Coalition Advocating Need for More Video Platforms Launches

Coalition Addresses Lack of Programming Diversity & Broadband Deployment Kicks Off Launch With Visits to Capitol Hill

Last Update: 10:39 AM ET Mar 9, 2006

WASHINGTON, March 9, 2006 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- The Video Access Alliance (VAA), a not-for-profit organization, today announced their formation as a coalition dedicated to advising and advocating for independent, emerging and minority networks, video programmers, application and content providers, independent film producers, and other industry participants. The VAA will promote both state and federal policies that encourage the rapid and ubiquitous deployment, and utilization, of innovative new video distribution platforms. The VAA's founding members include: Julia Johnson (BSBA '85; JD '88), Chairperson of the Video Access Alliance, Broderick Byers, Founder & CEO, The Employment & Career Channel, Michael Gerrity, Founder and Chairman, MultiChannel Ventures, Ava Parker, President, Linking Solutions, Doron Gorshein, Chairman & CEO, The America Channel and Deborah Lathen, President, Lathen Consulting.

As part of the Alliance's initial effort, VAA launched a campaign to urge Congress to pass video franchise reform legislation addressing the lack of diversified programming currently available, increase minority access to broadband technology and support emerging and independent networks and other content providers. VAA is kicking off its activities this week with a series of visits to key legislators on Capitol Hill.

"We believe that video reform would help emerging and independent networks as well as provide consumers with significantly more programming diversity and encourage broadband deployment into minority and traditionally disadvantaged communities," said Broderick Byers, Founder & CEO, The Employment & Career Channel. "Television programming today fails to reflect America's cultural or ethnic diversity and many people feel disconnected from the larger community. Unfortunately, most independent and minority networks are all but locked out of existing video platforms. Thankfully, Congress has a real opportunity to finally give consumers the choice they deserve in television and entertainment services."

"Innovative broadband technology has transformed cable television into an integrated communications package that can provide users with a wide array of tools ranging from education and entertainment to business and healthcare, among many other fields. Congress must act swiftly to ensure that all communities have access to this important technology," Julia Johnson, Chairperson of the Video Access Alliance, added.

"MultiChannel Ventures is proud to be a part of this new advocacy voice. We strongly believe that innovation, open markets and fair competition that will encourage investment in infrastructure that will allow for distribution for new applications and distribution models such as IPTV over the net, thus creating a more competitive programming environment. These changes will provide communities with more options in programming, apply downward pricing pressure on pricing and increase technological innovation," said coalition member Michael Gerrity, Chairman of MultiChannel Ventures.
Coalition Members:

Julia Johnson, Chairperson of the Video Access Alliance

Broderick Byers, Founder & CEO, The Employment & Career Channel

Michael Gerrity, Founder and Chairman, MultiChannel Ventures

Ava Parker, President, Linking Solutions

Doron Gorshein, Chairman & CEO, The America Channel

Deborah Lathen, President, Lathen Consulting

About the Video Access Alliance:

The Video Access Alliance, a not-for-profit organization, dedicated to serving as an advocacy and advisory group for independent, emerging and minority networks, video programmers, application and content creators and other industry participants. We will work to:

* Pursue public policies to accelerate competitive entry of alternative video distribution platforms and expand the options for reaching audiences that are open to independent, emerging and minority networks, film and TV producers and other application and content creators.

* Ensure more platforms with more capacity are deployed to carry our programming. This is essential to enabling our independent voices to be heard.

* Promote the unique offerings of independent networks, application and other content creators.

* Educate the public policy makers on the important role that independent emerging and minority networks, independent programmers, film and TV producers, and other content creators play in content development.

* Enable new providers who use the latest technology to better organize and present programming, which also is critical to getting our voices to be heard.

About Julia Johnson:

Julia Johnson serves as the Chairperson of the Video Access Alliance. Mrs. Johnson is a nationally recognized expert in regulatory public policy matters. Johnson's vast experience includes:

Governor Lawton Chiles appointed Mrs. Johnson to the Florida Public Service Commission for two consecutive terms from 1992-1999 and she served as Chairman from 1997-1999. She also served as the State Chair of the Federal/State Joint Board on Universal Service which provided regulatory policy recommendations to the Federal Communications Commission on the deployment of telecommunications and
universal service support mechanisms bringing internet access to schools and libraries across the nation.

In 1999, Governor Jeb Bush appointed Mrs. Johnson as the Chairperson of Florida's Internet Taskforce. In that capacity she served as key advisor to Governor Bush and the Florida Legislature on issues related to free-market development and beneficial use of advanced communications networks and information technologies.

In 1999-2001, Mrs. Johnson served as national spokesperson for NETCOMPETE NOW, an advocacy group that successfully focused on preventing government regulation of the deployment of broadband in numerous state and local jurisdictions.

In 2003, Mrs. Johnson was appointed by FCC Chairman Michael Powell as the Chair of the Federal Communications Commission Federal Advisory Committee on Diversity for Communication in the Digital Age. The Diversity Committee makes reports and recommendations concerning the need for guidelines, incentives, regulations or other policy approaches to promote diversity and participation in the communications sector. Under her leadership, the Committee held its first national diversity forum which attracted the participation of minority entrepreneurs and companies from across the county.

Mrs. Johnson holds a B.S. degree in Business Management and Juris Doctorate Degree from the University of Florida College of Law.

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