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Google Fiber may have hit the pause button on plans to bring superfast wired internet to Chicago, but regional cable provider RCN is moving full speed ahead.

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

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Chicago-area homes. The new high-speed service costs \$69.99 per month for the first year, not including a \$10 per month modem rental. Installation is required, but RCN is waiving the \$49.95 fee for customers who sign up online in November. Rates beyond the 12-month promotional period have not been determined, but will be "competitive and reasonable," Fenger said.

New Jersey-based RCN primarily serves Boston, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, Lehigh Valley (Pa.) and Washington, D.C. In August, TPG, a Texas-based private equity firm, agreed to buy RCN for \$1.6 billion. Chicago is the second RCN market to get the 1-gigabit service after it launched in New York last week.

RCN is employing the same modem-enabled DOCSIS 3.1 technology that Comcast rolled out in August to extend gigabit-speed internet to all of its Chicago-area broadband customers. Comcast is charging \$70 per month for the service with a three-year contract. "We're pleased with the response," said Comcast spokesman Jack Segal, who declined to share specific subscription numbers.

Launched last year, AT&T also offers gigabit-speed internet service through its direct-wired fiber network, which reaches more than 150,000 homes in Chicago and the suburbs,

RCN Telecom Services launched an upgraded internet service Wednesday that utilizes existing wiring and new modems to deliver 1-gigabit-per-second internet speeds throughout its Chicago footprint. "Wherever somebody can get our video service, our phone service, our incumbent internet service, they can get the 1-gigabit service," said Chris Fenger, chief operating officer for RCN.

In the Chicago area, RCN has customers in neighborhoods from West Rogers Park to Hyde Park, and also reaches into Lincolnwood and Skokie. While Fenger declined to disclose how many existing customers RCN served, its network reaches about 350,000

Allentown Morning Call
[Clinton, Obama to rally in Philadelphia on eve of Election Day](#)

Los Angeles Times
[When red meant Democratic and blue was Republican. A brief history of TV electoral maps](#)

according to Phil Hayes, an AT&T spokesman. The AT&T gigabit service costs \$90 per month with a two-year contract. There is no installation or activation charge once a customer's house or apartment is connected to the network, Hayes said. Meanwhile, Google said last month it is shelving plans to build a high-speed fiber network in Chicago and likely opting instead for a wireless internet service. Google agreed to acquire wireless internet provider Webpass in June. – *Chicago Tribune*

Cable programmers might get chills reading the Justice Department's 57-page antitrust suit against DirecTV that alleges the satellite broadcaster colluded with other pay-TV operators in rejecting carriage of the Dodgers channel SportsNet LA.

The suit says that DirecTV, led by senior executive Dan York, shared information about SportsNet LA with other pay TV providers in Los Angeles, including Cox Communications and Charter Communications, as they were negotiating with the channel's distributor, Time Warner Cable. The strategy was to reach a tacit agreement that none would carry the channel when it launched in 2014. The suit details numerous communications between DirecTV's Mr. York and his counterparts at other companies. The revelations will confirm the fears of many programmers that pay TV operators often work with each other and confer on strategy when it comes to negotiating content deals.

In one example outlined in the suit, an unidentified executive from Cox Communications allegedly called Mr. York after Time Warner Cable had said a pay TV operator was near a deal to carry SportsNet LA. Mr. York told the executive that DirecTV was not the distributor, which was good news to Cox since DirecTV was its biggest competitor in the market. The two executives also agreed to alert each other with a "heads up" before one agreed to launch the channel, something that hasn't happened yet. Mr. York even had a breakfast with a Cox executive in New York in fall of 2013 in which they discussed rising sports costs including the likelihood that the cost to carry Dodger games would be going up, according to the suit.

Another time, an AT&T executive shared details of a pitch he received from Time Warner Cable via a text message with Mr. York, saying it was similar to the one DirecTV had received. "Hope u hit it out," Mr. York texted back, according to the suit. AT&T, which operates the U-Verse pay TV service in the Los Angeles area, has since acquired DirecTV.

Mr. York seems to have been most chummy with Charter Communications, ironic now given that Time Warner Cable and Charter merged earlier this year and now the operator carries SportsNet LA. "The sharing of this competitively sensitive information among direct competitors made it less likely that any of these companies would reach a deal," the suit said. None wanted to carry SportsNet LA because its distributor Time Warner Cable was seeking a monthly fee of close to \$5.00 per-subscriber, which was significantly higher than what the previous rights holder – 21st Century Fox's Prime Ticket – had charged. While most of the conversations in the suit were about the Dodgers situation, some were about other networks and even rival programming services.

The suit also claims that Charter aided DirecTV when it was in a feud with the Weather Channel in 2014 over carriage fees. In that case, DirecTV had stopped carrying Weather Channel, which responded by taking out ads critical of the satellite broadcaster. Charter, according to the suit, rejected the ads, telling Mr. York in a voice mail that the favor was "my little bit for the planet earth." The suit also said Charter and DirecTV engaged in conversations about letting their customers access Hulu, the online video service co-owned by 21st Century Fox, Walt Disney Co., Comcast Corp. and Time Warner Inc.

In a statement, DirecTV-owner AT&T said, "By its very nature, a lawsuit is only one side of the story. We look forward to presenting all the facts as the case progresses." The company said Mr. York was not available for comment. Cox and Charter weren't named as defendants in the lawsuit. Charter declined to comment. Cox said in a statement Wednesday said, "We are gratified that we were not named as a defendant. We continue

to be committed to making independent decisions on program content.”

When Time Warner Cable agreed to a 25-year, \$8.35 billion deal to distribute the Dodgers network, much of the industry, consumer groups and media analysts saw it as further proof that sports rights costs were skyrocketing out of control. The Time Warner Cable bid topped by \$2 billion the offer from incumbent rights holder Fox Sports West, a unit of 21st Century Fox, according to people familiar with the terms. Time Warner Cable might have had better luck with DirecTV and the others if the Dodger channel hadn't come so soon after it had acquired rights for the Los Angeles Lakers in a deal valued at \$3 billion over 20 years with an option for another five years for \$2 billion. As it did with the Dodgers, Time Warner Cable launched a channel dedicated to just the Lakers at a high price. Distributors agreed to carry it given the popularity of the franchise.

However the Lakers have since gone into a tailspin and ratings have fallen for the team. Distributors felt hustled on the Laker channel – known as SportsNet – and were reluctant to pay even more for a Dodger network. The two new channels meant that Los Angeles had seven outlets devoted to local sports, making the city a symbol for the glut of sports networks driving up pay-TV costs. – *Wall Street Journal*; [more from Los Angeles Times](#)

State Rep. Martina White (R-Philadelphia) - you might recognize her from that sign on the side of a tractor-trailer **parked illegally** on an I-95 overpass in Northeast Philly - had her attorney Larry Otter write to Comcast last week, demanding that the cable giant stop airing a commercial produced by the State House Democratic Campaign Committee in support of her opponent, Matt Darragh.

That video shows White being, shall we say, less than hospitable when immigration activists visit her Harrisburg office for a chat. White, while praising America for its freedom of speech, orders them to leave. Otter claimed in his Comcast letter that using the video in the commercial violated the state's Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance Act. "Let's cut to the chase, a felony was committed in obtaining the tape which is the large part of the commercial," Otter wrote.

Attorney Adam Bonin wrote to Comcast on behalf of Darragh and the HDCC, noting that the video had been published on Al Dia's website and picked up by other news organizations. "The public has a right to know that Martina White is just as uncivil and unkind to recent Americans in her personal conduct as she is in her legislative actions," Bonin wrote. "They deserve to see that she can be just as hateful as Donald Trump when meeting people affected by the policies she seeks to advance." Apparently, Comcast agreed. The ad kept airing.

Otter told Clout he didn't know at the time he sent his letter that the video had been published by media outlets. "Upon further review and consideration, we chose not to pursue the issue," Otter said.

Quotable: "@KatyTurNBC 'crazy year' was brilliant' real, unbiased look @ very insecure man. now that u lost the french bf, how about a Philly boy? lol!" – **State Sen. Larry Farnese** (D-Philadelphia), feeling frisky on Twitter Thursday while reaching out to NBC News reporter **Katy Tur** about an article she wrote, detailing her coverage of Donald Trump's presidential campaign (which touches briefly on her break-up with a French boyfriend.)



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