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April 19 & 20
Kalahari Resorts in the Poconos

Next week's 29th annual Cable Academy, presented by the Pennsylvania Cable & Telecommunications Foundation, heads to the Poconos to highlight the direction our industry must

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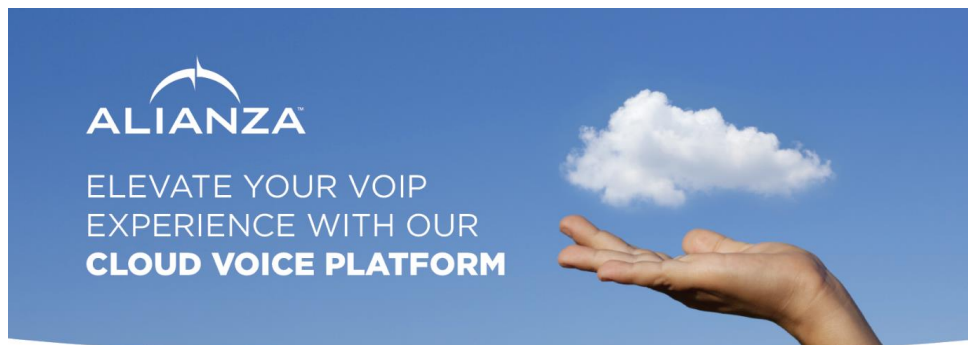
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Recode Roku has hired a team of lobbyists as it gears up for a net neutrality fight

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www.alianza.com info@alianza.com

SyFy and USA, said the people, who asked not to be identified discussing private plans. Comcast is still determining many of the particulars of the service, including whether it will have a live feed of the broadcast network and whether it will include sports, the people said.

The service could help Comcast continue to adapt to a TV industry that has transformed before its eyes since the cable provider acquired a majority stake in NBCUniversal in 2011. Tens of millions of customers signed up for services from Netflix and Amazon.com Inc. to get access to vast libraries of shows on-demand and over the internet, while viewership of live TV dropped among all but the oldest of viewers.

Comcast Corp. plans to introduce an online video service offering hit shows from its NBCUniversal TV networks in the next 12 to 18 months, an effort to compete with rivals Netflix Inc. and CBS Corp., according to people familiar with the matter.

The new service will include programs from the NBC broadcast network, and could include shows from Comcast cable channels Bravo,

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[Pittsburgh Post-Gazette State Treasury hopes to save \\$5 million with new investment strategy](#)

Several of NBC's peers have responded to the shifting landscape by introducing online TV services of their own to satisfy viewers who don't pay for cable or satellite packages. CBS sells All Access, an online-only version of the CBS broadcast network that includes a live feed, and created a new streaming service for premium cable network Showtime. Time Warner Inc. did the same for its premium cable network HBO. None of these services have attracted customers at the same rate as Netflix, Amazon or Hulu. CBS **said** in February its services each have more than 1.5 million subscribers, while HBO Now has surpassed 2 million.

Comcast's new service may take a while because the cable provider is still hamstrung by restrictions imposed by regulators in the deal for NBCUniversal. The rules make it difficult for Comcast to sell services entirely comprised of its own content. The last of the prohibitions expire in September 2018. Comcast added video subscribers last year for the first time since 2007 after weathering the loss of hundreds of thousands of customers fleeing for cheaper online video services. The largest U.S. cable operator has struck recent deals to accommodate changing viewing habits, incorporating Netflix into set-top boxes and making Comcast's Xfinity TV service available on Roku Inc.'s devices.

Comcast has acquired rights from cable network owners to offer their channels nationwide, according to people familiar with the negotiations, giving the cable giant a backup plan if rival online-TV services catch on with consumers. The company also has a comedy streaming service with original programming, called Seeso, and a sports package with cycling and rugby, called NBC Sports Gold.

While rivals CBS and ABC suffer steep viewer losses, NBC is riding high this season. It is the most-watched network among viewers 18 to 49, the demographic most important to advertisers, thanks to stalwarts "Sunday Night Football" and "The Voice" as well as the biggest new hit of this TV season, "This Is Us." NBCUniversal's cable networks haven't fared as well. – **Bloomberg**

A federal regulator's plan to roll back Obama-era net-neutrality rules is sparking another battle that is expected to rival or exceed the epic political clashes over internet regulation in recent years.

The dispute intensified last week when Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai held a closed-door meeting with telecommunications groups to **sketch out his ideas** for rolling back the **2015 net-neutrality rules**, one of the Obama administration's signature regulatory changes. Mr. Pai's emerging rollback plan appears aimed at preserving the basic principles of net neutrality, while shifting oversight responsibility to the Federal Trade Commission to reverse what GOP critics view as the overreach of the previous approach. "This will touch off another huge political firestorm," said Lawrence Spiwak, president of a conservative telecommunications think tank, the Phoenix Center for Advanced Legal and Economic Public Policy Studies.

Numerous online consumer groups—as well as many congressional Democrats and some internet firms—regard the current rules as essential for ensuring continued competition on the internet. An industry group, the Internet Association, was set to meet with Mr. Pai on Tuesday, aiming to try to preserve net-neutrality protections. A prominent member of the group, Facebook Inc., said it is working through the association "to support strong, enforceable net-neutrality rules, and will continue to do so," according to a spokesman.

"The internet industry stands with our consumers who demand strong, enforceable net-neutrality rules to protect their access to the entire internet," said Noah Theran, a spokesman for the Internet Association. Broadband providers "must not be allowed to tip the scales in favor of their own, or preferred, websites and apps." The FCC's net-neutrality rules required internet service providers such as cable and wireless firms to **treat all internet traffic the same**. Telecommunications firms and many Republicans said those rules went too far, particularly by reclassifying the companies as common carriers, potentially subjecting them to stringent government regulation.

Broadband carriers have **challenged the current net-neutrality rules in court**, so far unsuccessfully. Mr. Pai seems likely to move forward with his changes, even if carriers win in court. But his move would likely touch off its own court challenge by consumer groups, and the conflict is likely to spill over to Capitol Hill and could engulf media companies as well.

While the passion on both sides hasn't diminished, the dynamics of the fight could shift somewhat under a new administration. Companies in Silicon Valley, generally strong allies of former President Barack Obama, may feel less eager to pick a fight with Republicans. Republicans on Capitol Hill already are unhappy over online firms' recent opposition to another regulatory rollback benefiting broadband carriers, this one affecting consumers' privacy rights.

After Mr. Pai's thinking on net neutrality became public last week, consumer groups denounced it as a sellout to big telecommunications firms, because it would rely on industry commitments to abide by net-

neutrality principles, rather than explicit rules. Under the plan, violators could be pursued by the FTC using its broad authority to prevent unfair and deceptive trade practices, according to people familiar with the matter.

“If [media] reports are true, Chairman Pai is preparing to give dominant cable and telecommunications companies what their D.C. lobbyists have dreamed of for years: voluntary net-neutrality ‘rules’ where consumer protection is no more than ‘trust your cable or internet provider,’” said Chris Lewis, vice president at Public Knowledge, a consumer group that advocates for an open internet. The FCC declined to comment.

Some telecommunications firms have long favored handing internet oversight to the FTC, which is viewed as less powerful than the FCC in some ways. “Moving things to the FTC has been a long-running goal of the [broadband providers], and it’s totally understandable why,” said former FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler, an Obama appointee who shepherded the net-neutrality rules through.

The FTC has oversight over huge swaths of the business world, leading some observers to question its expertise in the often-technical telecommunications sector. The FTC often is limited to determining whether a company’s actions amount to a deceptive or unfair trade practice. It also handles some antitrust inquiries. The FCC, by contrast, can be more proactive in spelling out detailed rules of the road for firms.

However, FTC’s current acting chairwoman, Maureen Ohlhausen, a Republican like Mr. Pai, has argued that the agency is well-suited to ride herd on internet competition, because of its extensive responsibilities for enforcing antitrust laws. She has said the net-neutrality rules could harm consumers by “replacing competition with unneeded government regulation.” FTC defenders also say it has plenty of expertise in telecommunications networks.

Consumer groups have been having frequent meetings and conference calls to discuss strategy and tactics in the run-up to the net-neutrality clash. A recent legislative battle over congressional rollback of an Obama-era privacy rule provided hints of the bitter fight to come. Votes in the [House](#) and [Senate](#) were surprisingly close. Some of the organizations were suggesting they would seek to stir the kind of mass public response that helped push through the net-neutrality rules. Those rules generated around 4 million comments to the FCC.

“Millions of people will need to speak out to rescue the internet from Trump and Pai’s reactionary agenda. They must be stopped,” said Free Press President Craig Aaron. Free Press advocates for an open internet. Gigi Sohn, who helped craft the Obama-era rules as a senior FCC adviser, predicted the opposition to Mr. Pai’s rollback will exceed online protests that defeated online-piracy rules in Congress five years ago. Those protests—against legislation known as SOPA-PIPA—were aided in some cases by big online firms, such as Alphabet Inc.’s Google unit. “I think it’s going to be SOPA-PIPA plus,” Ms. Sohn said of the coming furor over the net-neutrality rollback. “You’re taking away something people have, and fought for.”

Some advocates for the FCC rules acknowledge privately they are worried that they might not have as much support this time around from big internet companies. In part that is because many of those firms are now successful and wealthy in their own right and less dependent on government protection. For example, one of the biggest potential beneficiaries of the net-neutrality rules—Netflix Inc.—said in a January earnings letter that “strong net neutrality is important to support innovation and smaller firms.” However, the company said that “weakening of U.S. net neutrality laws...is unlikely to materially affect our domestic margins or service quality because we are now popular enough with consumers to keep our relationships with [broadband providers] stable.” – *Wall Street Journal*

Beware, YouTube TV subscribers: For many popular shows you record on your DVR, you’re going to be forced to watch the commercials. YouTube TV launched in select markets last week at \$35 a month, touting more than 50 live channels and an eye-catching “unlimited” digital video recorder stored in the cloud. But there’s a catch, thanks to the tangle of contracts YouTube has with major media companies like Walt Disney Co., 21st Century Fox and Comcast Corp.’s NBCUniversal.

Let’s say a subscriber decides to record ABC’s “Blackish” episode in hopes of being able to catch up on it in a few days, skipping over the ads while they watch. Within 24 hours, though, YouTube likely will have the on-demand version of that show available, since many TV networks offer cable providers at least the last five episodes for catch up on demand. In on-demand versions of shows, TV networks typically disable fast-forwarding over ads to make sure they get credit from marketers who pay for the commercials. If YouTube TV does have the on-demand version of Wednesday night’s “Blackish” available, then it won’t let its subscribers watch a recorded version that allows for ad-skipping. Instead,

viewers will be forced to watch the on-demand episode and all of the ads, even though consumers thought they saved the show on their DVR. A YouTube spokeswoman confirmed the arrangement and said it is "tied to deals" with TV programmers. Of course, if the on-demand version doesn't exist, the YouTube TV subscriber will be able to watch a recorded version and skip ads.

It's an unusual compromise with TV networks that marks a departure from how traditional cable operators like Comcast operate. Most cable operators tend to offer both the option to watch your recorded show, thereby allowing ad-skipping, or the on-demand version. Some TV executives said that YouTube's arrangement is new, and that even Dish Network Corp.'s Sling TV streaming competitor won't have that stipulation as it rolls out its cloud DVR service.

Part of what led to the unusual concession on YouTube's part is that TV networks have been wary of doing deals with the Alphabet Inc. -owned entity, one person familiar with the matter said. YouTube has long had a contentious history with TV networks, many of whom think it hasn't done enough to battle pirated content appearing on its platform.

Some TV executives indicated that this DVR arrangement is something they'll push for in future deals with new streaming services offering a package of channels. While it isn't possible to put the DVR genie back in the bottle for traditional cable customers, TV networks are hopeful they can train viewers to expect ads at least in on-demand, current-season shows they stream. – **Wall Street Journal**

By March 2016, changes will be under way in Utah and across the nation affecting free, over-the-air television. In 2006, the FCC moved television stations to digital channels to free up broadcast spectrum for mobile phones, wireless Internet and tablets. It was an unfunded mandate by Congress that placed a burden on free, over-the-air broadcasters and consumers.

It's happening again! This time, rural translators in Utah are in danger of being forced to shut down. The FCC wants to capture more over-the-air spectrum for mobile and Internet technologies. Their goal is to move stations on channels 52 to 31 to lower channel assignments. When that happens, rural Utah will be served by far fewer translators, which will cut off over-the-air reception to more than 100,000 viewers statewide.

Why care?

- Affected residents will be forced to purchase cable or satellite service. Some will have no over-the-air television at all.
- All free, over-the-air television, including the educational programming provided by KUED and KUEN to homes and schools, will be reduced by 60 percent.
- Access to commercial television will be eliminated in rural areas of Utah
- Affected households lose access to emergency public safety information, news and weather alerts.
- Rural Utah is excluded from an informed political process.

It's time to communicate through our elected officials the significant impact this will have, especially to Utah and other Western states. – **Letter from James Morgese, General Manager of KUED-TV, Salt Lake City's PBS affiliate in the Salt Lake City Tribune**

