



## BROADBAND'S NEW AGE

**CABLE ACADEMY 2019 • MAY 1 & 2  
KALAHARI POCONOS RESORT**

BCAP's 31<sup>st</sup> annual Cable Academy returns to the Poconos to highlight the direction our industry must embrace to prosper during the most competitive environment in its history. Cable Academy 2019 will showcase and explain the new age of broadband cable, its challenges and the vast potential it brings.

CONFIRM YOUR [SPONSORSHIP](#), [REGISTRATION](#) AND [EXHIBIT](#)

[Click here](#) to reserve your room at Kalahari!



April 23, 2019

### ***Fierce Video***

[Netflix, Hulu, Amazon will lead OTT access revenue to \\$22B in 2019, study says](#)

### ***AdWeek***

[C-SPAN Founder Brian Lamb Is Retiring](#)

### ***Wired***

[Google Walkout Organizers Say They're Facing Retaliation](#)

### ***Fierce Video***

[Netflix, Hulu, Amazon will lead OTT access revenue to \\$22B in 2019, study says](#)

### ***Providence Journal***

[People are opting for streaming TV instead of having sex, survey says](#)

### ***Pennlive***

[Pa. Capitol to be lit in orange and green to honor victims of Sri Lanka bombings](#)

A planned network of fiber-optic cables will allow 911 dispatchers in seven counties to transfer misdirected emergency calls to the appropriate 911 centers more quickly and easily, according to the project's organizers.

Officials from the seven counties of the Southern Alleghenies 911 Cooperative – Cambria, Somerset, Bedford, Blair, Centre, Fulton and Huntingdon – met on Monday morning at the base of a Somerset Township cell tower to officially unveil plans for a fiber-optic network that will connect the counties' 911 centers, allowing dispatchers to share critical data across county lines. "This is truly a great day in public safety communications," said Joel Landis, director of the Somerset County Department of Emergency Services. "The fiber project being unveiled today will not only strengthen our emergency service information systems, but (also) launch us into the future. ... This project, without a doubt, will enhance our current capabilities, provide cost savings and solidify the way the counties can collaborate to best provide emergency services."

Sid McConahy, vice president of client services for Mission Critical Partners, a State College-based public safety communications consulting firm that is providing subject-matter expertise to support the project, said that the decline of landline telephones and the growing use of cellphones have driven a spike in the number of emergency calls that go to the wrong 911 centers. "Wireless calls don't follow the traditional county boundaries, so on a daily basis (911 dispatchers) get misdirected calls," McConahy said. The planned fiber-optic network will allow dispatchers to transfer those calls to the appropriate 911 centers "almost seamlessly," he added, "and it will also allow for other technology-sharing to occur so that they can ... get emergency services to people in need as quick as possible."

When the project is complete, each of the seven counties' 911 centers will be connected to all the other 911 centers, according to McConahy. "We're leveraging the existing technology that's already in place, but the fiber doesn't go to each of the 911 centers, so there is a

**Pennlive**  
**Ex-VP Joe Biden**  
**could make Pa.**  
**stops right after**  
**announcing**  
**presidential bid**

**Pittsburgh Post-**  
**Gazette**  
**Editorial: Keeping**  
**them honest – Pa.**  
**should resurrect**  
**idea of public**  
**integrity unit**

physical build that will have to occur,” he said, adding that the longest such fiber-optic cable will run 31 miles from Somerset to Bedford. Other segments of fiber-optic cable constructed as part of the project will not exceed 10 miles in length, he said. Funding for the \$2.5 million project was generated by a \$1.65-per-month surcharge on telephone bills that was implemented at the state level in 2015, designed to boost funding for county 911 operations. The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency awarded funding at the beginning of 2018 that will cover 100 percent of the costs associated with the project.

Zito Media, of Coudersport, will provide the fiber-optic network. Each of the seven counties has signed contracts with Zito Media for the implementation of the network after a request-for-proposal effort led by Somerset County in the spring of 2018. The long-term vision of the project’s leaders is to interconnect the 911 centers in 29 counties in southwest and south-central Pennsylvania and to enable each of those counties to transition at some point in the future to a digital 911 system, commonly called Next Generation 911. “This network will set up everybody in the region for what’s considered ‘Next Generation 911,’ where it won’t follow the traditional landline telephone systems,” McConahy said.

Next Generation 911 “will enhance emergency number services to create a faster, more resilient system that allows voice, photos, videos and text messages to flow seamlessly from the public to the 911 network,” according to [911.gov](http://911.gov), the website of the federal government’s National 911 Program. It will also help dispatchers “manage call overload, natural disasters and transferring of 911 calls and proper jurisdictional responses based on location tracking.” The Southern Alleghenies 911 Cooperative was formed in 2015 when leaders in Bedford, Blair, Fulton and Huntingdon counties OK’d an intergovernmental agreement to work together on ways to improve 911 service in their jurisdictions.

The cooperative expanded to include Cambria, Somerset and Centre counties in 2018. “In 2014, a fair amount of panic set in,” Mark Taylor, Blair County’s 911 director, said at Monday’s ribbon-cutting. “We’re all wondering, ‘How are we going to survive if our centers go down?’ We kept looking at the costs associated with trying to make the improvements we needed. My colleagues from Huntingdon, Fulton and Bedford got together ... and we started thinking about how we can work better together. “One of my biggest concerns has always been redundancy. ‘What happens if our 911 center goes down? Who’s going to handle our calls? How does 911 continue to survive?’ That, and all the things we’ve done, are pretty much getting rectified with all these different programs that we’ve done over the past several years. ... I believe this project with the fiber is going to make things even better.” – ***Johnstown Tribune-Democrat***

---

Presidential primary debates are increasingly must-see TV. Voters tune in to watch candidates answer (or dodge) questions, and each debate typically drives national news the next day. Recognizing the growing role of debates in shaping the race, the Republican National Committee in the 2016 election cycle asserted more control over their structure. Now Democrats are trying to do the same, but they’re likely to fail where the GOP succeeded.

Before the 2016 cycle, neither party had a voice in when or where the debates took place, or who hosted them. The media organization hosting a specific debate determined how it would be conducted, who would serve as moderator, and which candidates were eligible to participate. Reflecting on the disarray of the 2012 Republican primary season, party leaders decided to step in. That year saw 20 GOP debates with no predictable schedule, and in 2015 the Republican National Committee decided to restructure the format. That July we laid out the three main objectives for the presidential primary debates to improve outcomes for the candidates, the party and, above all, the voters.

First, we set a schedule of 12 debates: one a month from August through December 2015, two the following January and March and three in February. A predictable timetable allowed candidates and campaigns to plan more effectively and efficiently, maximizing the time and resources spent meeting voters rather than flying from one debate to the next. Second, we spread the debates across a more varied range of states, unlike previous years which emphasized the earliest primary states. This allowed candidates to reach voters directly in all communities.

Third, we refocused the debates on Republican voters' priorities. By joining with right-leaning journalists and outlets like Mary Katharine Ham and Salem Radio, we addressed concerns that prior GOP primary debates had ignored issues important to conservative voters.

In addition, the host organizations limited participation to ensure that viewers would see the most popular candidates on stage together. The official debates consisted of the top 10 candidates in a mix of national polls, with a minimum of 1% support. As the number of top-tier candidates grew to 17, the host organizations adapted by adding a second debate for those not in the top 10. In order for a debate to be sanctioned by the RNC, we asked the hosts to agree that any candidate who attended an unsanctioned debate be excluded from future official debates. And because we initially included all major networks and cable outlets, the media had an incentive to work within this new system.

The system wasn't perfect, but it was fair and it worked. All the key players—the RNC, the campaigns and media partners—had a stake in its success. Now the Democrats are seeking to restructure their primary debates. They are unlikely to achieve the same success. The Democratic National Committee has proposed 12 debates, each taking place over two nights. The top 20 candidates can make the stage on one of the two nights by achieving at least 1% in three different approved polls or by receiving contributions from at least 65,000 individuals, including a minimum of 200 contributors in at least 20 states. Once candidates qualify, they will be randomly selected for either the first or second night.

The proliferation of candidates is the DNC's first problem. At the current pace, the party is on track to have many more than 20 candidates meet at least one of its criteria. Excluded candidates will loudly challenge the new format from the beginning. Another controversy is likely to occur when top-tier candidates object to being on stage with those at the very bottom of the polls, who will attack the front-runners in hope of generating their "viral moment."

How important is it to candidates to squeeze onto the debate stage? Former Rep. John Delaney, who is barely registering in the polls, has pledged to give \$2 to charity for each of the first 100,000 donations of \$1. In effect he's trying to buy a spot on the stage. The biggest threat to the DNC's plan will likely come from an unexpected source: Fox News. The DNC has excluded Fox from hosting a debate, which means there is no incentive for Fox to work within the DNC framework. Fox already has held multiple highly rated and well-received townhalls with Democratic candidates, including one last week with Sen. Bernie Sanders. It may not be long before Fox announces it will host a debate independent of the DNC. With 2.4 million prime-time viewers, it would be near impossible for many candidates to say no, especially those near the bottom looking to break out.

If the DNC system breaks down, countless left-wing groups will seize the opening to host debates on their particular cause. Candidates looking to cater to these groups would find these invitations hard to resist, and since the DNC lacks any meaningful penalty to deter media outlets or candidates from participating in such debates, any attempt to shore up the official series would likely fail. While imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, the serious flaws in the DNC's plan will ultimately doom its ability to match the RNC's success from 2016. – *Wall Street Journal*

