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WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Next Chapter: Denver University Set to Buy Cable Center Building

The **Syndeo Institute at The Cable Center** has entered into a tentative agreement with the University of Denver to sell the more than 75,000-square-foot building that's housed the nonprofit educational arm of the cable industry since 2001. Financials weren't disclosed.

It was the University of Denver that approached The Cable Center with interest in the building as part of its long-term campus planning, academic programming and community development strategy. The building is adjacent to the university, which has strong cable ties. Its home of the Daniels College of Business, named in honor of cable pioneer *Bill Daniels*. If all goes according to plan, the deal is expected to be complete by the end of June. The agreement initiates a defined due diligence period during which final terms, timing and logistics will be evaluated. Proceeds from the transaction would be directed primarily to The Cable Center's endowment to support long-term sustainability and expand organizational capacity. Fundraising will remain essential for the nonprofit.

"This wasn't part of a big master plan or anything like that. This is the result of two parties coming to a table and seeing a mutual path forward that would benefit both organizations. That means that we have to spend some time now to think about what's next," *Michael Willner*, Chairman of The Cable Center board, told **CFX**.

The Center is clear that its work, including industry events,

educational programs and archives, will continue uninterrupted. The current building devotes its bottom floor to serving as a library of the cable industry, complete with old set-top boxes and cable periodicals. As part of the deal, the university will provide The Cable Center with approximately 8,000 square feet in a building down the street for two years.

"What I love about it is we're going to be able to house the library and the staff under the same roof, which to me, was very important," said *Diane Christman*, President and CEO of the Syndeo Institute at The Cable Center. "We're going to have a couple of displays and exhibits. And they have an off-site storage facility where they house part of their library collection and they're going to take our archives and house them for a period up to three years."

The Cable Center opened its doors in Denver after a \$55 million fundraising drive in the 1990s that saw a \$10 million donation from **Cablevision** Industries founder *Alan Gerry*, \$5 million from *John Malone*, \$2.5 million from the *Barco* family and various donations from industry folks, including **CNN** and **TBS** founder *Ted Turner* and **Starz** founder *John Sie*. It was initially thought the Center would serve as a museum for the industry, with predictions of 60,000-100,000 visitors annually, according to a *Multichannel News* article from 1998.

That never materialized. At the time of the building's opening, the cable industry helped usher in an age of high-speed internet that perhaps made a museum a bit obsolete. Instead, the large space was mainly rented out as a venue for weddings and

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other events. The inaugural Intrapreneurship Academy classes were held there, but have since moved to a virtual format.

While the building is special to the cable industry, Willner said there's an understanding that it's time for change. "Everybody understands, we're a quarter of a century beyond when that building opened, let alone when it was conceived. This industry in over 25 years probably has advanced 100 years of change," he said. "The whole industry has completely changed in ways that would be inconceivable 30 years ago."

Notably, the University of Denver has agreed that some of the etched-in-stone donor names/placements will remain on display for five years following the sale.

Syndeo board Vice Chair *Nomi Bergman* of **Advance** said the board expects to put an advisory committee in place to help guide the next phase of the nonprofit. "We hope the committee will be comprised of senior industry leaders and will work closely with the board and the executive leadership of the Syndeo Institute," she said. "We realize the building holds deep meaning for many in our community and that history matters. Our responsibility as a board is to steward that legacy entrusted to us with care and gratitude and foresight."

The Center was built in Denver because it was considered the capital of cable at the time. That's changed and as such, the Cable Center will evaluate possibly relocating. Or Willner suggested potentially even creating a traveling exhibit to reach more people.

Christman also sees the move as an opportunity to increase the digitization of the Center's archives, including film. The Center already is working to transform the Hauser Oral History Project into a searchable, AI-powered knowledge repository. Using Large Language Model technology, it will transcribe, categorize and contextualize over 400 oral histories—creating an interactive, thematic view of the connectivity industry's evolution.

"We want our collection to be accessible to many and this move allows us to do that because we're going to be digitizing," she said. "The Center is a symbol that represents the work of the industry and the stories of the industry. But, we're not going anywhere, and we are moving forward."

OPTIMUM LOSES NESN

It wasn't all quiet at the stroke of midnight on Jan. 1. **Optimum** lost regional sports network **NESN** on its Litchfield and New Haven, CT, lineups after the two were unable to agree on new carriage terms. A notice to Optimum's customers said it worked hard to continue to carry the RSN, something a NESN spokesperson bristled at. "Optimum did not respond to a proposal for over three months and in mid-December offered terms that would have been catastrophic to NESN's business," the spokesperson said. "Optimum custom-

ers should of course be seeking an immediate refund given they have just lost a channel that has been included in their lineup for decades." Optimum said it remains open to reaching a fair deal to restore the network, which is home to Boston Red Sox and Bruins games. "NESN has low viewership, even during major sports seasons, and offers niche content, which our customers should not be forced to pay for if it does not align with their viewing preferences," Optimum said in a statement. "As regional sports viewing becomes more fragmented, programmers like NESN continue to demand fees that simply don't reflect market realities, which is why Optimum is working to ensure that our customers receive the content they want to watch where they want to watch it, all while keeping costs down." For now, Optimum is directing customers to the \$29.99/month **NESN 360** app or to games available on channels such as **ESPN, TBS** and **Fox**.

VERSANT STOCK CONTINUES PLUNGE ON DAY 2

Wall Street isn't quite so hot on the **Versant** experiment thus far. The cable net-heavy spinoff company made its debut on the Nasdaq on Monday, opening at \$45.17 per share but tumbling down by 13% to \$40.57 at close. Versant saw another steep 10% drop on day two, ending the day at \$36.26 per share. Versant CEO *Mark Lazarus* previously outlined turnaround plans for the company's struggling cable brands, which include **MS Now**, **CNBC** and **USA**. Those plans involve growing the brands' digital presence and making them less dependent on traditional pay TV distributors. For example, for MS Now, that means launching a shiny new DTC streamer for the news net. But so far, investors aren't as excited about Versant's vision as Lazarus is.

VAN DER POST TO HEAD WOW!

Following [the completion](#) of **DigitalBridge** and **Crestview's** \$1.5 billion acquisition of **WOW!**, the operator announced that *Frank van der Post* will become its new CEO, effective immediately. Van der Post previously served as **Breezeline** President and before that was CCO of Dutch operator **KPN**. "Frank brings deep experience in delivering financial results, modernizing legacy networks, transforming the customer experience and driving growth in highly competitive markets," said Crestview President/Head of Media *Brian Cassidy* of the new WOW! chief. Van der Post succeeds *Teresa Elder*, who is retiring after leading the company for eight years. Elder has more than 30 years of experience in telecom leadership, including stints at **US West**, **MediaOne**, **Clearwire** and **AT&T**. She was the first female CEO of **Vodafone**, where she spearheaded the launch of Ireland's first

3G mobile broadband network. During her tenure at WOW!, the provider has prioritized market expansion, surpassing 106,600 homes in greenfield markets at the end of September.

CABLE ONE ACQUIRES MEGA BROADBAND

Cable One, which currently owns a 45% stake in **Mega Broadband Investments Holdings** (MBI), entered a definitive agreement to acquire the remaining 55% stake in the ISP, which operates as **Vyve Broadband**. The transaction, which Cable One expects to complete on Oct. 1, 2026, will see the operator pay somewhere in the range of \$475-495 million, determined by a formula calculating a multiple of MBI's Adjusted EBITDA and total net indebtedness. Cable One expects MBI's total net indebtedness in 4Q26 to be approximately \$845-895 million, in the form of term loans maturing in November 2027. The company paid \$575 million in 2020 for its 45% stake, but its call option to acquire the rest of MBI from private equity firm **GTCR** expired on June 30, 2024. However, Cable One confirmed that GTCR chose to exercise its put option on Jan. 2, which obligates the operator to buy the rest of MBI. Cable One will finance the transaction through a combination of cash resources and indebtedness.

CHECKING IN ON COX

An **SEC** filing from **Charter** gave another glimpse into **Cox Communications'** finances as the company counts down its final months as a private entity. In the nine months prior to Sept. 30, Cox recorded \$36.72 billion in assets while having \$11.47 billion in long-term debt. Cox's 3Q25 numbers revealed \$3.08 billion in revenue, down YOY from \$3.24 billion, while net income improved from \$407 million to \$464 million. Quarterly residential internet revenue declined from \$1.49 billion to \$1.4 billion, as did video (\$622 million to \$590 million) and telephony (\$57 million to \$47 million). Commercial revenue ticked up to \$856 million, though advertising revenue dropped from \$84 million to \$47 million.

CES NOTES

NBCUniversal, along with **Comcast's FreeWheel**, **Newton Research** and independent ad agency **RPA**, are partnering on a new approach to buying premium video on both linear and digital using agentic AI. The companies claim it's a first-of-its-kind proof of concept that enables an agency to execute and optimize a single video investment across platforms "in seconds," while NBCU, Newton and FreeWheel's agents coordinate cross-video buying in real time. The first usage of the approach "will feature a prominent brand's Q1 2026 investment, including premium placements such as live football playoff games." – While **C-SPAN** has covered **CES** since 2006, this marks the first year it is an official CES media partner. It'll provide extensive programming around the high-profile show produced by the **Consumer Technology Association**. That includes coverage of a fireside chat with

FCC Chair **Brendan Carr** and a panel with Senators **Jacky Rosen** (D-NV), **Amy Klobuchar** (D-MN), **Ben Ray Lujan** (D-NM) and **Gary Peters** (D-MN) on emerging tech policy. – **Amazon** announced a redesigned UI and overhauled mobile app for the **Fire TV** platform. The key goal of the upgrade is to make it easier for users to find what they want to watch so that they can spend less time searching and more time watching. Referencing a recent **Nielsen Gracenote** paper that found it takes U.S. consumers 12 minutes on average to find what to watch, Amazon said the redesign will now allow Fire TV users to find movies, TV shows, sports, news and other live content across all their subscriptions, with the new mobile app serving as a second screen to browse content and manage your watchlist. The company has seen 20-30% gains in speeds when testing the new UI, which will launch in February as a free software update for the Fire TV Stick 4K Plus, 4K Max (2nd Gen) and Omni Mini-LED Series TVs, with more devices to be added this spring. The mobile app also launches in February.

VAB SUGGESTS NEW STANDARDS

The **Video Advertising Bureau** is recommending a choice of either Households or P2+ as new co-standards for video audience guarantees. VAB thinks the move would offer the largest and most comparable audience bases for video ad campaigns, rather than focusing on narrower guidelines or demographics like A25-54.

WWE LIBRARY GOES TO NETFLIX

WWE is moving more of its content to **Netflix**, expanding a relationship that saw its flagship weekly wrestling show, "Raw," move exclusively to the streamer last year. Under a new, multi-year agreement, Netflix becomes the U.S. home of WWE's library of past premium live events, including **WrestleMania**, **SummerSlam** and **Royal Rumble**, as well as its documentary and original programming. The deal covers PLEs that aired prior to September 2025, when **ESPN** became the exclusive broadcaster of new editions of the company's biggest monthly events. **NBCUniversal's Peacock** was the previous holder of the PLE content library, but its five-year agreement with the wrestling company ended at the end of 2025. WWE is still partnering with NBCU for "SmackDown," which airs Friday nights on **USA**, and the quarterly weekend show "Saturday Night's Main Event" on Peacock. Beyond Raw and library content, Netflix is also presenting the making-of doc "WWE Unreal," which will release a second season on Jan. 20.

RATINGS

Nearly 4.5 million viewers tuned into **Fox News'** coverage of the U.S.' strike on Venezuela and capture of the country's President **Nicolás Maduro**. On Saturday from 11:15am-12:45pm, Fox News garnered 4.4 million viewers and 650,000 A25-54. That beat rivals, with **ABC** recording 2.3 million viewers (506,000 A25-54), **CNN** posting 2.1 million (488,000 A25-54), **NBC** reporting 1.6 million (416,000 A25-54) and **CBS** having 1.6 million (333,000 A25-54). **MS Now** followed with 1.4 million viewers/196,000 A25-54.