individually.

## SERVICE ELECTRIC CHOOSES OPENVAULT FOR PMA TECH

**Service Electric Cablevision** is opting to use **OpenVault**'s Profile Management Application (PMA) technology to help increase the capacity and resiliency of its broadband network. The PMA solution will allow the Pennsylvania-based SECV to increase bandwidth availability and optimize performance for customers. OpenVault's PMA optimizes modulation profiles used by DOCSIS 3.1 cable modems on OFDM(A) channels, having already introduced the solution across Europe and North America.

## FIBER FRENZY

**Optimum** is putting the finishing touches on a \$4.6 million investment into its local network, infrastructure and community presence in Tyler, Texas. The investment includes a rollout of Optimum Stream—the company's service that supports streaming apps offered through Google Play—in addition to improvements to internet network capacity and speeds. New speeds for customers in Tyler can reach up to 1 Gbps.

## ABC NEWS PICKS NEW PRESIDENT

**ABC News** is going with *Almin Karamehmedovic* as its next President, overseeing day-to-day operations of the news networks and leading teams responsible for shows across the division including "World News Tonight with David Muir," "Good Morning America" and others on top of ABC News Live and special events coverage. Karamehmedovic is been at the front of production and all daily operations of World News Tonight since August 2014. His responsibilities expanded to encompass news content development back in January 2022. Karamehmedovic first joined ABC News as a freelance video editor in 1998.

## SURVEY: STARLINK SUBS SATISFIED

A new [report](#) by **Recon Analytics** found that **Starlink** customers said they experienced fewer service outages than cable subscribers, but more than fiber. The report featured 153,770 respondents from July 7, 2023 to July 5, 2024 and included Starlink, **AT&T Fiber**, **Verizon Fios**, **Comcast**, **Charter**, **Cox**, **Optimum**, **Frontier**, **AT&T Internet**, **Centurylink**, **T-Mobile FWA** and **Verizon FWA** customers. Some 30% of the more than 1,300 Starlink customers surveyed reported that their internet connection went down in the last 90 days compared to 24% for customers of major fiber providers, 25% for large FWA customers and 39% for major cable providers. Recon said 11% of Starlink's customers are new to home internet, as they often live in very rural areas.

## OBITUARY

Former **Scripps Networks** President and **CTAM** CEO *John Lansing* passed away last week at the age of 67. He most recently served as CEO of **NPR**, retiring earlier this year. His cause of death has not yet been reported. Lansing actually began his career in TV news at 17 as a photographer and ultimately became news director at WCCO in Minneapolis. His tenure at NPR included leading the organization through the COVID pandemic as well as mass layoffs. Lansing spent almost 20 years working at Scripps, including eight years as President of Scripps Networks. His two-year stint as CTAM was punctuated by a heavy emphasis on TV Everywhere.

## PROGRAMMING

**Tennis Channel** will begin its coverage of the U.S. Open with "Tennis Channel Live at the U.S. Open" beginning Monday at 9 am ET. Former "60 Minutes" contributor *Steve Weissman* will anchor the show, which will air most mornings throughout the duration of the U.S. Open, from 9-11 a.m. ET, and from 7-8 p.m. ET on championship weekend after each day of play. Additional coverage, including new episodes of the series "Road to the U.S. Open", will be available on **Tennis Channel+**. – Former University of Texas and NFL quarterback *Colt McCoy* is joining **NBC Sports** as an analyst for its Big Ten football coverage. McCoy will be a game analyst and make appearances on the studio show "Big Ten College Countdown." – **HBO** and **BBC** are teaming up to co-produce a 10-episode drama series "First Day on Earth." Filming is scheduled to begin in 2025. – As the Democratic National Convention gets underway, **Fox News** will air an interview with *Cedric Richmond*, co-chair of the *Kamala Harris-Tim Walz* campaign, during "Special Report" tonight at 6pm. Then, *Sean Hannity* will speak with Democratic strategist *James Carville* during "Hannity" at 9pm. – **Prime Video** has ordered competition baking show "Killer Cakes." Set to debut Oct. 8, the two-part special has contestants working with the best horror special effects artists in Hollywood to create terrifying cakes to haunt your nightmares.