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WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Weathering Storms: Charter Performs Despite Natural Disasters, ACP

Charter followed in Comcast's footsteps with its 4Q24 earnings report, revealing the loss of 177,000 residential and SMB internet customers during the period.

Charter's declines were largely attributed to the final impacts of the shutdown of the Affordable Connectivity Program and Hurricanes Helene and Milton. Approximately 20,000 disconnects were driven by the hurricanes while non-pay disconnects and voluntary churn among former ACP customers ultimately led to around 140,000 losses.

On a positive note, the impacts from the ACP shutdown are now fully realized and Charter was ultimately able to keep roughly 90% of customers involved in the program. That makes things in 2025 less complicated, but Charter is also the primary operator in Los Angeles and it is now measuring potential outcomes from the fires that raged throughout the city earlier this month.

CFO Jessica Fischer will be able to deliver more details on potential impact during the operator's 1Q25 earnings call. As for estimates, there are roughly 15,000-16,000 passings that have been burned and are no longer inhabitable, and while that's not many in the grand scheme of Charter's 57 million passings, it will make an immediate impact.

"There will be credits along the way for customers who were impacted, obviously if they lost their home, but in addition to that, through evacuation and otherwise, we've got policies in

place to do that," CEO Chris Winfrey said on the company's earnings call. "We've got policies in place to do that and so there will be a number of one-time financial impacts, and similar to other times, we'll just go through that list."

Wireless continues to be a savior with Charter adding 529,000 lines during the quarter. On the video side, Charter lost 123,000 video customers, an improvement it ultimately attributes to the rebundling the operator launched in September as part of its Life Unlimited brand refresh. That does not yet reflect the benefits that will come from incorporating even more streaming services into its video packages, but Charter is gearing up to launch **discovery+**, **Peacock**, **AMC+** and **BET+** and begin to meaningfully market the value of the integrations to new and existing customers.

Winfrey said that marketing push will really begin once all of the apps are activated and Charter has a consumer-friendly way for anyone interested to upgrade to ad-free versions. The operator also wants to have those capabilities in a store that allows customers to go through at least what could be perceived as a unified authentication process.

"One of the key features that we've had as part of our negotiations with the programmers along the way is to say we need to cooperate. This is a partnership, and it shouldn't be that every four or five years, we're going to go do battle and try to find a net zero gain. That hasn't worked," he said. "The idea here is to form a true partnership where we can get behind each other's products that we can co-market together... we are

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very good at distribution, but I think having them get behind and help us advertise the value that's here can work well for the programmer, but also work well for us."

Winfrey did address all the buzz around potential major M&A in the cable industry amid speculation Comcast may make a bid to acquire Charter. He ultimately said Charter's strategy to create value has never been dependent on M&A, instead placing the emphasis on organic growth, giving customers the ability to save money, providing great service and allocating capital appropriately. But performing well does tend to draw interest. With many companies being family-owned, he said any significant movement will ultimately lie in the hands of when those families decide the time is right to combine.

"The door for M&A, I think there's a lot of chatter that it's also wide open. I don't think it's wide open. I think any M&A transaction that you have to do in any administration, any time, it has to be good for customers and has to be good for jobs," Winfrey said. "When you think about our organic operating strategy that drives growth, that's been helpful in that respect in the past in terms of our ability to get things done as well. It's a potential add-on to our strategy, it's not the core of our strategy and it's not the only way that we can create value."

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BILL INTRODUCED FORCING REBATES DURING BLACKOUTS

The blackout between **Altice USA** and **MSG Network** has lasted more than four weeks at this point, and Rep. *Pat Ryan* (D-NY) and Sen. *Chris Murphy* (D-CT) are attempting to take action to address such disputes. They introduced the Stop Sports Blackouts Act Friday, legislation that would direct the FCC to require television distributors to provide rebates to subscribers for television blackouts that occur as a result of carriage disputes. **ACA Connects** CEO *Grant Spellmeyer* argued the bill ultimately puts all the fault for these impasses on cable operators and doesn't properly examine the cause of the blackouts. "This bill gives billion-dollar broadcast corporations a complete free pass. If we don't address the root of the problem w/ reforms to the retrans consent regime, insatiable broadcasters will continue to abuse market power to extract higher fees, jack up prices & force blackouts," Spellmeyer said in a post on X.

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REPORT: PARAMOUNT, TRUMP IN SETTLEMENT TALKS

What was [previously reported](#) as a consideration has now turned into a conversation. According to a *New York Times* [report](#) that cites several people with knowledge of the situation, representatives from **Paramount** and President *Donald*

Trump have begun talks of settling Trump's lawsuit against **CBS** regarding a "60 Minutes" interview that featured former Vice President and presidential candidate *Kamala Harris*. The discussions follow concern that an ongoing legal battle could bleed into Paramount's merger with **Skydance** and delay that deal from crossing the finish line. There's no guarantee a settlement deal will be reached, and possible terms are unknown. The report notes that *Shari Redstone*, Paramount's controlling stakeholder, is for the settlement.

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DIRECTV PUTS MYSORTS IN MORE NIELSEN MARKETS

DirectTV's MySports skinny bundle is going live in more markets. The MVPD said MySports is now available in 122 **Nielsen** DMAs after being rolled out to an initial 24. Not only that, but an additional 104 **Fox** stations have opted into the new package—good news for football fans with the Chiefs vs Eagles Super Bowl coming Feb. 9. The expansion means MySports is now available in all top-50 markets, with new cities including Denver, Charlotte, Baltimore, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Las Vegas and Salt Lake City.

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VERIZON CLEARS \$10M DEBT FOR HURRICANE HELENE RELIEF

The aftermath of Hurricane Helene is still ongoing in several areas, including in western North Carolina. **Verizon** is teaming up with *ForgiveCo*, a company that helps target debt forgiveness for those experiencing hardships, to eliminate \$10 million in consumer debt for 6,500 people in western North Carolina. That includes medical, financial and other debts of necessity. No further action is required by beneficiaries. Plus, fans of the UNC Tar Heels will be excited as Asheville native and Hall of Fame coach *Roy Williams* signed on to be the one to share the news with impacted families. Verizon had already committed \$400,000 to United Way of North Carolina following the storm.

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NETFLIX ADDS SEASON DOWNLOAD OPTION TO MORE DEVICES

Netflix answered the calls of its **Apple** users after it announced the addition of a Season Download button for those watching on iPhone and iPad devices. It's a feature that's already been available to **Android** users and lets subscribers download every episode in a season through one button. The option appears on a show's display page in the bottom right next to the Share option.

CARRIAGE

Golf's **DP World Tour** is breaking into the FAST game, unveiling a 24/7 channel that'll be available across the U.S., Canada and U.K. Initial distribution partners include **Prime Video, Fubo, LG Channels, Plex** and **Sling Freestream**, and DP World Tour is set to go live on **Samsung TV Plus** on Feb. 5. Additional launches will be announced in the coming months. Content will include year-round coverage of events and studio programming.

RATINGS

ESPN's "SportsCenter" and its late-night edition with **Scott Van Pelt** got off to a good start in 2025. The 2pm SportsCenter had its most-viewed month of all time after averaging 443,000 viewers, good for a 22% improvement YOY. The 11pm edition had its fourth most-viewed month ever and best since May 2023 with an average of 994,000 viewers. That's good enough for a 126% jump YOY. For Van Pelt's show, he averaged 1.5 million viewers in January. That's the show's highest monthly average since December 2017 and is up 37% compared to

last January. Additionally, seven of 12 programs averaged 1.6 million viewers or more.

PROGRAMMING

After **Jake** and **Logan Paul** sparked speculation of a potential brother boxing match earlier this week, the two revealed plans for a new reality show following the Paul family. "Paul American" will debut on **Max** come March 27, showcasing the Paul brothers and their various endeavors, including fighting **Mike Tyson**. – **Peacock** picked up the crime drama series "Superfakes." **Alice Ju**, who helped produce "Beef" and "Poker Face," will serve as the showrunner. – Season 3 of the quarter-hour animated comedy "YOLO: Rainbow Trinity" will premiere Sunday on **Adult Swim**. New episodes will stream Mondays on **Max**. – **A&E** and **WWE** are introducing a pair of shows in addition to the return of "WWE Rivals." The competition series "WWE LFG" will premiere Feb. 16 at 8pm, featuring legends and future greats as contestants compete for a spot on **WWE NXT**. Following that at 9:30pm will be the roundtable show **WWE Rivals**, before "WWE's Greatest Moments" takes over at 10:30pm.

 **CABLEFAX DASHBOARD**

Social Media Hits

NCTC National Content & Technology Cooperative
@NCTCtweets

The team at NCTC member @tdstelecom recently sponsored a Wisconsin Hockey series event dedicated to first responders. It was a night of honoring the hardworking members of the Middleton EMS and their families!
okt.to/Sb3e1f



Michael Petricone #CES2025
@mpetricone

"Section 230 isn't a big tech issue, it's a tech issue. What small companies want - what we all want - is freedom to innovate w/out being smothered by regulation or litigation" - @GaryShapiro in conversation w @jrhuddles @WillRinehart and @drewclark



Doug Emhoff
@DouglasEmhoff

Kamala and I are grateful to be at the FireAid concert tonight in our hometown of Los Angeles. It is a wonderful night that shows the strength and resilience of our city as we begin to recover and rebuild from the devastating wildfires.



 **Up Ahead**

- FEB. 3-7: [NATPE Global and Realscreen Summit](#); Miami**
- FEB. 11: [Fiber Broadband Association Regional Fiber Connect](#); San Antonio**
- FEB. 23-25: [NCTC Winter Educational Conference](#); Atlanta**
- FEB. 23-26: [NTCA's RTIME](#); San Antonio**
- MARCH 4-6: [ACA Connects Summit](#); D.C.**
- MARCH 10-13: [CableLabs Winter Conference](#); Orlando**