

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Status Check: Early BEAD Award Takeaways, Broadband Funding Update

With Delaware, Nevada and Louisiana announcing the provisional subgrantees of their BEAD funds, industry watchers are analyzing their decisions and what information could be gleaned to inform how other eligible entities could direct their piece of the BEAD pie.

**New Street Research** examined the implications for the cable industry in a note to clients Thursday, saying some of the biggest names haven't made much of an appearance in these early announcements.

"**Comcast** and **Charter** won less than we expected so far; however, the three states that have announced results so far were not big states for these companies," New Street Research said, noting it wouldn't extrapolate those results to the rest of the country. "**Cox** won less than we expected in Louisiana, but more in Nevada. By way of reminder, Louisiana wasn't a fair fight for Cable because companies that could improve mobile network coverage were favored (the big winner was a consortium that included **T-Mobile**)."

What is also notable is the mix of technologies each state is utilizing to close the digital divide within their borders. Fiber has still been the preferred technology overall with Delaware awarding 100% of unserved and underserved locations to fiber providers. Approximately 95% of Louisiana's locations will be served by fiber, and 80% of unserved locations in Nevada will be reached with fiber.

But where fiber has not been the right choice, states haven't been afraid to embrace other options. **Amazon's** Project Kuiper was awarded \$14.49 million in Nevada to serve 4,891 locations. The service, set to launch commercially next year, is also hoping to win additional funding across other states, already being listed as one of the ISPs pre-registered for the Arkansas BEAD awards.

The satellite connectivity industry is expected to receive a boost from the *Trump* administration once he is inaugurated, but the **FCC** could give it something to celebrate before Jan. 20. FCC Chair *Jessica Rosenworcel* proposed a Report and Order on Thursday that would allocate additional spectrum resources needed for space launch communications needs. If adopted, the R&O would reallocate the 2360-2395 MHz band on a secondary basis for space operations.

Rosenworcel has asked her colleagues to vote on the proposal before Dec. 25, the statutory deadline set in the Launch Communications Act. That won't be the end of the Commission's responsibility to the legislation. By March 25, the FCC must issue new regulations to streamline the process of granting access to the designated bands for commercial space launch operations. In a speech before the US. Space Command and Satellite Industry Association Commercial SATCOM Workshop this week, Rosenworcel applauded the FCC's dedication to making life easier for satellite operators through the creation of a Space Bureau and this revised spectrum framework.

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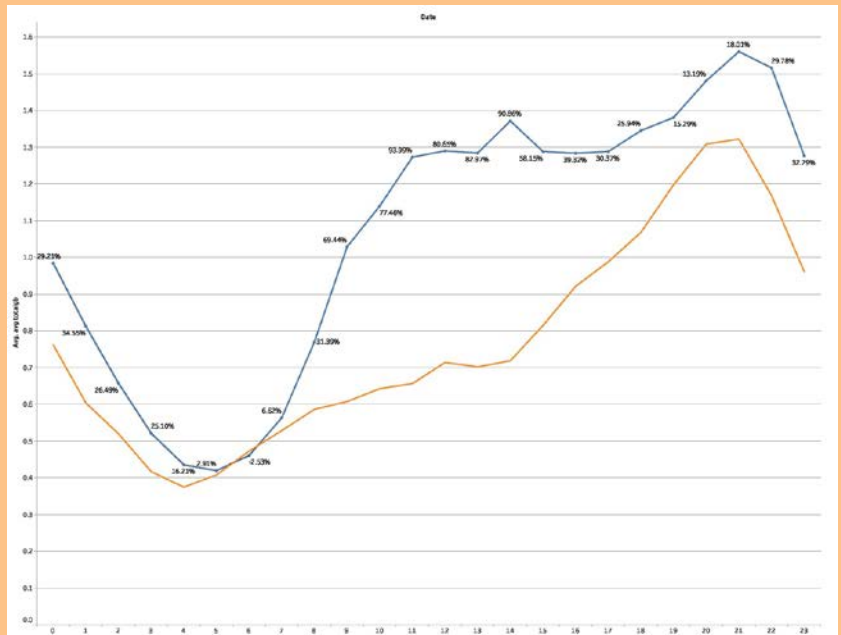


## Exclusive – OpenVault Identifies a Broadband Christmas Tradition

After the presents are opened and the eggnog is drained, it seems many of us turn to the internet. OpenVault has found peak broadband usage on Dec. 25 typically hits at about 9pm.

Average total usage during this peak hour increased 14% to 1.56GB in 2023 compared to 1.37GB in 2022. Average usage for the entire day increased 13%, from 22.53GB to 25.44GB .

OpenVault compared the average total usage per subscriber for each hour on Dec. 25, 2023 (blue) vs. the average hourly usage for the previous two Mondays (Dec. 11 & 18) (orange). Average usage on Christmas Day during the 11am-2pm period (5.22GB) was almost 90% greater than a normal Monday in December (2.77GB for Dec. 11 & 18). Average usage from 9am-5pm on Christmas was 66% greater (11.25GB vs an 6.76GB) while average total usage for the entire day (25.43GB) was 38% greater.



“It is also a meaningful step toward what I call the Single Network Future,” she said. “In the Single Network Future, we will connect everyone, everywhere. But to do it we cannot limit ourselves to using only one technology. We are going to need it all—fiber networks, licensed terrestrial wireless systems, next-generation unlicensed wireless technology, and satellite broadband, seamlessly interacting in a way that is invisible to the user.”

While we wait to see what the FCC do over the next several days, other agencies are continuing to distribute funding to strengthen rural broadband. On Wednesday, **USDA** announced more than \$313 million in funding that would be directed to building reliable broadband in 18 states. The projects are being financed through the fifth round of the ReConnect Program.

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## DOJ WANTS IN ON VENU-FUBO ORAL ARGUMENTS

The **Department of Justice** wants some time to speak up in support of **Fubo** during upcoming oral arguments over whether a stay that has prevented streamer **Venu Sports** from launching should be overturned. The United States already filed an amicus brief in support of Fubo, and now it’s asking the court for three minutes of argument time during the Jan. 6 proceeding before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

The government is asking for either three additional minutes of argument time or three of Fubo’s allotted 15 minutes. Venu owners **Warner Bros. Discovery, Disney and Fox Corp** oppose the DOJ being granted three additional minutes, but do not oppose the request to share Fubo’s time, according to court filings. The three programmers filed the federal appeal in August after a judge in the Southern New York District Court granted the vMVPD’s motion for a preliminary injunction. In her order, District Judge *Margaret Garnett* said Fubo is likely to be successful in proving its claims that the JV will violate this country’s antitrust laws. Late last month, the DOJ filed an amicus curiae brief in support of Fubo, citing Section 7 of the Clayton Act that prohibits mergers, acquisitions and certain jvs that may lessen competition or create a monopoly. Last Friday, Judge Garnett denied the programmers’ request to dismiss Fubo’s case. Venu Sports was set to debut in the fall for a price of \$42.99/month. In their appeal, the companies said they invested approximately \$74 million by the end of August in preparing for the launch of a new streaming business. The DOJ recently participated in another case’s oral arguments before the Second Circuit. While the government isn’t taking a stance in **DirectTV’s** antitrust claim against **Nexstar**, it [participated](#) in Dec. 9 oral arguments to make its case that the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York erred when it dismissed DirectTV’s antitrust claims for lack of standing.

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**LIVE SPORTS FUEL SIGNUPS**

With how high live sports rights have reached, it's no surprise they can be a catalyst in signups. Data from **Antenna** estimates that five events over the course of 2024 garnered more than 1 million signups in a three-day window. The most came for **Paramount+** when it reeled in 3.2 million signups during the Super Bowl (Feb. 10-12). **Peacock** had a trio of surges, the first being its exclusive AFC Wild Card game that saw 2.85 million signups from Jan. 12-14. It had a summer boost during the Paris Olympics with 1.79 million from July 26-28, and the Packers vs Eagles game in Brazil aided 1.36 million signups from Sept. 5-7. **Netflix's** recent *Jake Paul vs Mike Tyson* fight helped bring 1.43 million signups from Nov. 14-16.

**WBD, AEW READY FOR NEW YEAR**

All Elite Wrestling (AEW) is getting ready to begin its renewed agreement to stay in **Warner Bros. Discovery's** world on Jan. 1. "AEW Dynamite" will remain in its Wednesday slot on **TBS** as will "AEW Collision" on Saturdays on **TNT**. Those two will also be available to stream live on **Max** in the U.S. for the first time ever, with "AEW Dynamite: Fight for the Fallen" kicking off Jan. 1 at 8pm. AEW Collision's first bout will be Jan. 4 at 8pm. Additionally, AEW Dynamite, AEW Collision, AEW Rampage and all AEW pay-per-view library content through the end of 2024 will become available on Max on a rolling basis.

**CARRIAGE**

**Hallmark+** is now available to **Fubo** users as a standalone premium subscription or as an add-on for subscribers to one of the vMVPD's packages. Hallmark+ has over 600 hours of holiday content, and on Friday, all 2024 Countdown to Christmas and Miracles of Christmas movies that aired on **Hallmark Channel** will be made available to stream. – **Curiosity's** FAST channel **Curiosity Now** launched on a handful of platforms Thursday. The channel is now available on **Fubo's** Pro Base Plan and the free tier. Curiosity Now is also available on **Xumo Play** and **MyFree DirectTV**, and it'll add U.K. distribution with **Sky Stream** and **Sky Glass**.

**FANDUEL'S DEAL**

Online gambling company **FanDuel** has an early Christmas present in an effort to drive users to its newly branded **FanDuel Sports Network**. FanDuel is offering users three

months of their respective RSN's DTC service if they place a \$5 bet in FanDuel Sportsbook or enter a paid daily fantasy contest. Those folks will get an email with a promo code to get a trial subscription. The deal is only available for new users of the streamer, and they must reside within a FanDuel Sports Network market. The DTC option offers studio programming like "Up & Adams" and "Run It Back" as well as local live sports telecasts.

**FIBER FRENZY**

Over 1,400 homes and businesses in Aiken and Lexington Counties, South Carolina, now have access to **Comporium's** multi-gig internet offerings. Comporium placed nearly 156 miles of fiber-optic network to expand to rural addresses near Swansea, Pelion and Thor in Lexington County, and Perry in Aiken County. The project came from a nearly \$7.3 million investment that was made up of private funding and state-issued funds from the American Rescue Plan Act.

**RATINGS**

The ratings wins keep coming for the **Paramount** portfolio. **Paramount+**'s "Landman" became the streamer's No. 1 original series or movie ever with 14.9 million households through four weeks.

**CAVUTO LEAVING FOX NEWS**

Longtime **Fox News** pundit **Neil Cavuto** is departing the network after 28 years. His final day was today, signing off on the afternoon program "Your World," which he's been at the helm since Fox News' creation in 1996. Cavuto, a known critic of President-elect **Donald Trump**, also hosted "Cavuto Live" and "Cavuto: Coast to Coast" on **Fox Business**. "Neil Cavuto's illustrious career has been a master class in journalism and we're extremely proud of his incredible 28-year run with FOX News Media. His programs have defined business news and set the standard for the entire industry. We wish him a heartfelt farewell and all the best on his next chapter," the network said in a statement.

**HAPPY TRAILS**

Wishing all the best to **Robbie Caploe**, who is stepping down as VP, Brand Director and Group Publisher for **Cablefax** and sister pub **Cynopsis** at the end of 2024. She's been with Cablefax for four years, and quickly became an evangelist for the brand, helping to improve our content, design and sales success. We're excited to see her next adventure.

BASIC CABLE		
P2+ PRIME RANKINGS*		
(12/09/24-12/15/24)		
MON-SUN	MC	MC
	US	US AA
	AA%	(000)
<b>FNC</b>	<b>0.770</b>	<b>2443</b>
<b>ESPN</b>	<b>0.556</b>	<b>1762</b>
<b>PRMNT</b>	<b>0.323</b>	<b>1024</b>
<b>HALL</b>	<b>0.285</b>	<b>905</b>
<b>MSNBC</b>	<b>0.185</b>	<b>587</b>
<b>USA</b>	<b>0.158</b>	<b>502</b>
<b>HIST</b>	<b>0.151</b>	<b>478</b>
<b>ESPN2</b>	<b>0.148</b>	<b>469</b>
<b>TNT</b>	<b>0.147</b>	<b>465</b>
<b>INSP</b>	<b>0.145</b>	<b>460</b>
<b>HGTV</b>	<b>0.144</b>	<b>457</b>
<b>TBSC</b>	<b>0.141</b>	<b>447</b>
<b>HALLMYS</b>	<b>0.139</b>	<b>441</b>
<b>FOOD</b>	<b>0.137</b>	<b>434</b>
<b>TLC</b>	<b>0.137</b>	<b>434</b>
<b>DISC</b>	<b>0.136</b>	<b>431</b>
<b>FRFM</b>	<b>0.133</b>	<b>423</b>
<b>FX</b>	<b>0.117</b>	<b>370</b>
<b>CNN</b>	<b>0.112</b>	<b>354</b>
<b>AMC</b>	<b>0.105</b>	<b>332</b>
<b>BRAVO</b>	<b>0.098</b>	<b>309</b>
<b>LIFE</b>	<b>0.090</b>	<b>287</b>
<b>ID</b>	<b>0.090</b>	<b>286</b>
<b>TVLAND</b>	<b>0.086</b>	<b>271</b>
<b>A&amp;E</b>	<b>0.084</b>	<b>266</b>
<b>GSN</b>	<b>0.079</b>	<b>252</b>
<b>NWSMX</b>	<b>0.079</b>	<b>251</b>
<b>WETV</b>	<b>0.079</b>	<b>250</b>
<b>BET</b>	<b>0.075</b>	<b>238</b>
<b>REELZ</b>	<b>0.072</b>	<b>229</b>
<b>OXY</b>	<b>0.067</b>	<b>212</b>
<b>NAN</b>	<b>0.061</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>NATGEO</b>	<b>0.058</b>	<b>184</b>
<b>SNDNCE</b>	<b>0.053</b>	<b>168</b>
<b>COM</b>	<b>0.053</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>ADSM</b>	<b>0.052</b>	<b>164</b>
<b>FXX</b>	<b>0.051</b>	<b>161</b>
<b>CMT</b>	<b>0.048</b>	<b>152</b>
<b>GAF</b>	<b>0.048</b>	<b>152</b>
<b>IFC TV</b>	<b>0.047</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>TRAVEL</b>	<b>0.047</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>SYFY</b>	<b>0.045</b>	<b>143</b>
<b>HLN</b>	<b>0.044</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>NFL</b>	<b>0.044</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>BBCA</b>	<b>0.040</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>CWBY</b>	<b>0.038</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>MTV</b>	<b>0.038</b>	<b>121</b>

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



## BEYOND THE BANDWIDTH

### Adding to Cart, From the TV Screen to Your Home

There's more content available to watch than ever before thanks to streaming platforms, particularly ad-supported programming, and with that has also come a rise in advancements in the realm of shoppable TV.



The concept of being able to purchase a product that was seen on the television is far from novel. For example, QVC launched in Nov. 1986, and it has been broadcasting from West Chester, Pennsylvania, ever since. Customers used to place

phone orders to purchase goods from QVC and others, but today the experience is far more about embracing technology and launching apps that make the buying process as simple as possible for viewers.

"Today, it's about seamlessly integrating commerce into the content viewers already love across platforms, making it a natural extension of their engagement rather than a separate experience," NBCUniversal CMO, Advertising and Partnerships Josh Feldman told CFX. "Through technology and the rise of streaming, we've been able to transform the advertising experience by enabling shopping at the point of inspiration and completely collapse the purchase funnel for brands."

Today, NBCU uses its Must ShopTV capability to allow viewers to connect even closer to the content than ever before. Introduced last year, Must ShopTV allows Peacock viewers to buy products as they appear on screen. The feature utilizes AI-powered technology from KERV Interactive to scan programming and identify and match products in episodes of TV shows. It is the sophistication of that technology and more that has fueled NBCU's ability to meet audience desires in the shoppable arena.

"For example, the rise of the QR code has completely changed the game, allowing viewers to lean into what they are watching and connect them to what they can shop for in a matter of seconds," Feldman said. "Additionally, we've been able to leverage AI technologies to enhance our ability

to identify products in programming, to identify the moments within a show that are the best suited for shopping and to scale those capabilities across more content."

NBCU made the decision earlier this year to expand Must Shop TV to an additional six series across Bravo, and Feldman said that is a perfect example of marrying together this technology with the right kind of programming and fandoms. Because Bravo fans are so passionate and locked in with the content, NBCU finds they gravitate toward options to connect on an even deeper level.

"Adding a layer of optionality to shop what they are seeing is a chance for them to emulate the style of a Real Housewife they admire or taste a 'Top Chef' winning dish," he said.

Beyond the purchasing of products that have been seen on screen, there is an effort now to stretch shoppable TV to make the viewing experience even more enjoyable for audiences and to minimize disruptions that can force individuals away from their favorite franchise. That inspired the launch of NBCU's Virtual Concession, a feature that allowed viewers of the Paris 2024 Olympics and Paralympics across NBC and Peacock to order food and drinks through on-screen QR codes and have them delivered to their location.

"Two out of three Peacock streamers are likely to order through a delivery service provider while watching content they love," Feldman said. "It is a natural moment that we're making more seamless and accessible."

NBCU saw phenomenal results from across the Paris Olympics and Paralympics, and it expanded the capability to its "Christmas in Rockefeller Center" across NBC and Peacock. Consumers were able to purchase holiday snacks and gifts from the comfort of their homes while watching the annual tree lighting.

Underneath all of these new shoppable experiences is a wealth of data around consumer behavior. Feldman believes understanding consumer behavior ultimately starts with the importance of delivering relevant advertising which is built on a foundation of authenticity.

"Through tools like single sign-on experiences and strategic data collaborations, we can meet audiences where they are with meaningful, engaging moments while honoring their evolving media habits," he said. "We've already developed strong partnerships and seen incredible results for our clients with our partners at Instacart and Walmart Connect. Through these collaborations, we've seen the power of leveraging attribution data enhancing both brand results and the viewing experience for our audiences allowing us to further demonstrate the value of modern-day premium TV advertising."