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October 4, 2019

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thousands to lease
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Trump suggests
launching own
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Philadelphia
Inquirer
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some cheers in this
Pa. swing district,
but voters at town
hall have other
issues, too

Pittsburgh Post-
Gazette
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impeachment
inquiry grows, Pa.
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Pat Meehan, Charlie
Dent, Ryan Costello
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Amity Township (Berks Co.) supervisors recently approved engaging the services of the Cohen Law Group, Pittsburgh, to assist in finalizing its ordinance to regulate 5G mini cell towers.

Township Solicitor Brian Boland said the Federal Communications Commission has recently added regulations — some inconsistent with current local ordinances and rules dealing with the aesthetics of mini towers — that should be addressed in Amity's ordinance. "We looked at ordinances at several other municipalities and found them inadequate, as they do not address current changes," Boland said. "Mini cell towers are coming and we want to be ready for them."

The Cohen Law Group specializes in representing municipalities in cable, telecommunication and broadband matters. The township will pay the law group \$300 an hour for any work it does on the ordinance.
— *Pottstown Mercury*

Amazon.com Inc. and Walt Disney Co. are at loggerheads over terms for carrying the entertainment giant's apps in Amazon's Fire TV devices, a dispute that highlights the new power struggles emerging in the streaming economy.

Amazon is pushing for the right to sell a substantial percentage of the ad space on Disney apps, and Disney has so far resisted, according to people familiar with the situation. Some of these people say they are optimistic the companies will reach an agreement. If they don't, Disney apps could be removed from Fire TV, the second-largest distributor of streaming TV apps. Disney has several apps, including for networks such as ABC, ESPN and Disney Channel.

The dispute is one reason Fire TV has no deal in place to carry Disney+, [a coming Disney streaming-video service](#) set to launch Nov. 12, the people familiar with the situation said. The deadline for the talks wasn't clear. Amazon's Fire TV is an internet-connected streaming-media player that lets users stream content to their television sets from a range of apps, including Amazon's own Prime Video, Netflix Inc., Sling TV and offerings from a host of TV networks. It had 29% of the U.S. market for streaming-media boxes in the second quarter, according to Strategy Analytics, behind only rival Roku Inc.

The dispute highlights the complicated and sometimes tense relationships between streaming-video distributors and content providers. Fire TV, Roku and other companies offering such set-top boxes or plug-in "sticks" have become vital hubs for reaching consumers who stream media, and are increasingly playing the role cable companies have played in traditional television.

For years, cable providers have worked out arrangements with TV channels to carry those networks. The channels get a portion of consumers' monthly cable fees, and the cable providers often get access to a portion of the ad time on the networks. Likewise, the new-era streaming distributors have their own requests when they negotiate carriage of streaming apps, such as a portion of the content company's advertising or subscription revenue.

One big difference: Cable operators in the U.S. each cover a specific geographic footprint, and TV programmers must negotiate with each of

them, under the threat that if a deal isn't reached channels could be blacked out in those areas. In streaming, channels can distribute their programming nationwide through a number of set-top box players, and new entrants recently joined the fray, including Comcast Corp. 's Flex and a Facebook Inc. device called Portal. "The traditional negotiations between cable operators and media companies are the most vicious negotiations that I've ever been exposed to. And now you see that world colliding with these tech behemoths," said Steve Shannon, chief executive of Tetra TV, which operates a marketplace for ads on streaming video.

People close to the Disney-Amazon situation said it isn't as acrimonious as a traditional cable-carriage dispute. Spokeswomen for Amazon and Disney declined to comment. Streaming-media device makers have had fights among themselves for several years. Until this year, for example, Fire TV devices didn't have Google's official YouTube app, while Google's Chromecast device didn't offer the Amazon Prime Video app.

Now, the battles are taking on higher stakes as entertainment companies such as Disney, facing stagnating pay-TV businesses, place greater importance on reaching audiences on digital platforms and increasingly are competing with tech giants. Disney+, for example, will go up against Amazon's Prime Video in the marketplace, as will forthcoming streaming services from AT&T Inc. 's WarnerMedia and Comcast's NBCUniversal.

When Fire TV was first launched, it allowed a number of media companies to have apps on its platform without sharing any advertising revenue, people familiar with the situation said. But lately Amazon has been tightening its proposed terms in discussions with certain programmers, the people said. Amazon's push for more ad revenue from its partners is part of a wider effort to better monetize businesses outside of the company's profit engine, cloud-computing arm Amazon Web Services. Now, Amazon often starts out asking for about 40% of the ad inventory from programmers, and negotiations often bring it down to 30% or 20%, according to people with knowledge of the company's deals.

Well-known apps have the leverage to barter for more favorable terms. Disney believes its popular apps—and the coming launch of Disney+—give it substantial clout, and the company hasn't been keen to give up any ad inventory to Amazon, people familiar with the company's deliberations said. Recently, the two sides have discussed a proposal in which Disney would give up 10% of its ad inventory, the people said.

Roku does business in a similar way. It often asks for 30% of the ad inventory in channels it carries—a starting point for negotiations, said a person familiar with the matter. YouTube, the second most-watched channel on Roku, shares none of its ad inventory with Roku, according to people familiar with the matter. Some subscription-oriented services pay Roku a one-time "bounty" when people sign up for the service through a Roku app, while others may pay on a recurring basis. Hulu, the Disney-controlled streaming service, gives Roku about 15% of the subscription revenue from customers who signed up for the service through Roku, a person familiar with the arrangement said.

Though Disney+ won't have ads, the discussions with Amazon to carry it on Fire TV gave the tech giant an opportunity to revisit advertising terms for various other Disney apps. Disney won't want to have the service's distribution curtailed at the launch, and Amazon won't want to miss out on offering a service that will include classic Disney movies, a lineup of Star Wars and Marvel content, the full catalog of "The Simpsons" and more. Disney has said Disney+ will be available to stream on Apple TV, Android devices, Chromecast, iPads and iPhones, PS4, Roku and Xbox One. – *Wall Street Journal*

If you're hoping to cast a ballot in the November election and you haven't registered to vote, time is running out. The deadline to register to vote in the fall election is Oct. 7. Next month, voters will cast ballots in judicial, county, municipal and school board races. It may be an "off-year" since the presidential election is a year away, but these races determine who will set local property tax rates, oversee schools and protect the public.

Voters will also be asked if they want to amend the constitution to clarify the rights of crime victims. If you haven't registered to vote, you can go to the Pennsylvania Department of State's [online voter registration page](#). The last day to register for an absentee ballot is Oct. 29. [This is the first election where voters can request an absentee ballot online](#). Those eligible for absentee ballots include college students, members of the military and those who will be out of state on Election Day. ([Go here to apply for an absentee ballot.](#)) – *Pennlive*

