

A BETTER CHOICE FOR YOUR HOME AND BUSINESS

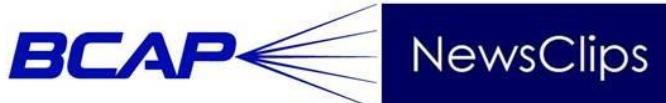


Atlantic Broadband provides residential
and business customers with advanced Internet,
TV and Phone services.



atlanticbb.com • atlanticbb.com/business

Services subject to availability. Contact Atlantic Broadband for details.



March 2, 2021

Associated Press
New Mexico
Legislature seeks

The eight biggest U.S. cable companies collectively added 4.819 million wireline broadband customers in 2020 and now control approximately 69% of the U.S. fixed internet market.

[reforms to spur internet access](#)

Delaware County Daily Times
[Behind on utility bills? PUC urges residents, businesses to reach out](#)

Pittsburgh Tribune-Review
[Allegheny County officials: 'We're not there yet' on reopening](#)

Politico
[Facebook lifts political ad ban](#)

Vox
[Your tweet goes viral. Here come the companies asking you to sell their crap.](#)

TV Answer Man
[Sling TV, Dish to Lose NBC Sports Regional Channels](#)

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
[Activists get behind legislation to open legislative redistricting process in Pennsylvania](#)

Philadelphia Inquirer
[Op-ed: One way Pa. can help solve growing vaccine disparities between counties](#)

According to Leichtman Research Group (LRG), the 4.86 million total fixed broadband customers added last year by the 16 largest providers, accounting for 96% of the U.S. market, was the most since 2008. Telco operators, which are still mostly in the process of ramping up fixed [5G](#) services, collectively added only 39,535 customers to the total. Verizon led all telco providers with 173,000 customer additions. The pandemic year customer growth performance represented a 190% uptick over the industry's 2019 expansion.

Charter Communications alone added 2.215 million customer in 2020, followed by Comcast, which added 1.971 million broadband subscribers. Analyst (and frequent Cable Academy presenter) Bruce Leichtman, who has been tracking the U.S. broadband industry since 2001, said he can't remember a time when cable's share of the market was bigger. "With the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, there were more net broadband additions in 2020 than in any year since 2008," he said. "The top cable and telco broadband providers in the U.S. cumulatively added about 4,860,000 subscribers in 2020, compared to about 5,100,000 subscribers in 2018 and 2019 combined." – **Next TV**

The National Football League is on the verge of signing new rights deals with media partners that could see Amazon.com Inc. carry many games exclusively and TV networks pay as much as double their current rate, people familiar with the matter said. New agreements could be in place as early as next week, the people said. The television deals for the league's Sunday and Monday franchises with Fox, CBS, NBC and ESPN are likely to run for as long as 11 years, they said. ESPN's deal would go into effect after the 2021-22 season while the Fox, CBS and NBC agreements would kick in after the 2022-23 season.

A deal with Amazon would result in a significant number of Thursday night games exclusively on its Prime Video platform and represent the league's deepest foray into streaming, some of the people said. Those games wouldn't be available on traditional television outside of the local markets of the two teams playing, they said.

Amazon has become an aggressive bidder for sports rights here and abroad. The company already has a relationship with the NFL as it has held streaming rights for Thursday night football since 2017. Those games have also been televised by the league-owned NFL Network and most recently [by the Fox network](#), whose parent Fox Corp. shares common ownership with News Corp., the parent company of Wall Street Journal publisher Dow Jones & Co.

If completed, an Amazon deal wouldn't take effect until after the 2022 season, when Fox's current pact for Thursday night football expires. Fox is now paying \$660 million a season for that package, The Wall Street Journal previously reported. If the Thursday games go to Amazon and there is no other video component beyond the local TV markets of the teams playing, that yearly fee Amazon pays could reach \$1 billion, people with knowledge of the discussions said. Amazon currently pays between \$75 million and \$100 million to stream Thursday games, a person with knowledge of the deal said. As with Fox, that contract still has two seasons on it. The NFL Network would continue to carry a handful of exclusive Saturday and Thursday games as its contract with distributors requires it to carry at least five games a season, people familiar with the league's thinking said.

A deal with Amazon for most Thursday night games would solve a potential problem for the NFL. While Thursday games get strong ratings compared with any other programming, the high price tag was making it a tough sell with broadcasters who already carry NFL packages such as Fox, which analysts and industry insiders estimate loses \$250 million a season. Prior to Fox's deal, CBS and NBC shared Thursday games and their combined losses were more than \$200 million, people familiar with those agreements have said.

A move to put a chunk of NFL games—which typically dominate television ratings—exclusively on a streaming platform isn't without risk. Amazon carried one game exclusively last year and drew an average audience of fewer than five million, much lower than the typical NFL game on broadcast television or ESPN's "Monday Night Football." The league is trying to strike a balance between embracing new platforms and the revenue they represent while keeping most of its games on traditional television.

Fox Corp.'s annual average fee for its Sunday afternoon games is expected to jump to around \$2 billion from the current \$1.1 billion, the people familiar with those negotiations said. ViacomCBS Inc. likely will see its average fee per season of Sunday afternoon games go from \$1 billion to the \$2 billion range, the people said.

The new deal for Comcast Corp.'s NBC is also expected to more than double from the average of \$960 million it pays per season now to around \$2 billion, a person familiar with that pact said. NBC's streaming service Peacock will also carry one game exclusively and will simulcast NBC's Sunday night games, the person said. The league in addition expects to get a big increase in fees from Walt Disney Co's ESPN, people familiar with the matter said.

The fee increases come after a season in which [ratings were down](#) for the regular season, playoffs and Super Bowl. Network executives say they believe that the coronavirus pandemic played a large part in the declines and feel numbers will improve once normalcy returns. In addition, CBS, Fox, NBC and ESPN are all facing challenges in holding on to viewers, making live sports ever more important.

This next round of long-term deals might be the last time the NFL is able to command such giant fee increases from its broadcast and cable partners as fragmenting viewership and cord-cutting are expected to only increase in the coming years, said MoffettNathanson media analyst Michael Nathanson. "This is a sign that the NFL wants to take as much as they can for as long as they can. A decade from now, the world will surely look different and a new set of bidders will need to emerge," Mr. Nathanson said.

One TV deal the NFL isn't yet renegotiating is the Sunday Ticket package, which allows fans to watch any game on Sunday afternoon. AT&T Inc.'s DirecTV has the package through the 2022 season at an annual price of \$1.5 billion. AT&T Chief Executive John Stankey has indicated that Sunday Ticket isn't the growth engine it once was and isn't critical to DirecTV anymore. In addition, AT&T's own interest in the satellite broadcaster is also fading. Last week, it struck a deal to [sell a 30% stake in DirecTV](#) to private-equity firm TPG for \$1.8 billion. — *Wall Street Journal*

Gov. Tom Wolf is taking hits on issues ranging from vaccines to tolling bridges, from ballot questions to charter schools, from budget pitches to nursing homes. He's the target of a jab fest seemingly bent on turning him into a political punching bag. Everything he does or seeks to do draws opposition and criticism.

He's stirred such ire among Republicans that the state GOP just officially censured him! Though who knows what that means, other than maybe he's now banned from GOP pig roasts. Anyway, the Gov's got lots of haters and lots of heat, albeit mostly partisan. But other Democratic governors seem to be on hotter seats than his. Take two who also run big states.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo is under fire amid claims of sexual harassment and a scandal over handling nursing home death data. Either could cost him his job. California Gov. Gavin Newsom faces recall for his COVID-19 lockdowns and personal dining habits, which potentially could cost him his job. More on these guys in a bit. First, a look at Wolf's current list.

CORONAVIRUS: [The House State Government Committee](#) is starting a series of hearings into Wolf's handling of the pandemic. The first is Tuesday. The topic is "lack of government transparency."

NURSING HOMES: House Republicans just announced an investigation, with subpoena power, of [the administration's oversight of long-term care facilities](#), focusing on questions and data related to COVID-19 deaths.

CHARTER SCHOOLS: Wolf recently offered ["reforms" to the state's charter school law that would alter and cut funding](#). Within hours, [Senate President Pro Tempore Jake Corman](#) tagged Wolf as "Tone-deaf and out-of-touch."

BRIDGE TOLLS: An administration plan to toll bridges, [including the I-83 South Bridge](#), to pay for infrastructure, could earn Wolf permanent recognition. Dauphin County Republican Sen. John DiSanto says he'll push legislation to rename the local span the ["Gov. Tom Wolf Toll Bridge."](#)

BALLOT QUESTIONS: Republicans, hoping to shrink Wolf's (and future governors') emergency powers, put questions to do so on May's Primary Election ballot. Then, after the administration wrote the questions (as law requires), Republicans raged that [verbiage was used to ensure the measures fail](#). House Majority Leader Kerry Benninghoff called it "shameful," labeling Wolf "desperate" to cling to power.

Wolf even took shots from allies such as statewide education groups pushing vaccine priority for teachers (which Wolf now is granting). And some Democratic lawmakers want to create a statewide vaccine registry, which the administration has resisted. All this comes on top of ongoing GOP opposition to Wolf's calls for a natural gas severance tax, a higher income tax and a big bump in the minimum wage, recurrent wishes viewed as coming from Wolf's own "Fantasy Island."

All of it distracts from, if not hampers, Wolf's ability to govern. But others have bigger distractions. Cuomo's under pressure both from New York Democratic lawmakers working to [take away his emergency pandemic powers](#), and from others seeking his resignation after a third woman charged him with inappropriate behavior. Newsom's odds of facing [a recall election](#) -- enhanced by his infamous dinner during lockdown at Napa Valley's ritzy French Laundry -- just went up after a citizen recall petition surpassed the required 1.5 million signatures.

Wolf doesn't have such troubles. First, Wolf likely thinks The French Laundry is a place to wash fancy shirts. And since Pennsylvania has no recall provision, allowing for buyers' remorse after electing a governor as 20 states do, Wolf's job seems safe. (This assumes Butler County GOP [Rep. Daryl Metcalfe's](#) nine-month IMPEACH WOLF NOW crusade stays stalled.)

And, come on, the prospect of Wolf ever being in a Cuomo-like #MeToo moment falls somewhere between extremely unlikely and no way, no how. COVID-19 has been rough all around. The financial news website 24/7 Wall Street recently released data showing nearly all governors paid a price for their handling of the pandemic. Polling, collected throughout October, ranked Cuomo 10th. This was, of course, before his travails. Newsom ranked 26th. Wolf 32nd.

Top-ranked governors were Republicans: Vermont's Phil Scott; Maryland's Larry Hogan; Massachusetts Charlie Baker. Bottom-ranked were Nebraska Republican Pete Ricketts, Iowa Republican Kim Reynolds and Hawaiian Democrat David Ige. Now all states race to vaccinate their citizens. All focus should be on that. Especially here, where the vaccine rollout has been shaky. And especially since our governor doesn't face the ouster threats of others.

– John Baer's column in *Harrisburg Patriot-News*



**Broadband
Cable Association
of Pennsylvania**

127 State Street Harrisburg, PA 17101
717-214-2000 (f) 717-214-2020
bcapa.com

First in Broadband.
The Future of Broadband.®