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WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Standing Tall: Verizon Confident in Outlook Despite Tariffs

Though the repercussions from the tariffs President *Trump* enacted are still being gauged, **Verizon** Chairman/CEO *Hans Vestberg* was assured in his outlook about whether his company can weather the storm. However, when it came to the pricing ramifications for consumers on handsets, Vestberg sang a different tune.

He revealed during Verizon's 1Q25 earnings call Tuesday that only a small portion of the mobile giant's capital expenditures could be impacted by the tariffs, giving it confidence to reaffirm its financial guidance for 2025. He doesn't anticipate the company changing any types of investments it's planning with CapEx this year, but acknowledged that the situation could change quickly as the tariffs are "a moving target." In the meantime, Verizon is working with suppliers to avoid issues that could arise down the road, similar to the preventative measures taken during the COVID-19 pandemic.

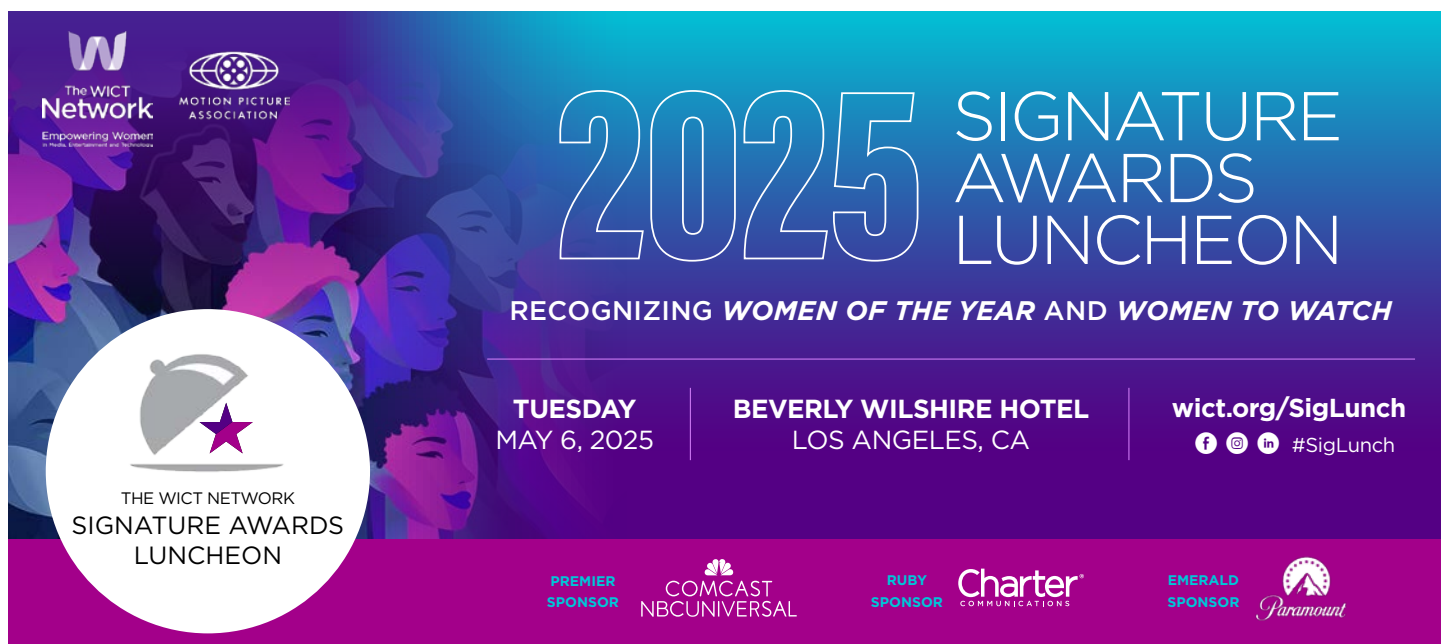
One area that does seem to be primed for a change is consumer handsets. "If the tariff is going to be as high as they say, on the handsets, we're not planning to cover that in our work. That's just not going to be possible," Vestberg said. "We will continue to be financially disciplined in whatever promotions we have, but we will not cover any enormous increase on tariffs on handsets that's ultimately going to hit the consumer in the market. But again, it's too early to say. We don't know where tariffs [are] going to go."

New Street Research expects Verizon to slow down its pace of deployment if there's a rise in equipment prices in order to stay within its CapEx budget for the year. Although smartphones might be exempt from tariffs, the firm shared Vestberg's sentiment of passing the cost onto consumers. "If any of the carriers were going to willingly eat any smartphone price increase from tariffs, we doubt it would be Verizon," NSR jibed in its research note.

Speaking of consumers, Verizon recorded its biggest postpaid phone net loss since 1Q17, dropping 289,000 customers in 1Q25. Vestberg noted the loss was largely due to elevated churn from price increases and pressure from federal government accounts. Verizon finished the quarter with consumer wireless retail postpaid churn of 1.13% and wireless retail postpaid phone churn of .90%. On the business side, those churn rates were 1.52% and 1.15%, respectively.

"The story of the quarter is relatively clear. Verizon's higher prices triggered higher churn. Verizon didn't just lose postpaid phone subscribers in Q1—weakness in the government segment of their Business Wireless unit accounts for some of the softness—it lost whole accounts," **MoffettNathanson** said in a note.

Verizon did have 137,000 wireless retail prepaid net adds. It also posted 339,000 broadband net adds in 1Q25, also putting up 308,000 total FWA net adds to grow its base to more than 4.8 million subscribers. Verizon said it's still on track to reach 8-9 million subscribers by 2028. Fios net adds came in at 45,000—down




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YOY from 53,000—and total broadband connections increased to over 12.6 million, a 13.7% increase from the same quarter the prior year. As for Verizon's pending acquisition of **Frontier**, things are still on track to cross the M&A finish line by 1Q26.

"We are in the planning stage right now, and of course, working through the regulatory approvals. As soon as we get more clarity and closer to the closing of Frontier, we will do more updates where we are, timing, etcetera," Vestberg said. "Everything with the Frontier transaction is going as planned. Our plan is to close it in the first quarter [of 2026]."

Total operating revenue for 1Q25 was \$33.5 billion, up 1.5% YOY. Cash flow from operations reached \$7.8 billion while free cash flow was \$3.6 billion. Consolidated net income checked in at \$5 billion, and consolidated adjusted EBITDA was \$12.6 billion. Verizon's guidance remains for total wireless service revenue to grow between 2-2.8%, adjusted EBITDA to go up 2-3.5% and CapEx and free cash flow to both be between \$17.5-18.5 billion, subject to tariffs or other economic headwinds.

GOMEZ HITS THE ROAD AS CAR GOES AFTER ABC, CBS & NBC

In the wake of **The Center for American Rights** (CAR) filing another news distortion [complaint](#) at the **FCC**, Democratic Commissioner **Anna Gomez** announced she's embarking on a First Amendment tour to "[fight] back against this administration's ongoing campaign of censorship and control." The first event will be hosted by the **Center for Democracy and Technology** in D.C. on Thursday, but there are other happenings planned across the country for Gomez to engage with stakeholders and members of the public. "Silencing dissenting voices is not a show of strength—it's a sign of fear. We must continue to speak out against this growing campaign of censorship and control before this dangerous new normal becomes the status quo," Gomez said. On Monday, CAR filed a formal complaint at the FCC against **ABC**, **CBS** and **NBC**, accusing them of deliberately misleading the American public about **Kilmar Abrego Garcia**, the man deported to a prison in El Salvador who the Supreme Court has told the **Trump** administration to "facilitate" the release of. "NBC, ABC, and CBS have all done a grave disservice to the basic facts of the controversy by consistently referring to him as a 'Maryland father' and in some instances even presenting false information, like calling him a 'legal resident,'" CAR said in its complaint. The complaint repeatedly pointed to a social media [post](#) from FCC Chair **Brendan Carr** that criticized Comcast for implying Garcia was "just a regular 'Maryland man,'" adding that federal law requires it to serve the public interest. The complaint alleges all three networks ignored or obscured the facts of Garcia's immigration case, including alleged gang ties and domestic violence allegations.

CAR has previously filed complaints at the FCC against CBS for news distortion over edits made to **Kamala Harris'** "60 Minutes" interview, NBC for Harris' last-minute appearance on "Saturday Night Live" in light of the equal time rule and ABC for hosting a presidential debate that it said was biased. On Tuesday, the *NY Times* [reported](#) that 60 Minutes Executive Producer **Bill Owens** had quit, citing editorial pressure.

SPINCO SPORTS APPOINTMENTS

Matt Hong was tapped as President of Sports for **SpinCo**, **Comcast's** planned spinoff of primarily linear media brands. Most recently President and COO of **PlayOn!**, Hong will lead the company's sports rights across primarily **USA** and **Golf Channel**. The collection of media rights spans **NASCAR**, **WWE**, **Premier League**, the **PGA Tour** and the **WNBA**. Hong's resume includes serving as COO for **Turner Sports**, where he played a key role in the acquisition of **NCAA** multiplatform rights as well as acquisitions of **Bleacher Report** and **UEFA Champions League** rights. SpinCo CEO **Mark Lazarus** also announced that **Jeff Behnke** will serve as Executive Producer and SVP, Sports Production, overseeing day-to-day operations of the sports portfolio and leading all studio and remote productions. Golf EVP **Tom Knapp** will continue to lead the Golf Channel and Golf Media businesses, reporting to Hong.

MASN UNVEILS DTC PRODUCT

The wait is over for cord-cutting baseball fans in Baltimore and the Beltway. On Monday, **MASN** announced the launch of **MASN+**, an in-market direct-to-consumer offering that features every **Nationals** and **Orioles** game as well as all other programming from the RSN. It's being priced at \$19.99/month or \$89.99 for the remainder of the 2025 regular season, with availability on iOS and Android mobile devices and CTV platforms including **Apple TV**, **Amazon Fire TV** and **Roku**. The **Nationals** and **Orioles** were previously two of the last three **MLB** teams without a direct-to-consumer option. However, the Nats may need to revisit the issue in a year's time when the team's deal with MASN expires ahead of the 2026 season. All eyes are now on the **Astros** and **Space City Home Network** to make it 30/30 teams with a DTC option.

AMCN'S CHO HEADS TO SPINCO

We're getting closer to **SpinCo** spinning, with the company announcing that **Roy Cho** will serve as President of Distribution and Partnerships, beginning May 5. He'll report to **Dave Pietrycha**, SpinCo's Chief Revenue and Business Officer. Cho has spent more than eight years at **AMC Networks**, which

promoted him in 2022 to EVP, Distribution & Business Development. Recent wins for Cho include a multi-year distribution deal with **Charter** that included access to **AMC+** for select video customers, an expanded relationship with **Verizon** for an exclusive new **Netflix** Premium and AMC+ Ad-Free streaming bundle and more launches for the AMCN FAST portfolio. He's an interesting choice for the spinoff of Comcast's linear nets, which include **USA**, **CNBC** and **Golf Channel**, as he's helped branch AMCN's footprint beyond the traditional video space. At SpinCo (name coming soon, we're told), Cho will be responsible for driving strategic alliances and advancing distribution and monetization opportunities across the company's portfolio upon completion of the spin-off. *Eric de Cholnoky*, who has been with AMC Networks since 2015, was tapped to fill his role as EVP, Distribution & Business Development. Reporting to AMCN Chief Commercial Officer *Kim Kelleher*, de Cholnoky took a brief break in 2023 for a distribution leadership role at EPIX (now **MGM+**). He began his career as an attorney at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom.

FCC QUERIES OPERATORS REGARDING T-MOBILE/USCELLULAR

The **FCC** sent letters Tuesday to various mobile providers, including **Comcast**, **Charter**, **Verizon**, **Optimum**, **Cox** and **EchoStar**, regarding **T-Mobile's** proposed \$4.4 billion acquisition of **UScellular**. For the Commission to complete its review of applications to the transfer of control and assignment of certain spectrum licenses and spectrum leases held by UScellular to T-Mobile, it is asking competitors to provide data on subscribers, revenues and costs by May 13.

KUIPER'S NEW LAUNCH DATE

Kuiper 1, the mission that'll launch 27 of **Amazon's** Project Kuiper satellites into low Earth orbit, is now scheduled for Monday night from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida. A two-hour window will open at 7pm ET. The launch was originally slated for the night of April 9, but unfavorable weather conditions forced it to be postponed. If it launches Monday, it'll set the stage for Amazon to compete in the satellite internet space alongside **Starlink**.

XFINITY MOBILE ROLL OUT PREMIUM UNLIMITED PLANS

Comcast continues to fine tune its mobile offering, launching a new Premium Unlimited plan Tuesday that delivers gigabit speeds and 4K UHD streaming, more WiFi hotspot data, advanced spam call protection and the option to upgrade a phone twice a year (per the fine print: up to \$830 towards the latest devices from **Apple** and **Samsung** with a qualifying trade-in). The plan, which as with all Xfinity Mobile plans requires users take Comcast internet, costs \$50/month with the ability to add additional lines for \$30/month per line.

That compares to \$40/month and additional lines for \$20/month for Xfinity Mobile's Unlimited plan. Comcast claims customers who take two Premium Unlimited lines will cut their bill in half during the first year compared to similar plans from the big three cellular companies. The operator is offering new and existing Xfinity internet customers an unlimited mobile line for one year.

ASTOUND TWEAKS PRICING

Astound introduced new pricing framework in an effort to simplify offerings for customers. The operator's internet plans start at \$30/month for 300 Mbps, with the option for \$10 in monthly savings via autopay/paperless billing—all accompanied by a one-year price guarantee. Other plans include 600 Mbps for \$45/month, 1 Gbps for \$60/month and 1.5 Gbps for \$70/month, depending on whether mobile or TV plans are bundled with internet. Astound offers two-year price guarantees as well, which adds \$5 monthly to each internet plan. Additionally, Astound is offering one free unlimited mobile line for a year, and it's rolling out a \$19.95/month Internet First option available for seniors, veterans and students.

FIBER FRENZY

Hotwire Communications is saying "Hello, Orlando," after it announced a \$50 million project to build infrastructure and roll out its Fision fiber network across the region. The company's Orlando dealings will be led by SVP, Fision Enterprise *Dan Hakker* and VP, Enterprise Sales *Nick Lamberti*. The \$50 million investment will also bring 60 new jobs along with it.

RATINGS

No surprise that **Fox News** led cable networks in primetime and total day this past week. The news net recorded a primetime average of 2.49 million viewers P2+ from April 14-20, but it was a close race between **TNT** (1.29 million), **MSNBC** (1.2 million) and **ESPN** (1.14 million) for the following spots. ESPN said it had its most-watched opening weekend of the **NBA** Playoffs ever on its platforms, averaging 4.49 million viewers across six games. Game 1 of the Clippers vs Nuggets led ESPN with 5.2 million viewers. Fox News led total day with 1.61 million as **MSNBC** trailed with 641,000. ESPN and TNT posted 612,000 and 399,000, respectively, while **CNN** came in with 382,000.

PEOPLE

Raquel Williams, **Hallmark Media** VP of Content Distribution & Partnerships, and *Tonya Walley*, **Optimum's** SVP of Field Operations, are the latest additions to **NAMIC's** national board of directors. They will serve through April 2028. Both are alumnae of NAMIC's award-winning Executive Leadership Development Program.