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~ Harry S. Truman



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June 3, 2020

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Associated Press
Weekend Protest Coverage Boosts Cable News

Politico
Zuckerberg rejects employee calls to act on Trump posts

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
Pittsburgh election officials successfully pull off primary amid pandemic

Philadelphia Inquirer
Voters undeterred by coronavirus and inspired by protests turn out for an unprecedented Pennsylvania primary

Pittsburgh Tribune-Review
Rob Mercuri in line for GOP nod to seek House Speaker Mike Turzai's seat

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
Cong. Mike Doyle (D-18th), Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Communications and Technology,

BCAP Associate Member Evolution Digital launched a cloud-based SaaS device management platform Tuesday for its eSTREAM 4K devices. The platform, called the Evolution Device Manager Android TV, offers greater device management, control and analytics for operators and enables operator managed application update capabilities. Midco, Blue Ridge and Service Electric Cablevision are among some of the first eSTREAM 4K customers signed on. – **Cablefax Daily**

Antietam Broadband has dropped its data cap, and it's apparently never going back. As one of dozens of US ISPs to participate in the FCC's Keep Americans Connected pledge, Antietam Broadband relaxed its broadband usage policies temporarily. The small cable operator, which serves Washington County, Maryland, is now taking that a step further by eliminating data caps completely for all customers, a move that is retro-active to mid-March.

Antietam Broadband, an operator that's part of Schurz Communications, said it made the decision permanent after customers started to shift to tiers that reflected their rise in residential broadband usage during the pandemic. The company also felt that customers needed as much certainty over their bills as possible. "Removing data usage caps, in part, is a result of learnings from the COVID-19 Pandemic as more people worked and learned remotely," Antietam Broadband president Bryan Lynch said in a statement. "During this period customers moved into broadband packages that more accurately reflected their broadband needs."

Antietam said it was able to stay ahead of demand on its network over the past two months by adding backhaul, server capacity and local nodes. The cable op didn't release any specific data on network usage during that period, but the NCTA's [COVID-19 Dashboard](#), which captures data from several major and mid-sized US cable operators, shows that peak usage surged in early March through early April and has since flattened out. Since March 1, aggregate upstream peak usage among the MSOs being tracked by the dashboard has grown 30%, and peak downstream usage has risen 16.1% during that period.

Though some of Antietam's broadband customers have upgraded to faster tiers in recent weeks, the elimination of data caps could leave some money on the table. Antietam's 1-Gig, FTTP-based service has always been uncapped, but its DOCSIS-based tiers were previously governed by a policy that charged \$10 for a bucket of 50 gigabytes of data if customers exceeded their monthly plan. Antietam would wave the fee if the customer moved to a higher speed tier that more closely reflected actual usage. Antietam estimates that an average of 4% of data customers exceeded their monthly cap limit.

Usage-based home broadband policies have been a source of controversy ever since they came on the scene. While operators have argued that such policies are used in the name of "fairness" – customers who use more data of the network should pay more – critics of those policies [claim they are unnecessary](#) since they don't impact network congestion and can be used as a tool to gouge a subset of customers that are heavy users due to streaming video and other capacity-intensive applications and services.

Meanwhile, several ISPs, including Charter Communications, Altice USA, WideOpenWest and even fixed wireless companies such as Starry and Common Networks operate without caps and data usage policies and their networks appear to be holding up just fine without them. As Antietam moves to scrap its caps completely, it could put pressure on other cable operators and telcos do the same and eliminate those policies rather than restoring them once the impact of the pandemic starts to subside.

Several cable ops have relaxed their caps temporarily on the urging of FCC Chairman Ajit Pai. After originally waiving data caps and overage fees through mid-May, several broadband service providers, including Comcast and Cox Communications, have since extended that decision through the end of

[declares victory in primary](#)

[Associated Press](#)
[Trump, Biden win Pa. primary contests amid unrest, pandemic](#)

June. Most US cable operators don't reveal much about the financial impacts of their usage-based policies or unlimited data plans other than to note that very few customers exceed their monthly data plans. Cable One, which has all but ignored pay-TV to instead focus on its higher-margin broadband service, has noted that roughly 20% of new broadband customers opt for an unlimited plan that typically costs an extra \$45 per month.

But will Cable One and possibly others follow in Antietam's footsteps? That's still not clear. Speaking on Cable One's Q1 2020 call last month, CEO Julie Laulis said the company is evaluating its existing data plans and expects to make adjustments when its standard service is restored, but stressed that the vast majority of the company's residential broadband customers do not exceed the company's data plans. -- *LightReading*

Tuesday's primary election in Pennsylvania has been described as unprecedented in many ways and yet possibly another is how it went off without any widespread issues arising in spite of the challenges surrounding it. Despite 22 counties using new voting machines for the first time, many polling places being relocated, a global pandemic, and a time of civil unrest in the country, Secretary of State Kathy Boockvar reported Tuesday: "I'm so happy to be here today to report that today's election in the commonwealth went remarkably smoothly."

One of the noteworthy differences that may have contributed to the day's success in her eyes is this election was the first time, Pennsylvania voters could vote by mail-in ballot without having to provide an excuse. That helped lessen the lines at most polling places although some did report an hour or longer waits in the bigger cities. Approximately 1.8 million Pennsylvania voters applied for and were approved to vote by mail-in and absentee ballot, which is 17 times greater than the number who applied for an absentee ballot for the last presidential primary in 2016. By Tuesday afternoon, more than 1.3 million ballots had been returned to county election offices, she said. "Some counties have received more than 90% of the ballots that they had sent out," Boockvar said. "I want to give specific credit to Sullivan County and Forest County, which led the commonwealth in the percentage of ballots that they got back from voters."

In all but six counties the ballots had to be turned into the county election office by 8 p.m. Tuesday. [Gov. Tom Wolf on Monday issued an executive order](#) that gave voters in Allegheny, Dauphin, Delaware, Erie, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties a little more leeway by only requiring them to have their ballot postmarked by Tuesday to still be counted as long as the ballot arrives at the county election office by 5 p.m. June 9. Those ballots will be segregated from the Election Day ballots in the event there's a challenge. "They'll know exactly which ballots were received after the statutory deadline," said Jonathan Marks, deputy secretary for elections and commissions.

Boockvar explained the governor decided to allow those counties extra time for ballots to be received because they were the places that had road closures and curfews stemming from the riots and civil unrest "restricting the ability of those voters to participate and get their ballots in on time." As a result of the delay along with the unprecedented number of mailed ballots, Boockvar said there may be some delays in tallying votes. She said in some contested races, the winner might be known but the exact vote count may not be for day or two or longer.

Among the few wrinkles that spoiled a picture-perfect Election Day for election officials were some protests over the death of George Floyd, an unarmed black man in Minneapolis who died in police custody, including one in Lawrence County that caused the courthouse to be closed. Employees there were sent home with the exception of election staff who stayed to count ballots, she said. In Bucks County, the ballots were too large to fit into the scanners and had to be deposited into ballot boxes to be counted at the county election office.

In Lancaster County, the code on the ballot at some polling places was too light to be read by the scanner and they too were placed in a ballot box and taken to the county election office to be scanned.

There were the [other snafus that election watchdog groups reported](#) including polls not opening at 7 a.m., poll books being sent to the wrong place, and some issues with voting machines but Boockvar and Marks said there were fewer of those kind of issues than usual on Tuesday. "There's some element of human error in any human operations so those are very standard," Boockvar said. "I wish we could eliminate them altogether." Marks added: "You have thousands of polling locations across the commonwealth in every primary election and so you're going to have a few that just don't come off without a hitch."

He attributed the problems to the consolidation of voting precincts and limited training of poll workers due to the restrictions related to COVID-19 mitigation efforts. But Boockvar said between now and November, the department will continue to work on voter education to help voters get more comfortable with the new voting systems and work with counties that struggled to get the mail-in ballots out earlier. Additionally, she said, "We very much hope to work with the Legislature between now and November to allow the counties to start canvassing those mail-in and absentee ballots earlier."

A law passed in October allowed counties to begin counting those ballots starting at 7 a.m. on the day of the election, which she said is not enough time and won't be in November when she expects an even larger surge of voters choosing to vote via mailed ballots. "We supported pre-canvassing those ballots weeks before election day but whether it's weeks before or days before, any amount more that we can give the counties helps them spread out that time period for them to do what's a very, very challenging job," Boockvar said.

Another anticipated change could help alleviate some of the confusion voters encountered on Tuesday in figuring out where to vote. She said the consolidation of polling places that caused some of the polling place relocations only applied to this primary because counties had difficulty finding pollworkers and polling places due to COVID-19 concerns. "Nobody knows what will happen with the public health situation come November," Boockvar said. "But what I can say is the circumstances that existed this time will not be the same November." -- *Pennlive*



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