

# Independent Cable

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May 2011

# NEWS

## 2011 Summit Tallys 150 Capitol Hill Visits

### Leading Telecom Lawmaker Addresses ACA's Key Issues

The American Cable Association's 18th Summit concluded on a high note with a special legislative policy update from House Communications and Technology Subcommittee Chairman Rep. Greg Walden, whose overview examined many of the key telecommunications issues

that hundreds of ACA members planned to discuss in meetings with other Capitol Hill lawmakers throughout the day.

"I am very honored that Chairman Walden would share his deep legislative knowledge in a wide-ranging briefing that only a seasoned insider of his caliber could deliver to a room filled to capacity with independent cable operators highly motivated to effect policy change in Washington," ACA President and CEO Matthew M. Polka said. "Aware new communications laws are coming, ACA is planning to work with Chairman Walden to ensure that Congress understands the unique economics surrounding the business plans that ACA members have ready to go for their rural markets."

Chairman Walden — whose panel oversees the Federal Communications Commission — spoke moments before waves of ACA members headed to Capitol Hill for briefings in Congressional offices to share ACA's policy goals for at least the duration of the 112th Congress.

The three-day ACA Summit wrapped up with more than 150 Capitol Hill visits in addition to meetings with FCC officials. Attendance at this year's Summit was strong as the event drew 321 attendees from a cross-section of the industry, including cable companies, equipment vendors, programming suppliers and government officials on the federal and state levels.

In his breakfast session comments, Chairman Walden discussed a numbers key issues,

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## The American Cable Association's 18th Summit

### 2011 Summit *(continued from page 1)*

ranging from retransmission consent to Net Neutrality, spectrum policy, and reform of the FCC to create more openness and transparency. Although Walden expressed support for market-based solutions to many challenging issues facing ACA members, he did remark that he was “not unsympathetic” to ACA’s view that retransmission consent backs small cable operators into a corner in ways that suggest a less than perfect market situation. Chairman Walden said he

ACA members gathered for this year’s Washington Summit in support of their message that good policymaking ensures that rural companies serving high-cost areas are treated fairly in the marketplace and not overburdened by regulations, so they may continue to supply affordable communications services to their communities. ACA members stressed that the rules of the road set by government must take into account the unique economics of rural deployment and that policy misjudgments can freeze investment and cre-



*From its inception, ACA’s leaders and members have emphasized the vital role of grass roots work by smaller cable operators in the nation’s capitol. Among the more than 150 ACA member meetings with their elected representatives in Washington during the recent Summit were (above) Mississippi Members meeting with Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS), and (opposite page) Pennsylvania Members meeting with Senator Pat Toomey (R-PA)*

was hopeful consumers would be able to vote with their TV remotes to settle some of the content access debates raging today.

“Chairman Walden, who operated radio stations in his home state of Oregon for 22 years, knows what it means to meet a payroll as a former small businessman,” Polka added. “With enthusiastic support from Chairman Walden, hundreds of ACA members – many traveling thousands of miles to be here – fanned out across Capitol Hill to assure lawmakers that Hometown America is receiving the very best communications services on the market.”

ate digital disparities that could take many years to remove.

Other ACA Summit 2011 highlights included the FCC Keynote Address by FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn, who preceded a Broadband Access panel that included Zac Katz, Legal Advisor to FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski; Larry Landis, Commissioner, Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission; Tom Power, Chief of Staff, National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA); and David Villano, Assistant Administrator for the Telecommunications Program at the Rural Utilities Service in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. □



### WOW!'s Colleen Abdoulah Elected ACA Vice Chair

Colleen Abdoulah, Chairwoman & CEO of WOW! Internet, Cable and Phone, has been named Vice Chairwoman of the American Cable Association, the second-highest leadership position in the organization that was held by James Bruder, CEO of Harron Communications, for the past four years. Abdoulah was appointed to her first two-year term on the ACA Board in 2008.

"Colleen is one of the most talented and visionary executives in the cable television industry, and I congratulate her on being named ACA's new Vice Chairwoman. I truly appreciate that Colleen is so willing to assume such an important role with so much at stake for ACA members and the millions of consumers they serve in hometown America," ACA chief Matt Polka said.

"Colleen's election as Vice Chairwoman is terrific news for our organization and the independent cable community that Colleen serves so well as an ACA Executive Committee member. Jim's decision to remain on the ACA Board ensures that his deep industry experience will inform all of the important decisions awaiting us in the years ahead," ACA Chairman Steve Friedman said.

Abdoulah has been a strong supporter of ACA activities for many years. In 2010, Abdoulah testified on behalf of ACA before three Congressional Committees — the House Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, and the Internet; the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Antitrust, Competition Policy and Consumer Rights; and the Senate Commerce, Science and Trans-

portation Committee — to deliver independent cable's concerns with the \$30 billion Comcast-NBC Universal merger.

Much of Abdoulah's Comcast-NBCU testimony served to give shape to regulatory conditions eventually applied in January to the most significant media merger in a decade.

Also last year, Abdoulah received the ACA PAC Individual Leadership Award, which recognizes enthusiasm, dedication and support for the ACA PAC and for creating a culture of knowledge within her company regarding the ACA PAC's important role and purpose.

Bruder, who will continue as a board member, became ACA Vice Chairman in 2008, providing strategic advice and leadership direction during a period of dramatic change, highlighted by the digital TV transition, federal broadband stimulus programs, the Comcast-NBCU merger and broadcasters' new reliance on eleventh-hour blackout tactics to extract higher retransmission consent fees from ACA members. □



# The American Cable Association's 18th Summit



*Above: ACA Summit Attendees Enjoy Lunch in the conference Exhibit Hall*

*Above right: Congressman Greg Walden (R-OR) Chairman of the Communications and Technology Subcommittee Addresses Summit Attendees*

*At right: Steve Friedman, Wave Broadband – ACA Chairman; FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn; Colleen Abdoulah, WOW! – ACA Vice Chairwoman; Matt Polka*



*Below: David Villano, RUS; Tom Power, NTIA; and Zac Katz, FCC discuss broadband deployment*

*Below right: The Capitol Steps perform at the Opening Reception*



## The American Cable Association's 18th Summit



*Above left: Steve Friedman, House Communications and Technology Subcommittee Chairman Rep. Greg Walden, Matt Polka*

*Above: Matt Polka; Patty Boyers, Boycom; Tom Might, Cable ONE; Tom Larsen, Mediacom; Scott Widham, Cobridge; Tom Gleason, New Wave; and Steve Boyers, Boycom; prepare to meet with Senator Roy Blount (R-MO)*

*At left: Senator Roy Blount (R-MO) meets with ACA members including Tom Larsen, Tom Gleason, and Matt Polka*

*Below left: FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn Addresses Summit Attendees*

*Below: Attendees at the Opening Session of ACA's 18th Annual Washington Summit conference.*



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## Matt Polka's Summit Speech

# ACA Expanding To Serve Growing Lines of Business; Plus Support For USF Reform

Launching ACA's 18th Summit in Washington, association President and CEO Matthew M. Polka threw ACA's support behind the FCC's effort to use Universal Service Fund money for the first time to advance universal and affordable broadband, highlighting ACA's involvement in an issue that reflect the business diversity of the trade group's membership.

"In general, ACA supports the creation of a competitively neutral fund," Polka said. "Our members offer a video service but most also offer data and voice. No longer does ACA focus just on video issues," Polka said.

Polka said he is hopeful that the FCC will agree that the program's high-cost fund should be capped at year-end 2010 levels; that support should not flow to areas where there are competitive providers offering service without using support; and that a sufficient transition for smaller telephone companies now drawing high-cost support is necessary.

In his remarks, Polka also touched on ACA's unprecedented 13-month effort to apply regulatory conditions to the \$30 billion Comcast-NBC Universal merger, which eventually received government approval in January.

"Our work is not finished. ACA plans to stay actively involved in the coming years to ensure that Comcast-NBCU adheres to the letter and spirit of the merger conditions..." Polka said.

Specifically, the FCC adopted three key remedies for smaller pay-TV operators:

- First, pay-TV providers with up to 1.5 million video subscribers can jointly designate a bargaining agent;
- Second, pay-TV providers with 600,000 or fewer video subscribers can recover their arbitration costs from Comcast-NBCU if they win their arbitration; and
- Third, the FCC established rules to ensure pay-TV providers and potentially over-the-top online platforms can gain access to online content from Comcast-NBCU.

Polka also updated ACA members on a number of important regulatory developments, including FCC implementation of the Commercial Advertisement Loudness Mitigation Act, which requires cable operators to curb abrupt spikes in sound volume when commercials interrupt regular programming. He also discussed FCC regulations on the insertion of video descriptions in TV programming to assist the blind, pursuant to the Twenty First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010.

Lastly, Polka commented on the FCC's AllVid rulemaking, which envisions a CableCard replacement that would encourage competition in the retail market for smart set-top boxes that are compatible with cable, satellite TV, and IPTV.

Regarding broadband reporting requirements, Polka reminded ACA members of the importance of providing the locations where they offer broadband so the FCC and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration have accurate data to include in NTIA's national broadband map.

"The government should not accidentally support broadband overbuilders of ACA members because it lacked accurate data," Polka said. □



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# A Grand Finale You Can't Miss

The Cable Show 2011 saves some of its best content for last. On Thursday, June 16, the top operations executives from leading U.S. cable companies offer a waterfront view on their strategies and approaches for winning in a competitive environment. Addressing product differentiation, operational priorities and new service initiatives:

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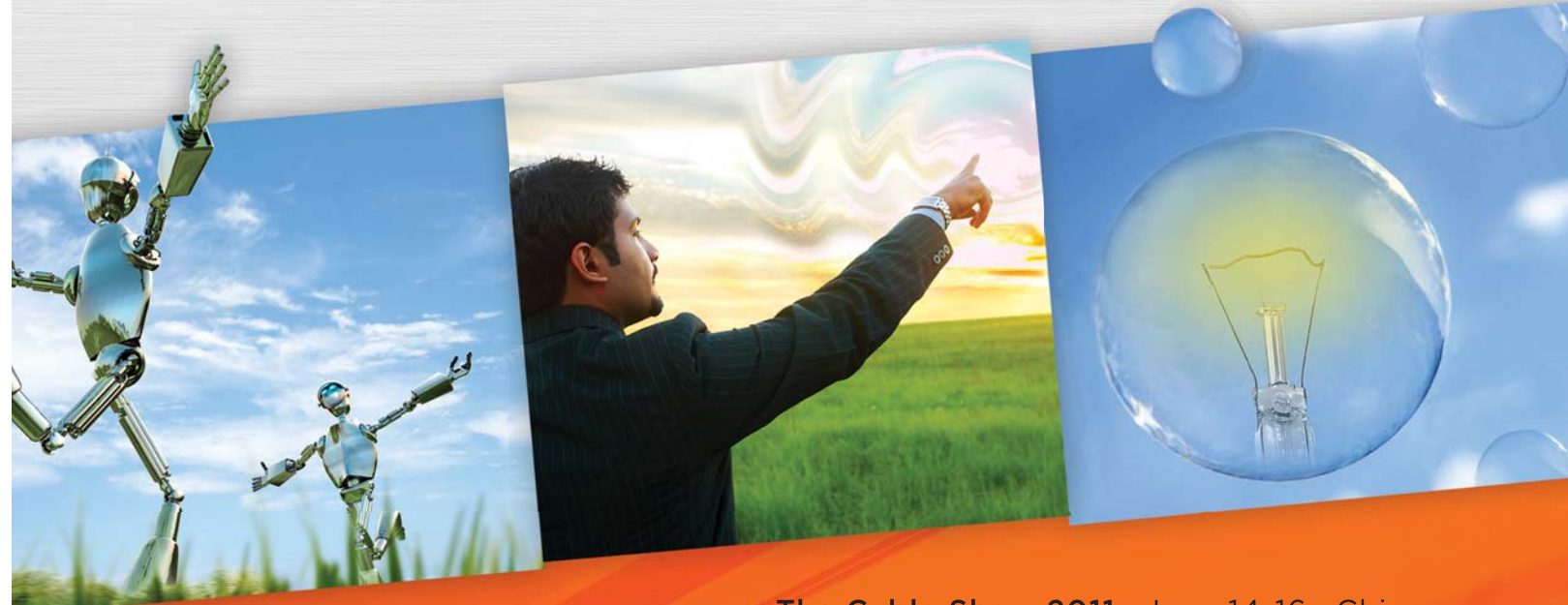
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