

UP AHEAD?

- **Sept. 28:** [Cable Pioneers Diamond Jubilee](#), Atlanta
- **Sept. 29-Oct. 1:** [SCTE TechExpo26](#), Atlanta
- **Sept. 29:** [USTelecom Cybersecurity Leadership Summit](#), D.C.
- **Sept. 30:** [FCC Meeting](#), D.C.
- **Oct. 5:** [NAMIC Next Leadership & Impact Experience](#), NYC
- **Oct. 6-7:** [WICT Network Leadership Conference](#), NYC
- **Oct. 7:** [Kaitz Event](#), NYC

NECN'S SPECTRUM NEWS REFRESH

New Englanders tuning into **New England Cable News** (NECN) this morning were greeted by a rebranded and refreshed network now owned and operated by **Charter**. **Spectrum News NECN** went live Wednesday at 6am across Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont, with regional and hyperlocal news headlines and weather forecasts, including coverage of a potential Nor'easter threatening the area this weekend.

The Charter-owned news brand acquired NECN from **Comcast NBCUniversal** in February. While Spectrum News was already in Worcester, Massachusetts, and Maine, and also operates a national news network, adding NECN to its portfolio of 35+ nets allowed it to gain a foothold in states where it didn't yet have a dedicated presence.

"The opportunity to expand our footprint... on a larger scale was incredibly appealing," Spectrum News Group VP *Sam Singal* told **CFX**. "To take such a reputable brand, whose mission is very similar to ours, which is to become part of the community, integrate ourselves, know the people, know the issues, it's a really perfect fit for who we are." The relaunch also marks a first for the news brand: "We're covering six states, so this is our first truly regional news operation."

Spectrum News NECN is available to all Spectrum customers via their TV package, the brand's website and Spectrum News App, with Charter keeping the channel's existing distribution agreements in place as well. That means **Verizon Fios**, **Hulu + Live TV**, **Fubo** and **Astound Broadband** subscribers in the region can still tune in. It also remains on Comcast Xfinity, which began carrying Spectrum News stations in select markets last year. (Comcast briefly decided to drop NECN from its lineup back in June 2025 when it still owned the network, although it ultimately didn't.) Charter plans to expand availability to additional viewers in the coming months.

The rebrand comes just a week after "[Spectrum Day](#)," which saw Charter officially roll out its products in former Cox markets. The \$34.5 billion merger brings with it expanded reach for Spectrum News. "With Charter's acquisition of Cox, we'll start to have many more subscribers in Rhode Island and Connecticut, which are two new areas for us," Singal explained, noting the network is currently hiring in those states.

NECN went live in 1992 as a joint partnership between **Continental Cablevision** (now part of Comcast) and **Hearst**. In 2009, Hearst sold its stake to Comcast, with NECN eventually sharing studios, resources and programming with local station NBC10 Boston after the operator acquired NBCU. Notably, Spectrum News only acquired the NECN brand, not its staff, which remained with NBC Boston.

"We are literally building a new news operation from the ground up," Singal said. While Spectrum News' Worcester and Maine operations now fall under the NECN

umbrella, it's spent the last few months staffing up. "We're lucky that we can tap into our Massachusetts team, but we're hiring 30+ reporters, producers, anchors, meteorologists, photographers and editors. We are adding to our news personnel, which is great for the people of New England because they are going to get to see a lot more regional and hyper-local news and weather coverage."

Spectrum News began [introducing](#) some of those new faces on social media this week. One big addition to the on-camera news team is veteran New England journalist *Matt Reed* as the network's primary anchor. He'll also host a new morning show debuting later this year. Leading the network is Senior News Director *Teisha Parker*, joining from NBC Connecticut and who previously served as News Director for **Optimum's News12 New Jersey**.

Viewers can expect to see local headlines every 15 minutes and weather forecasts every 10 minutes on the 1s. "On day one, you'll see about seven minutes and 10 seconds per half hour of local news and weather," with NECN also bringing in national news from 24/7 streaming network Spectrum News+, Singal said. The network will get more New England-based programming "over the next couple months."

"If you look at our other markets around the country, an evening political program is something that you find in all of our major markets. There's so much political news in New England, it's ripe for something like that," he said, but stressed that no decisions have been made. The first priority is getting fully staffed and having all news dayparts up and running before expanding to other types of programming. Of course, it's not lost on Singal that the rebrand comes just weeks before the midterm elections: "Politics is kind of our bread and butter, so it works out perfectly."

DISNEY+, HULU NEXT TO RAISE RATES

Make that four price hikes in four years for **Disney+** and **Hulu**. New rates began rolling out Wednesday, with both SVODs' ad-supported plans moving from \$11.99/month to \$12.49. Their ad-free options got a \$2.50 bump to \$21.49/month. The ad-supported Disney+ and Hulu bundle will stay put at \$12.99/month, though the ad-free option was upped by \$2 to \$21.99/month. That's the same increase and rate with the Disney+, Hulu and **ESPN Select** (with ads) bundle. The Disney+, Hulu and ESPN Unlimited ad-free and ad-supported bundles were unchanged at \$35.99 and \$44.99, respectively.

BIPARTISAN BILL TACKLES RISKY TECH LIST

A new bill from **House Commerce** leaders *Brett Guthrie* (R-KY) and *Frank Pallone* (D-NJ) aims to make it easier to add malicious tech and telecom equipment from foreign adversaries to the **FCC's** covered list. The idea is to improve the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act of 2019 that directed the FCC to publish and maintain a list of equipment and service providers that pose an unacceptable security risk. The proposed bill would broaden the types of technologies the FCC must add to its covered list and create better alignment between the FCC's national security work and the **Department of Commerce's** work. There are clarifications throughout the bill, including language that the FCC is not required to retroactively review or revoke any

CFX Daily (ISSN 1069-6644)
is published daily by Access
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cablefax.com

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equipment authorization granted before the relevant equipment was placed on its covered list. The bill would also enhance Congressional oversight of certain additions and removals and clarify that equipment made in China, Russia, North Korea and Iran is eligible for the covered list. Meanwhile, the FCC on Wednesday granted a **CTIA** waiver and partially granted a **USTelecom – The Broadband Association** waiver allowing certain hardware component substitutions on foreign-made routers on the covered list. **NCTA** has a similar petition pending at the FCC, but it hasn't been acted on yet.

PSKY-WBD SETTLEMENT HEARING SET

U.S. District Judge *Araceli Martinez-Olguin* set a hearing for Thursday at 11am PT to go over the proposed settlement between **Paramount**, the states and the **Writers Guild of America** that would allow PSKY to close its \$110 billion acquisition of **Warner Bros. Discovery**. The hearing will also “address certain outstanding questions regarding the factual and legal underpinnings of the parties proposed consent decree” and its implementation. The [settlement](#) includes several conditions PSKY must meet across film and television, including that it must negotiate distribution agreements for Paramount channels and WBD channels separately, without one set of terms influencing the other.

PSKY-WBD'S BIGGER SLICE OF THE VIEWERSHIP PIE

With **Paramount-Warner Bros. Discovery** expected to close in the coming days, **MoffettNathanson** is feeling good about the combo. The firm believes it should lead to a “more formidable competitor,” especially for streaming, since each company is currently “subscale.” The firm did a breakdown of what a combined PSKY and WBD would have meant in measured viewership in the first half of the year, estimating it would account for 13% of total U.S. TV viewership by distributor, tying with **YouTube**. When the measurement is streaming viewership by platform, it would only account for 8%—but **MoffettNathanson** thinks that's the rationale for the deal: beefing up DTC scale. Linear is a different story—a combined WBD and PSKY would have accounted for 32% of share in the first half of the year, with a big lead over runner-up Fox (21%). The firm estimates the transaction will be dilutive to EPS by -49% in 2028 and -6% in 2029, before turning accretive by +43% in 2030.

CABLE ONE BORROWS \$700M

Cable One revealed in an **SEC** filing that it borrowed \$700 million under its \$1.25 billion revolving credit facility. “The Company borrowed the funds to increase cash on hand and preserve financial flexibility,” the filing read, noting that the transaction took place last Thursday and Friday. As of June 30, Cable One's gross debt totaled \$3.06 billion, with a weighted average cost of debt of 4.6% for 2Q26. In July, Cable One had a separate 8K that revealed potential troubles with the financing behind its full acquisition of **Mega Broadband Investments Holdings**.

SANDERS WANTS TO HIT PAUSE ON AI DEVELOPMENT

Sen. *Bernie Sanders* (I-VT) and Rep. *Greg Casar* (D-TX) are looking to crack down on the rapid ascent of AI and super-intelligence technologies. The two introduced a new bill called the Ban Artificial Superintelligence Act, which would prohibit a person or entity from creating or deploying artificial superintelligence and pause all advanced AI development until a federal regulatory body is formed, along with rules and a model review process to ensure security. The cabinet-level federal Department of AI would be tasked with overseeing frontier AI systems at all stages of the lifecycle, enforcing the removal of dangerous capabilities and supervising the destruction of superintelligence. “Scientists have been clear: AI is an existential threat to humanity. It must be treated as such,” Sanders said.

10 STREAMERS GET 86'D

Thank goodness someone is keeping up with all these streaming services. **Parks Associates'** 2Q26 Streaming Video Tracker found 10 U.S. streaming services phased out in the quarter, bringing the total number of services to 370 in the U.S. Some notable changes: **BET+** (moved to a dedicated hub under **Paramount+**), **FIFA+** (moved to **DAZN**), **RidePass** (now solely a FAST channel), **CTV Throwback and Movies** (moved to **Crave**), **OHL Live** (transitioned digital streaming content to **FloHockey**), **Barça One** (replaced by **Barça Play** and integrated on FC Barcelona's app and website) and **FanDuel Sports Network** (shuttered stream-

ing and linear). Parks Associates will host a [webinar](#) “Streaming Video: Churn, Loyalty, and Competition” on Thursday for a deeper dive.

PISTONS PARTNER WITH DAZN

DAZN’s push for local sports rights kept rolling with the **NBA**’s Detroit Pistons. The two signed a deal to make DAZN the team’s exclusive DTC streaming partners starting this season. The Pistons-branded platform is already live, going at a \$19.99 monthly rate and \$119.99 season-long pass. Fans can get enhanced subscriptions as well for \$24.99/month and \$139.99/season.

DOING GOOD

Comcast partnered with the 76ers to open a new community resource center at North10 where Philly residents can access free Xfinity WiFi, tech resources and workforce development programs designed to build digital skills and advance career opportunities. The orgs invested more than \$150,000 in the new community hub. That included facility upgrades and tech investments, including desktop computers, laptops and A/V equipment. They’re also supporting programming at the center, with plans to invest an additional \$20,000 on that front.

CARRIAGE

The **MyFree DirectTV** FAST platform launched a new 24/7 channel dedicated to BrandStar original series “Military Makeover,” hosted by *Montel Williams*. The channel boasts more than 200 episodes spanning 44 seasons. It will also feature future seasons of the program. As part of the launch, the distributor will support the family of *William Weatherholt*, a U.S. Air Force veteran who now serves the community of Jupiter, Florida, as a firefighter and paramedic. The family will receive a full home transformation, with the makeover featured in a short segment of the show’s upcoming season.

FIBER FRENZY

Nearly 13,000 new homes and businesses in Chanhassen and Nowthen, Minnesota, can now access **Comcast** Xfinity services. – Amid the Spectrum Day festivities in former **Cox** markets, **Charter** also announced that it’s expanding its footprint in Indiana, bringing online over 520 addresses in Crawford County and more than 1,400 in Parke County. Meanwhile, nearly 2,000 homes and businesses will be connected soon in Oscoda County, Michigan.

ASTOUND-ING GETAWAY

Running through Sept. 30 is **Astound Broadband**’s Spring Break contest, giving both customers and non-customers the chance to win a \$4,000 free spring break getaway. Two grand prize winners will be selected in a random drawing on Oct. 5. -- **Socket Fiber**’s project in Fredericktown, Missouri, is underway. The operator is working to expand FTTH service to more than 3,000 homes and businesses in the area. No timetable on when construction should wrap up, but residents will receive updates as work moves throughout Fredericktown.

SPORTS RATINGS

Some more **NFL** ratings from Week 2: the Chiefs’ overtime win over the Colts gave Sunday Night Football 24.3 million viewers on **NBC** and **Peacock**, peaking at 27.4 million during the second quarter. Earlier on Sunday, **Fox**’s Commanders vs Cowboys telecast had 27.21 million viewers, the network’s most-watched NFL telecast this season to-date. -- An action-packed weekend of college football gave a boost to **ESPN** and **ABC**. “College GameDay” started Saturday’s slate with 2.8 million viewers and 3.6 million during the final hour. ESPN said its networks then accounted for the top five most-watched Week 3 games and made up 2/3 of all college football viewership. Ole Miss’ win over LSU led the way with 10.9 million viewers on ABC, followed by Alabama vs Florida State with 7 million (ABC), Kentucky vs Texas A&M with 5.4 million (ESPN/ABC) and Georgia vs Arkansas with 4.2 million (ABC). Clemson vs North Carolina led ESPN with 3.6 million viewers. -- Sticking with ESPN and ABC, the **Premier Lacrosse League** had its most-watched Championship ever Sunday with 405,000 viewers on ABC. Season-long viewership on ESPN, ABC and **ESPN2** reached a record-high 265,000, a 22% improvement compared to the 2025 season.