Here’s the big news!

The Independent Show Debuts Sept. 29 - Oct. 1, 2020

ACA Connects and NCTC are presenting the first-ever "reimagined" virtual Independent Show (#TIS20).

The dates are Sept. 29 to Oct. 1, and this unique event will feature national, industry and political speakers, highlighting the stories and issues of independent broadband providers. Designed to suit the online work world so many of us are relying on these days, the six-hour, invitation-only event over three days will bring together nearly 1,000 industry professionals from across the U.S. for thought-provoking sessions.

The goal is to help independent providers better understand the changing landscape of broadband Internet, advanced video, and other technical and policy issues in a post-COVID 19 world, including in the marketplace, on Capitol Hill and at the Federal Communications Commission.

#TIS20 Registration Opens Monday, July 20. Visit our show site, theindependentshow.org for all the details.

ACA CONNECTS: KEY DEVELOPMENTS

ACA Connects To FCC: Take A Hard Look At Satellite Operators’ Deficient C-Band Transition Plans

Satellite operators’ individual plans for completing the transition of associated earth station services to the upper portion of the C-Band spectrum must be reviewed more closely and have their deficiencies addressed.
C-band are defective and raise concerns about the degree to which the satellite operators intend to fulfill their transition-related responsibilities, small and medium-sized cable television providers of ACA Connects told the Federal Communications Commission. ACA Connects explained that even where the satellite operators properly accept responsibility, their Transition Plans are not consistent with FCC rules.

In its comments, ACA Connects urged the FCC to carefully examine the Transition Plans and related filings of satellite operators SES Americom and Intelsat, which between them account for almost all C-band video programming delivery to pay television providers in the U.S. ACA Connects explained the satellite operators’ plans are deficient, despite the clarity with which the FCC outlined the satellite operators’ roles when they accepted the responsibilities, as well as financial rewards, associated with accelerated relocation under the C-band Order.

“Given the importance of the satellite operators having airtight plans in place for the transition, the FCC should have no problem about holding the satellite operators’ accountable for providing a detailed plan that meets the FCC’s requirements,” ACA Connects President and CEO Matthew M. Polka said. “Importantly, these plans also help cable operators such as ACA Connects members know exactly what to expect and when, so they can also prepare fully for a successful transition. Read more.

ACA CONNECTS FILING 7/13: FCC Comments re Eligible Satellite Operator Transition Plans for the 3.7-4.2 GHz Band

ACA CONNECTS: FILINGS

ACA Connects has been actively representing independent cable in many other ways and on many issues in Washington, D.C. Those efforts are described in the filings, letters, and testimonies linked below for your review:

7/10: FCC Ex Parte re Advanced Methods to Target and Eliminate Unlawful Robocalls w/ Consumer and Government Affairs Bureau

7/9: FCC Ex Parte Letter re Establishing the Digital Opportunity Data Collection and Modernizing the FCC Form 477 Data Program

7/7: ACA Connects Ex Parte re Expanding Flexible Use of the 3.7 to 4.2 GHz Band w/ Office of the Chairman and Wireless Telecommunications Bureau

7/2: FCC Ex Parte re Expanding Flexible Use of the 3.7 to 4.2 GHz Band w/ Office of the Chairman, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, and International Bureau

7/1: FCC Ex Parte re Expanding Flexible Use of the 3.7 to 4.2 GHz Band w/ Offices of Cmmsrs Carr and O’Rielly

6/30: FCC Ex Parte re Office of Economics and Analytics Seeks Comment on the State of Competition in the Communications Marketplace w/ Office of Economics and Analytics and Media Bureau

6/30: FCC Ex Parte re Expanding Flexible Use of the 3.7 to 4.2 GHz Band w/ Office of the Chairman

ACA CONNECTS: NEWS HEADLINES

Cable ONE To Take Minority Interest In Hargray (Light Reading, 7/8)
Hargray Communications announced an agreement for Cable ONE to contribute to
Hargray its Alabama assets, comprised of its system serving Anniston, Ala., and surrounding areas. Under the terms of the agreement, Cable ONE will hold a minority equity interest in Hargray upon closing. The transaction, expected to close this fall, will add residential and commercial customers to Hargray's expanding business in the southeastern U.S. and will expand Hargray's meaningful presence in Alabama where Hargray already serves neighboring Pell City.

**Charter Will Enter RDOF Bonanza** *(Light Reading, 7/13)*
Seizing upon an opportunity to expand its footprint while also putting more pressure on incumbent telcos, Charter Communications disclosed in an 8-K filing that it will join the bidding for billions of dollars in Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) subsidies. While spelling some bad news for companies such as CenturyLink and Frontier Communications, it's "ambiguously good news for Charter," Craig Moffett, analyst with MoffettNathanson.

**ISPs Lose Facial Challenge To Maine Privacy Law** *(MCN, 7/7)*
Maine has scored a court victory, and cable providers a defeat, over the state's law preventing ISPs from "using, disclosing, selling or permitting access to" a customer's personal information without express consent, and restricts the use of nonpersonal information if a customer opts out. A Maine judge denied ISPs' motion that the court rule the state statute preempted by federal action and unconstitutional to boot, and instead granted the state's cross motion that the statute was not preempted.

**Moody's: Cable Has Ample Room To Tap Debt Markets** *(MCN, 7/13)*
While the rest of the analyst community braces for the COVID-19 pandemic's full impact on second-quarter results, pay TV distributors and networks appear to have more than enough liquidity to weather the worst the lockdown has to offer, according to Moody's. Moody's Senior VP Neil Begley wrote that despite the surge in activity, most pay TV companies still have ample liquidity as some states begin to lift restrictions associated with the pandemic.

**Black News Channel Names Former CNN Exec Princell Hair As CEO** *(MCN, 7/13)*
Black News Channel has tapped former CNN executive Princell Hair as its president and CEO, the network announced Monday. Hair will oversee the five-month-old, African-American targeted news network’s day-to-day operations effective immediately, according to chairman and interim CEO J.C. Watts. Hair replaces former network CEO and co-founder Bob Brillante who left the company in April.

**Mission Broadcasting To Buy WPIX From Scripps** *(Next TV, 7/13)*
Mission Broadcasting has exercised an option to acquire WPIX-TV, New York. The option was granted to Nexstar Media Group when it sold eight stations to Scripps in order to comply with federal regulation after Nexstar bought Tribune Media. Nexstar transferred the option to require WPIX to Mission, according to Scripps. Mission will pay about $75 million.

**Charter's 'Broadcast TV' Fee Adds $197/Yr. To Cable Bills** *(Ars, 7/10)*
Charter Communications is raising the "Broadcast TV" fee it imposes on cable plans from $13.50 to $16.45 a month starting in August. Charter says the Broadcast TV fee covers the amount it pays broadcast television stations (e.g. affiliates of CBS, NBC, ABC, and Fox) for the right to carry their channels. At $16.45 a month, the fee will cost customers an additional $197.40 per year.

**Roku Has Upended The Cable TV Power Dynamic** *(Motley Fool, 7/10)*
Comcast is about 10 times as large as Roku in terms of market cap. The telecommunications and media conglomerate has generated nearly 90 times more revenue than the smaller streaming TV company over the past year. Yet, despite those vast differences in fundamentals, Roku appears to have the upper hand as Comcast's NBCUniversal prepares to launch its Peacock streaming services in a matter of days. That's a significant change in the underlying power dynamic.

**MLB TV Finally Issues 2020 Refund Plan** *(TV Answer Man, 7/7)*
MLB.TV, baseball’s online package of out-of-market games, has finally revealed how it will offer refunds and/or credits to subscribers who paid the full $121.99 price before the 162-game season was suspended in March. The league says the price of the 2020 MLB TV subscription will now be prorated to reflect the new 60-game schedule. The league says...
the price of the 2020 MLB TV subscription will now be prorated to reflect the new 60-game schedule. If you paid $121.99, you will only be charged $45.18 for the shortened season, a difference of $76.81 from the original price (before additional applicable discounts or taxes are applied).

ACA CONNECTS: ACTION BRIEF TOP THREE

Most-Clicked Links From June 30 ACAAction Brief:
1. Sparklight Extends Covid-19 Relief Efforts (Release, 6/24)
2. ImOn Continues Pledge To Keep Iowans Connected (Release, 6/30)
3. Grande Offers Free, Low-Cost Internet To In-Need Families (KRIS, 6/26)

ABOUT ACA CONNECTS

Across this vast country, small and rural markets participate in the digital revolution by receiving video, broadband, and phone services from more than 700 small and medium-sized independent operators represented by ACA Connects - America’s Communications Association.

ACA Connects' members -- cable, phone, and fiber-to-the-home operators and municipalities -- deliver affordable basic and advanced services to nearly 8 million households and businesses. ACA Connects members operate in every state, offering high-definition television, next generation Internet access, and digital phone service.

Access to advanced communications is not a luxury but a critical necessity for consumers and companies, schools and hospitals. America's economic prosperity in smaller markets and rural areas depends on the growth and success of ACA Connects members, who believe a connected nation, is a united nation.

ACA Connects asks lawmakers and regulators to ensure fair treatment so that small and medium-sized independent operators may continue to supply affordable video, broadband, and phone services to Main Street America. Through active participation in the policymaking process, ACA Connects members and leaders advocate for the interests of their customers, their companies, and their communities to help ensure the continued viability of their way of life in hometown America.

For more information, visit www.acaconnects.org, or contact:

Ross Lieberman, SVP Government Affairs
202-494-5661 | rlieberman@acaconnects.org

Ted Hearn, VP Communications
202-713-0826 | thearn@acaconnects.org

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