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WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

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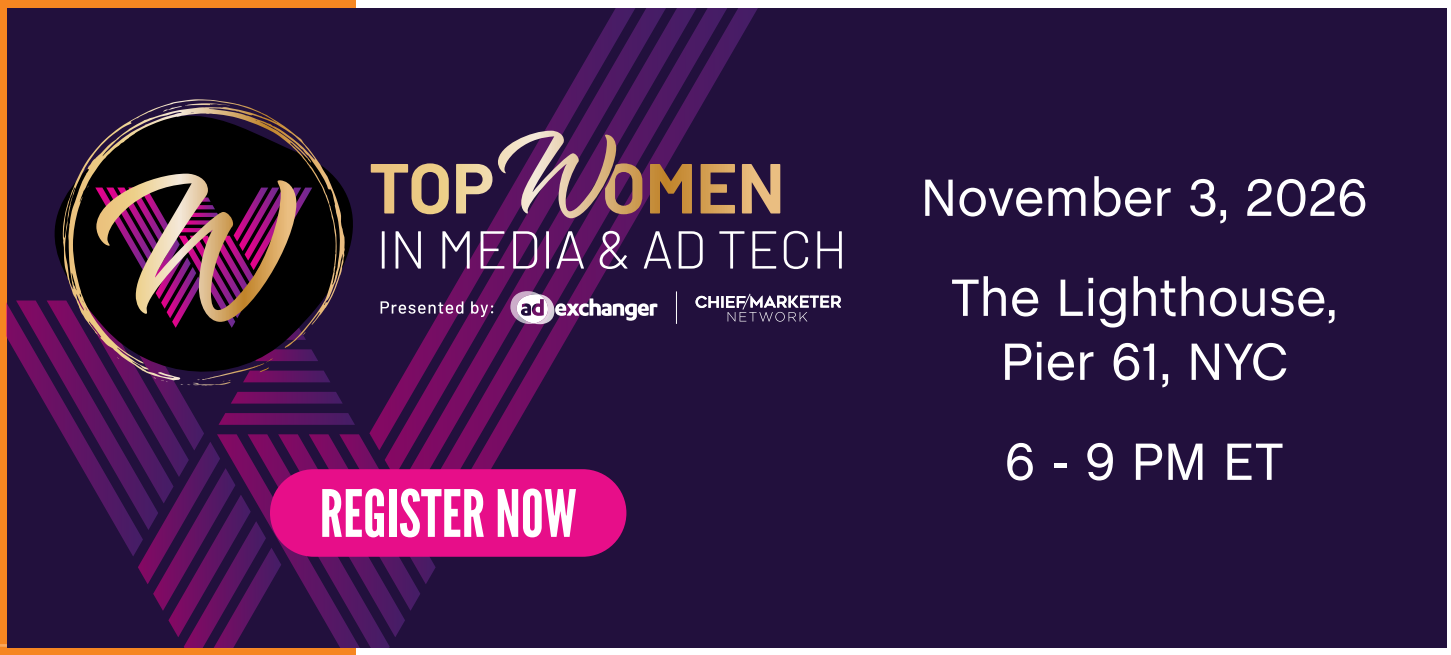
CABLE NEWS READY FOR MIDTERMS

Programmers are revving their engines for Tuesday's midterm elections, with cable news brands planning in-depth coverage throughout the day across linear and streaming. Notably, several outlets are offering new ways to engage with programming, including on **YouTube** and via interactive features designed to bring viewers closer to the action.

Charter's **Spectrum News** will air the midterms across its 35+ local stations, 24/7 streaming national news net Spectrum News+ and **Spectrum Noticias**, with programming kicking off after polls close in each state. Spectrum News+ begins live coverage at 7pm with anchors *Josh Robin* and *Sharon Tazewell*, reporting on top races, including in Michigan, Georgia, North Carolina and Maine.

A station to watch that night is the recently relaunched **Spectrum News NECN**, which will be on the ground in Maine and across New England. The network's new primary anchor *Matt Reed* will host with *Donovan Lynch*. NECN will have reporters at events for Sen. *Susan Collins* (R) and *Troy Jackson* in Maine and coverage from Rep. *Chris Pappas* (D) and *John Sununu* events in New Hampshire. Programming also begins at 7pm.

Sam Singal, GVP of News and Content at Spectrum Networks, told ***CFX*** that the plan is to "cover battleground states the same way we cover every race—with fact-based,



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unbiased reporting that goes deeper to examine the candidates' stances on issues impacting local communities."

Spectrum subscribers can also access all networks via the Spectrum News app, with NY1 and Spectrum News California additionally streaming programming for free on YouTube. The general Spectrum News YouTube channel will have multiple streams, featuring reporting from SN+, Bay News 9 (Tampa), News 13 (Orlando), North Carolina, Ohio, Kentucky, Wisconsin and Texas.

C-SPAN, which is partnering with Spectrum News' cameras, will be live on election night from 4pm, promising at least 20 continuous hours of commercial-free and non-partisan coverage following races from more than 30 locations across the country. Hosts *Greta Brawner*, *Pedro Echevarria*, *Mimi Geerges* and *Peter Slen* will anchor on the night, with *Jacob Rubashkin* and *John McArdle* guiding viewers through the returns.

This year, C-SPAN is trying something new, tapping YouTube creators to offer liberal and conservative viewpoints on its linear channels. The non-profit public affairs programmer will simulcast election night streams from online news network *The Young Turks* on C-SPAN2 and podcaster *Patrick Bet-David* on C-SPAN3. The simulcasts signal "its commitment to reaching new audiences" and "bringing fresh perspectives." C-SPAN will also stream its own midterm programming on YouTube on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Fox News' multiplatform plans kick off at 6pm, co-anchored by *Bret Baier* and *Martha MacCallum*, while the "Ruthless Podcast" will helm an election night special from 8-11pm on its digital channels and **Fox Nation**. Fox Business will simulcast Fox News' coverage until Wednesday at 6am. The Fox News app will also introduce an AI-powered election chatbot to provide real-time answers to the latest developments and results. The **Fox One** DTC streamer, which live streams both Fox's cable nets and local stations, has a similar chatbot feature called Ask Fox, which will also surface video and reporting alongside election answers.

The DTC service is also launching an interactive election experience that will give viewers more context and more local relevance as results come in. The first thing Fox One users will see on election night is the Command Center, comprising a live stream in the center of the screen that's surrounded by a set of widgets offering additional context, including voter polling, race-by-race results and election insights on key contests from Fox News, all updated in real time. The streamer will also provide a curated election hub featuring video on battleground races, key ballot measures and contests shaping control of the House and Senate.

Rachel Maddow will once again lead Election Day programming at **MS Now**, beginning at 6pm. This will also mark the Election Day debut of the MS Now Membership DTC product. On top of streaming linear programming, the $7.99/month service allows members to interact directly with the brand's anchors and reporters via live Q&As. To that end, MS Now is promising plenty of live interactive programming on the night.

It will host a three-hour Q&A event, starting at 8pm, with on-air talent *Stephanie Ruhle*, *Eugene Daniels*, *Katy Tur* and *Luke Russert* answering questions live

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from the MS Now green room. The "Members Lounge" experience will give viewers a behind-the-scenes look into the brand's election HQ and provide real-time reactions to results. MS Now is also opening up this Q&A stream to viewers on YouTube, **TikTok**, ms.now and the MS Now app for free that night, although interactive features will be exclusive to membership subs.

CNN will also extend its midterms coverage across its digital platforms, including the app, which will provide a custom vertical video live stream on mobile with live updates. The news brand is hosting a special live Q&A edition of "CNN Office Hours" at 7pm, featuring analysis by *John Berman* and *Harry Enten* and reactions from an "unexpected and diverse group of influential voices." While the program will stream on YouTube, TikTok and the CNN website and app that night, CNN All Access subs get exclusive access to the full interactive experience, including participation in the Q&A. *Jake Tapper* and *Anderson Cooper* are set to co-anchor CNN's linear coverage.

Meanwhile, on the distribution side, **DirecTV** is bringing back the Election HQ channel to the guide, offering a multiview of CNN, **Newsmax**, MS Now and Fox News, with live election data provided by the **AP**. The experience launches for eligible customers with compatible devices Tuesday and runs through Thursday, with a possible extension if needed.

DEMS PUSH AGAIN FOR FCC NOMS

With rumblings that *Danielle Thumann Sever* could soon be up for a nomination hearing (*Comm Daily* reports the week after midterms is highly likely), Dems are renewing their cry that she be paired with a Democrat nominee and that *Anna Gomez* should be renominated for a full term. Several **House Commerce** Dems reached out to the **Senate Commerce** leadership this week and gave Gomez a strong endorsement, saying she's consistently engaged with members on both sides of the aisle and has been a strong advocate on spectrum policy and closing the digital divide. "The Commission functions as intended only when both parties have a seat at the table. Confirming an additional Republican nominee without also securing continued Democratic representation would upset that balance," they wrote.

OBITUARY

Industry shockwaves are still reverberating over the news that beloved communications guru and Cable TV Pioneer *Dave Andersen* passed away suddenly this week following a cardiac event. His family said they will share information about services when available. Andersen helped establish the communications department at **Cox Communications,** where he worked from 1982 to 1999. He also spent six years at **Charter** as SVP, Communications, serving as the first chief communications officer after **Microsoft** co-founder *Paul Allen* bought a controlling stake in the company and launched an aggressive acquisition spree. He was a consultant since 2006 and remained closely tied to the industry, attending last month's **Cable TV Pioneers** event in Atlanta.

WELO ON USING AI, BUNDLING MOBILE

While most operators are bullish about the efficiencies leveraging AI tools can bring to the customer experience, **Welo** Head of Marketing *Steve Newsome* told ***CFX*** that the **Cogeco**-owned digital-first ISP is making a "very purposeful effort to not use AI as much as possible." For example, the provider aims to connect customers to live human agents in the chat experience "in less than two minutes," as "it's important for a digital brand to still have that human touch." Newsome added that marketing materials also feature real people to further ground the brand in human connection. Of course, Welo is using AI to streamline some operational elements, such as reporting. And Cogeco President/CEO *Frederic Perron* did hype the operator's efforts to adopt more AI tools across the business, although those are in the "pre-inflection" stage in terms of impact. An FY27 priority for Cogeco is to significantly increase the AI models used to expand customer resolution capabilities and increase the efficiency of network maintenance. – Bundling mobile service with internet plans is another lever cable operators are pulling to fight broadband churn. No immediate mobile launch plans at Welo, even as **Breezeline** already offers wireless, but "it's something that we can consider down the line," said Newsome. "If and when mobile were to enter the mix, we could say pretty confidently that the approach would be the same to make sure that process would be simple and easy for people to understand and sign up." Growing wireless penetration in the U.S. is a priority for Cogeco in FY27.