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AT&T Inc. continued to lose its most profitable pay-TV viewers and wireless phone subscribers in the latest quarter as the company's aggressive bundle offers failed to stanch the flow of customers ditching legacy services. The country's No. 2 wireless company lost a net 97,000 postpaid phone subscribers, those who are billed monthly and tend to be more profitable for carriers. AT&T has leaked that type of customer for years, though its losses have eased in recent months.

Executives said much of the latest decline didn't involve smartphones, and that the company was having success bundling its wireless service with its DirecTV video service. "The bundling strategy... is working and we will continue to use good judgment in providing customers what they want," finance chief John Stephens said on a conference call on Tuesday.

On the satellite side, DirecTV shed 251,000 customers in the third quarter while AT&T's U-verse business lost 134,000 pay-TV accounts. [The company earlier this month warned](#) that its video business kept shrinking during the period despite nearly 300,000 new signups for its DirecTV Now streaming service. AT&T executives blamed hurricane damage for some of the video losses. Comcast Corp. said earlier this year that its subscriber base was shrinking as viewers opted for cheaper online channel bundles or dropped their TV plans altogether, a sign of weakening demand for the whole sector.

On Tuesday, Mr. Stephens said some of the pay-TV declines also came from the company's decision to tighten its credit standards. He predicted the video business would return to customer growth in the current quarter. AT&T aims to head off the forces buffeting its telecom operations by owning more media outright. Its bid for Time Warner Inc., the owner of CNN, Warner Bros. studios and Turner's cable networks, was designed to protect its core business in the same way Comcast has guarded its cable operations by owning the film and TV assets of NBCUniversal.

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AT&T is still waiting on the U.S. Justice Department to approve its takeover of Time Warner, a deal worth \$85 billion when it was struck more than a year ago. The company said in a regulatory filing

*The achievements of an organization are the results of the combined effort of each individual. ~ Vince Lombardi*

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Monday that the two sides had agreed to extend an October deadline "for a short period of time to facilitate obtaining final regulatory approval required to close the merger." "The financing is set and we're ready to close," Mr. Stephens said. "In the meantime, Time Warner continues to perform well, even better than our expectations."

On Tuesday, AT&T said it had spent \$152 million on costs related to the planned merger through Sept. 30. Mr. Stephens reiterated that the company expects the transaction to close by year's end. Overall, AT&T's third-quarter profit fell 9% to \$3.03 billion, or 49 cents a share, as revenue slid 3% to \$39.67 billion. Excluding lost business due to hurricanes and earthquakes, the company said revenue would have been \$39.8 billion.

Monthly churn, a measure of how many customers

dropped wireless service, edged up to 1.07%, from 1.05%, driven by cancellations among tablet users. Looking at postpaid phone contracts alone, the cancellation rate was 0.84%, compared with 0.90% in the year-ago quarter. The company ended the quarter with 138.8 million U.S. wireless subscribers. Including tablets and other devices, AT&T added 117,000 postpaid wireless customers in the quarter. Verizon Communications Inc., the largest U.S. carrier by subscribers, last week said it had added 603,000 postpaid wireless connections in the quarter. T-Mobile US Inc. added 817,000 postpaid subscribers. – **Wall Street Journal**; [more in Dallas Morning News](#)

Eight Western Pennsylvania TV stations will go dark Wednesday, according to a Virginia-based broadcasting company. Three of them will shut down permanently. The other five might return to the screen, though it is unclear when and in what form. All eight stations are owned by OTA Broadcasting and carry the Cozi, Movies! and RetroTV networks, which broadcast classic shows and films.

WEPA Channel 59 in Pittsburgh, WNNB Channel 66 in Beaver and WPCP Channel 56 in New Castle were **sold in an auction** the FCC held to free up broadband for internet providers, part of a deal that netted OTA \$74 million. The other five stations rebroadcast WEPA's signal, so when the Pittsburgh station shuts down, they will too, according to OTA station manager Matthew Davis. OTA is trying to work out an arrangement to bring the five stations back in some form, but the company doesn't know when that will happen, Davis said.

These stations are: Butler WJMB Channel 60; Charleroi WMVH Channel 26; Kittanning WKHU Channel 60; Uniontown WWKH Channel 35; Washington WWLM Channel 20. Greensburg's WEPA affiliate, WEMW Channel 56, was sold in the FCC auction and shut down in July. – **Pittsburgh Tribune-Review**

Facebook is actively looking at the possibility of broadcasting live sports content via its Facebook Live service, according to its global head of Strategic Partner Development – Sports Media, Rob Shaw. Speaking at a Sportel Tech Panel session on Social Video, Shaw told delegates that the recent introduction of the Facebook Live service had altered the dynamics of its relationships with sporting rights holders. “Our relationships and conversations have certainly changed over the last couple or six months,” he said

“Facebook is a phenomenal place to reach large audiences and we are now looking into and testing the possibility of actually broadcasting live sport content. It’s going to be a huge learning curve for us, for broadcasters, media companies, the leagues, because it’s not telephones, it’s different. It’s interactive, it’s social, it’s not a one-way conversation,” he added. “So these are the things that we’re trying to work together with the leagues and gain their feedback on data and consumption so that we can understand what we can build in the future.” – **Advanced Television**

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Q. Is there an easy way to tell if the cable television service is out for everybody or just at my own house because of equipment problems? I really hate calling.

A. If you have a working internet connection (or access to one on a cellular device or work computer) and an online account from your cable company, you might be able to check specifically about the status of your own equipment. To do that, log into your account on your TV provider’s site and find the technical support area. What you find there will vary depending on your cable company, but many providers have problem-solving tools available to help lighten the load on the phone lines. Spectrum, for example, lets you select the problematic service (like TV or internet) from a menu to see the status of your service and check for notice of a possible problem in your area. If there is no systemwide disruption, you can use the available guides and tools to troubleshoot your cable converter box and other equipment. Spectrum has a nationwide page that customers can use to [check on storm-related problems](#), and Comcast has its own [Status Center page](#) for Xfinity cable customers. Many companies have their own mobile apps for account management. too.

Even if you do not have an online account to see your home setup, your cable provider’s site might have live chat, general support tips and a service-disruption map. (While it may seem like just another password to remember, signing up for an account lets you check your bill, pay online, sign up for service alerts, control your DVR or even watch live television on a mobile device — depending on what your provider offers.) Your cable company’s customer-service account on Twitter can be another good source of news. Websites that monitor the status of communications services may also be useful. [Down Detector](#), [Outage Report](#) and [Is the Service Down?](#) are a few sites in this category. – **New York Times**

