

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

DEI Dedication: Industry Geared Up for Diversity Week in NYC

While there's growing concern about some U.S. companies scaling back DEI initiatives in recent months, the media and telecommunications industry's diversity organizations feel good about the levels of commitment they continue to see. DEI will be front and center next week as the industry gathers in NYC for its annual Diversity Week, a decades-long tradition that includes **The WICT Network's Leadership Conference**, **NAMIC's 38th annual conference** and the annual **Kaitz fundraising dinner**.

"We are the only industry that I'm aware of that dedicates close to a week to shine a spotlight on the importance of diversity and inclusion. I give our industry a lot of credit for that. Anybody who isn't embracing this notion of DEI isn't following the data because everything in the data makes it clear that diversity is good for businesses," WICT Network CEO **Maria Brennan** told **CFX**. "It raises shareholder value, it reduces quit rates among employees. There's higher productivity, there's greater problem solving and faster innovation."

WICT will join with NAMIC on Tuesday for a joint townhall to present findings from their biennial PAR and AIM surveys on advancement and pay equity for women and people of color. The surveys were created to provide benchmarking data on industry progress to ensure Diversity Week isn't just a feel-good event. Just this week, 49 House Democrats signed a letter to Fortune 1000 companies asking them to uphold workplace equality initiatives. "Your companies, our economy, and the public at large all benefit

when everyone is given a fair shot at success. But recently, a handful of companies announced they are ending programs and practices shown to foster unity and equality. Undoubtedly, this will lead many communities to seek their products, services, and employment elsewhere," said the missive.

A few companies, including **Lowes**, **Ford** and **Harley-Davidson**, have said they will no longer participate in the **Human Rights Campaign's** Corporate Equality Index. But industry diversity groups said they aren't seeing less engagement for Diversity Week doings. (And if you haven't registered yet, it's not too late!)

"We're aware of the DEI backlash affecting many companies and industries. However, NAMIC's foundation is deeply rooted in DEI, and we're proud to witness the strong engagement from our partners as they continue to foster more inclusive spaces. DEI has evolved beyond just an initiative—it now represents a genuine commitment to embracing inclusion in all its dimensions," said NAMIC's Chief of Strategy & Programs **Anne-Marie Burton**. "Recent positive trends for people of color, as reflected in the bi-annual AIM/PAR survey, are a testament to this progress. We remain steadfast in supporting our partners as they integrate DEI into the very fabric of their organizations."

The **Walter Kaitz Foundation**, which had been co-located at **NCTA's** HQ since 2004, was fully integrated into the **NCTA Education Foundation** earlier this year. The Foundation is continuing the former Kaitz Foundation's grant-making programs and support for legacy industry organizations and efforts. And it's keeping the Kaitz name for its more than 40-year-old fundraising

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dinner for targeted grant-giving to industry diversity programs. Wednesday's dinner is co-chaired by **Cox Communications** President *Mark Greatrex* and *Angela Cannon*, SVP, Multicultural Networks & General Manager, **aspireTV**.

"Engagement remains strong across our industry's companies, stakeholders and supporters, who have rallied around the mission of this annual dinner and Diversity Week. Many have supported this effort from the very beginning, attending the Kaitz Dinner since day one," said NCTA Chief of Staff *Nilda Gumbs*. "This is a testament to the industry's unwavering commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. The dedication from both companies and individuals to fostering a more inclusive environment continues to drive meaningful progress. As the industry celebrates its achievements during Diversity Week, we are reminded of the ongoing importance of these efforts."

Cablefax will release its annual Diversity & Pride List magazine during Diversity Week, celebrating leaders who are moving the needle when it comes to equity and inclusion. NAMIC's conference agenda includes everything from multicultural marketing to the transformation of traditional television networks as well as a discussion on empowering innovation through diversity in tech with **Warner Bros Discovery's** *JB Perrette* and *Asif Sadiq*. The WICT Network's Leadership Conference will explore navigating career pivots, celebrate its Women of the Year and dive into the current state of the industry with a high-level panel featuring **AMC Networks** CEO *Kristin Dolan*, **Charter Communications** CEO *Chris Winfrey* and Cox President *Greatrex*.

"If anything, people are as invested as ever," said WICT's Brennan. "It's sort of like a stake in the ground where we're saying, 'Look, we're not looking for added opportunity. We're not looking for added access. We're just looking for like access and the same rules and the same engagement as anybody else who's part of a team. It's just not that complicated. But I think individuals and organizations get a hold of these soundbites and they just kind of run with it. I would submit that anybody who is just dropping their initiative either doesn't understand the data or maybe they weren't as committed as one would hope."

HULU OUTAGE HITS DURING PLAYOFF BASEBALL

Hulu + Live TV viewers watching playoff baseball missed a dramatic Guardians comeback over the Yankees after thousands of users reported an outage Thursday night. "We are seeing service improving as we actively work to resolve a technical issue impacting live playback and log-in errors on Hulu. We apologize for the inconvenience," Hulu [posted](#) on X at 11:27pm on Thursday before [confirming](#) at 12:18am the issue had been resolved. It wasn't the best timing either since the outage occurred the same

day the vMVPD raised its prices. The Hulu + Live TV, **Disney+** and **ESPN+** bundle—all with ads—is now priced at \$82.99/month, while the Hulu and Disney+ ad-free version is now \$95.99/month.

USCELLULAR AGREES TO THREE SPECTRUM SALES, MORE TO COME

UScellular is shedding a portion of the spectrum licenses not included in its sale to **T-Mobile**, entering into a \$1 billion agreement with **Verizon** for three different swaths of spectrum. Through the deal, Verizon would acquire 663 million MHz POPs of its Cellular (850 MHz) spectrum licenses, 11 million MHz POPs of its AWS spectrum and 19 million MHz POPs of its PCS licenses. UScellular also reached deals to sell a total of 12 million MHz POPs of its spectrum licenses across the CBRS, C-band and 700 MHz B/C Block bands to two additional unnamed mobile network operators. The terms of those deals have not been disclosed. In the aftermath of these deals, UScellular's retained spectrum will include 3.4 billion MHz POPs of low and mid-band spectrum as well as 17.2 billion MHz POPs of mmWave spectrum, and the company is continuing to look at ways to monetize those assets.

MAINE LEANS ON STARLINK

Maine is taking a unique approach to serving the unserved with low-cost internet. The **Maine Connectivity Authority** is launching the Working Internet ASAP Program, which will see the entity coordinate the bulk purchase of LEO hardware and service reservations from Starlink for the approximately 9,000 homes and businesses that are the hardest to connect and lack any connectivity options. Starting next month, eligible locations will be able to use an enrollment portal to apply for the subsidized hardware and installation support and to find further information about developing digital skills. The Maine Connectivity Authority will also conduct outreach to all eligible locations through a marketing campaign, targeted advertising, direct mail and coordination with local and regional organizations.

DIAMOND SPORTS ADDS MARLINS TO POST-BANKRUPTCY PLANS

Diamond Sports is again updating its post-bankruptcy plans with the Southern Texas Bankruptcy Court learning Friday that it plans to continue carrying Miami Marlins games. It had previously only committed to broadcasting the Atlanta Braves should it emerge from Chapter 11. The Bally Sports RSNs will also officially become **FanDuel Sports Networks** on Monday with Judge *Christopher Lopez* approving Diamond and **FanDuel's**

naming rights partnership. Notably, Diamond and FanDuel said they share a commitment to exploring a unified DTC app experience with the ability to syndicate FanDuel TV programming across FanDuel Sports Network and its live rights programming.

ESPN+ TO JOIN FLAGSHIP APP

In case there were any misconceptions, **ESPN** Chairman *Jimmy Pitaro* made it clear this week that **ESPN+**'s full programming lineup will be integrated into the ESPN flagship DTC app when it launches next year. He revealed the news during the inaugural USC Next Level Sports Conference in L.A. **Disney** hopes to expand its sports audience in December with the introduction of an ESPN tile on **Disney+** with a sampling of sports content.

POLITICAL AD SPEND SKYROCKETS

September brought the heat when it came to political ad spend,

and about a quarter of all political CTV ads in September were presidential according to **Madhiv** data. The surge in political CTV ad impressions in September was monumental, rising by an impressive 489% over August. Advertising spiked the week ahead of the first presidential debate between *Kamala Harris* and *Donald Trump*. Impressions grew incrementally in the days after before jumping significantly again in the middle of the month. Approximately 70% of presidential CTV ads in September were directed to a trio of swing states—Michigan, Pennsylvania and North Carolina.

LONE STAR STATE LAST FOR BEAD


NTIA approved the BEAD Volume II plans for Alabama and Florida this week, leaving just one more on its plate before it can completely move forward into the implementation phase of the program. Texas is the final eligible entity awaiting approval with the other 55 now able to access their allotment of dollars for broadband buildouts and other accessibility efforts.

 **CABLEFAX DASHBOARD**

Social Media Hits

Chip Pickering
@ChipPickering

Today, I had the pleasure of attending @awscloud's event in Arlington, Va. Hearing from an esteemed speaker line-up that included AWS CEO Matt Garman, Virginia Governor @GlennYoungkin, Sen. @MarkWarner, @SenTimKaine, @Amazon VP of Public Policy Shannon Kellogg, and @SecGranholm.



Mike Ozanian
@MikeOzanian

An indication of how bad the RSN (pay cable TV bundle) economics have become, here are the equity valuations for Diamond's RSNs:

- 2018 (Disney purchase): \$20b
- 2019 (Sinclair purchase): \$10b
- 2020 (Sinclair still owner): \$5b
- Presently: \$600M

11:18 AM · Oct 17, 2024 · 21.2K Views

Leticia Latino-van Splunteren
@letilatino

It was an 'office with a view' for @FCC officials and #Congressional Staff that accepted @tschlek and #NATE's invitation to experience #towerclimbing to better understand the #wireless #workforce! As always @BrendanCarrFCC showed off his impressive climbing skills!! #connectivity



 **Up Ahead**

- OCT. 21-22:** [WICT Network Leadership Conference; NYC](#)
- OCT. 22-23:** [38th Annual NAMIC Conference; NYC](#)
- OCT. 23:** [The Kaitz Dinner; NYC](#)
- NOV. 14:** [Horowitz Research Cultural Insights Forum; Miami](#)
- DEC. 4:** [Cablefax Most Powerful Women Celebratory Luncheon; NYC](#)