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Armstrong, a family-owned and operated internet, television and phone company based out of Butler that has an office in Meadville, has purchased Coaxial Cable Television Corp.

The sale was announced Friday by the Armstrong Group of companies, which includes Armstrong Telephone Co., Armstrong Utilities and Guardian Protection Services, which the company identifies as the nation's largest privately held security company. No sale price was disclosed.

While Guardian operates nationally, Armstrong Utilities is the nation's 11th largest cable company, with customers in five states, according to the company.

Coax customers will become part of Armstrong's northwest Pennsylvania system

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with current offices in Meadville and Titusville. Armstrong serves many local areas, including Meadville, Saegertown, Titusville, Conneaut Lake, Cochranon, Mill Village and Wattsburg and some Ohio communities. No sale price was provided when the acquisition was announced on Friday.

"We look forward to adding Coax subscribers to our Armstrong family of customers," President Jeffrey Ross said. "We will initially focus on upgrading the current internet and telephone service to mirror our award-winning Zoom Internet product. We are investing substantially so we can quickly offer a superior internet and telephone product. We think current customers will be more than delighted with Zoom speeds and reliability."

General Manager Scott Brush said Armstrong would like to provide improved video offerings to subscribers by the holidays. "Our video product is a close second on the upgrade schedule with a great choice of video packages along with our exciting new product EXP," Brush said. "There are a lot of moving parts with the video transition; rewiring where needed, changing existing video boxes to more advanced boxes compatible with our network, offering more HD channels, giving subscribers the ability to record, pause and rewind live TV as well as access to Video on Demand content.

"We need to be very careful and deliberate — yet prompt — in this transition and understand the customers' needs and wants," Brush said. "It's imperative we give them the 'Armstrong Experience' as soon as we are confident that we are ready."

The new phone number to contact Armstrong is (866) 951-0684. The call center and website (armstrongonewire.com) are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to serve Armstrong subscribers' needs along with local service technicians and customer service representatives, according to an Armstrong press release. Personal phone calls, letters, emails and press releases will keep subscribers up-to-date on the progress of the transition, the release read.

"We truly are excited to welcome Edinboro, Cambridge Springs, Venango and surrounding areas to the Armstrong family," Brush said. "We are committed to becoming part of your community with not only our broadband offerings but also in supporting local organizations and community endeavors." Armstrong has been nationally recognized in Consumer Reports surveys for customer service excellence and technical support for the past three years and was recently listed in PC Magazine as one of the "fastest internet service providers of 2016."

Coaxial Cable TV, owned for years by the Times Publishing Co. and more recently by members of the Mead family, has been sold to Armstrong, a family-owned company based in Butler. Coaxial, which had offices in Edinboro, had a service area that included Edinboro and McKean and sections of northern Crawford County, including Saegertown, Venango and Cambridge Springs.

Since the sale of the Erie Times-News by the Mead family in January, Coaxial has been owned by Kildysart LLC, a company controlled by members of the Mead family. The new owner of Coaxial Cable also owns and operates restaurants in Pennsylvania and Ohio and builds and operates commercial sites for clients that include CVS and JPMorgan Chase Bank. — **Meadville Tribune, Erie Times-News**

Citigroup Inc. projects that spending on political ads on Facebook Inc. could surpass spending on Alphabet Inc.'s Google this year, reversing the historical pattern. This is no small accomplishment, considering how powerful search advertising remains, as a conduit for motivated donors and volunteers. This reflects both Facebook's vast reach and the tools it offers advertisers to target ever-narrower segments of its users. For campaigns striving to get supporters to the polls, as well as change minds, this ability to "micro-target" is manna from heaven. As with conventional advertising, it is

now happening with unprecedented scale and precision in politics.

Even Republican presidential hopeful Donald Trump, who once called data “overrated” as a political tool, appears to have seen the light. One day in August, his campaign sprayed ads at Facebook users that led to 100,000 different webpages, each micro-targeted at a different segment of voters, said Brad Parscale, Mr. Trump’s digital director and head of San Antonio-based digital advertising firm Giles-Parscale. Hillary Clinton’s campaign is using similar tactics, said a campaign official. In an ideal world, campaigns would poll every voter in America, then craft strategies to persuade undecideds and motivate supporters to go to the polls, said Sasha Issenberg, a journalist who has written about the science of winning campaigns. Campaigns haven’t reached this point yet, but they are coming close.

Cambridge Analytica LLC, a data-science firm known for its psychological profiles of voters, is now working with Mr. Trump, after working with Sen. Ted Cruz during the primaries. Chief Data Officer Alexander Tayler says the firm has a database of 220 million U.S. adults with 4,000 to 5,000 data points on each. Cambridge Analytica can connect this database to vast quantities of other data—from voter-registration records to databases of shopping patterns and gun ownership—from consumer data brokers such as Experian PLC and Acxiom Corp.

Facebook has made similar tools accessible to anyone with a credit card. The social network’s [role in influencing political attitudes](#) has been much discussed. But Facebook’s increasingly important role as a campaign advertising medium has gotten much less attention. “Everybody thought 2008 was the Facebook election, but I’d argue 2016 is the Facebook election,” says Zac Moffatt, former digital director for Mitt Romney’s presidential campaign and co-founder of political consultancy Targeted Victory. “Facebook’s real value is in its size and scale. ... It’s that you can hit three out of four Americans on one platform.”

Several Facebook moves to help advertisers target their audience more precisely appeal particularly to political campaigns. Its “custom audiences” tool allows advertisers to reach a specified list of users, such as a group of supporters; both the Obama and Romney campaigns used custom audiences in 2012. Facebook also allows advertisers, including even local campaigns, to plug in [data from data brokers](#), just as Cambridge Analytica and other firms do. And its “lookalike audiences” allows advertisers to reach people who are like those in a known group. Think of a Spotify service for finding potential supporters who look like known supporters.

Analysts from Borrell Associates estimate that about \$1 billion will be spent on digital ads this election cycle. That is still a fraction of the \$4.4 billion Kantar’s Campaign Media and Analysis Group expects to be spent on TV, but the digital total is up more than threefold from 2012. The spending, and candidates’ ability to target Facebook ads with different messages to different voters, worry Cathy O’Neil, author of “Weapons of Math Destruction,” a book about the dangers of ceding control to opaque algorithms. “What’s efficient for campaigns is to decide what bit of information is given to a given voter on Facebook and Google,” said Ms. O’Neil. “But in that case what is efficient for campaigns is inefficient for democracy.”

Politicians, and their aides, are plunging ahead, however. “Conventional political wisdom has been destroyed by data science and the hard quantities of facts,” said Mr. Tayler, of Cambridge Analytica. Microtargeting is important, according to the same Clinton campaign official, who cautions, however, that targeting can’t replace a candidate’s message and isn’t as powerful as conversations with friends and neighbors.

Mr. Issenberg, the journalist, says the value of targeting lies in making campaign spending more efficient. If Mrs. Clinton has \$100 million to spend on a digital ad budget, efficient targeting could free up \$10 million, and commensurate volunteer

and campaign staff hours, to spend on something else. In a tight race, such small benefits could lead to a few thousand votes in key states, and could swing the election. – *Wall Street Journal*



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