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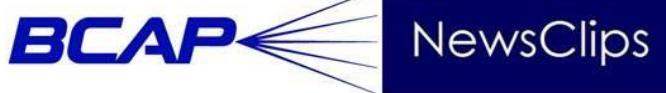
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Television viewers will not see a disruption in service now that Fox Corp. and Service Electric Cable TV reached a contractual agreement late Tuesday night.

"They're fine-tuning some details, but viewers will have all channels tomorrow," Service Electric General Manager Jack Capparell said at 11:35 p.m., 25 minutes before the midnight deadline when Fox could have terminated its signal had a satisfactory agreement not been reached. A terminated signal would have meant no more Fox News, Fox Business, two sports channels or other programming for viewers. The cable giant known for its Fox News personalities Sean Hannity, Tucker Carlson and others had been negotiating with a trade group representing cable operators across the country, including Bethlehem's Service Electric Cable TV & Communications and Blue Ridge Communications in Palmerton. "We're operating as normal until negotiations break down," Capparell said before a deal was reached.

The sticking point of negotiations was differences over what Capparell considered a significant price hike coming from Fox. He said Fox was seeking double-digit increases, anywhere between 20% and 40%. "We were satisfied with the numbers we were at right now, and our vote was to continue [carrying the channels]," he said earlier, but did not mention details about what agreement was later worked out with Fox on pricing. The Morning Call was unable to connect with Fox

TVNewsCheck
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Inquirer**
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**Allentown
Morning Call**
How Pennsylvanians
vote, when they hunt
among 2019
changes that will
affect us in 2020

Associated Press
'Sordid history' cited
as judge blocks
North Carolina's
voter ID law

spokeswoman Megan Klein for comment after Capparell said an agreement had been reached.

Fox had been negotiating with the National Cable Television Cooperative Inc. which represents about 750 independent cable operators across the country. The parties reached a settlement that keeps affiliates Fox 29 from Philadelphia, New York's Fox 5 and the Big Ten Network on the air, Capparell said Monday. That means NFL fans will be able to catch any playoff games airing on Fox, including the 1 p.m. Sunday wild-card game between the Minnesota Vikings at New Orleans Saints.

Fox Corp. took out a full-page advertisement in Friday's Morning Call addressing the impasse with Service Electric and NCTC. Fox also accused the cooperative on its website of fabricating an "avoidable crisis." Fox said the cooperative leverages deals with companies like Fox to generate fees toward the group's overhead.

A deal not been reached also could have affected Blue Ridge cable subscribers in parts of the Lehigh Valley and Carbon County. Blue Ridge spokesman Joe Lorah said Monday that Fox was seeking a rate hike more than 10 times the rate of inflation; he said that since 2004, Fox has increased its fees for Fox News Channel by almost 800%. The dispute did not affect RCN customers; an RCN representative did not return a message seeking comment Monday, but Capparell said RCN earlier negotiated a deal with Fox. — **Allentown Morning Call**

A Google artificial intelligence system proved as good as expert radiologists at detecting which women had breast cancer based on screening mammograms and showed promise at reducing errors, researchers in the United States and Britain reported. The study, published in the journal Nature on Wednesday, is the latest to show that artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to improve the accuracy of screening for breast cancer, which affects one in eight women globally.

Radiologists miss about 20% of breast cancers in mammograms, the American Cancer Society says, and half of all women who get the screenings over a 10-year period have a false positive result. The findings of the study, developed with Alphabet Inc's DeepMind AI unit, which merged with Google Health in September, represent a major advance in the potential for the early detection of breast cancer, Mozziyar Etemadi, one of its co-authors from Northwestern Medicine in Chicago, said. The team, which included researchers at Imperial College London and Britain's National Health Service, trained the system to identify breast cancers on tens of thousands of mammograms.

They then compared the system's performance with the actual results from a set of 25,856 mammograms in the United Kingdom and 3,097 from the United States. The study showed the AI system could identify cancers with a similar degree of accuracy to expert radiologists, while reducing the number of false positive results by 5.7% in the U.S.-based group and by 1.2% in the British-based group. It also cut the number of false negatives, where tests are wrongly classified as normal, by 9.4% in the U.S. group, and by 2.7% in the British group.

These differences reflect the ways in which mammograms are read. In the United States, only one radiologist reads the results and the tests are done every one to two years. In Britain, the tests are done every three years, and each is read by two radiologists. When they disagree, a third is consulted. In a separate test, the group pitted the AI system against six radiologists and found it outperformed them at accurately detecting breast cancers.

Connie Lehman, chief of the breast imaging department at Harvard's Massachusetts General Hospital, said the results are in line with findings from several groups using AI to improve cancer detection in mammograms, including her own work. The notion of using computers to improve cancer diagnostics is decades old, and computer-aided detection (CAD) systems are commonplace in mammography clinics, yet CAD programs have not improved performance in clinical practice.

The issue, Lehman said, is that current CAD programs were trained to identify things human radiologists can see, whereas with AI, computers learn to spot cancers based on the actual results of thousands of mammograms. This has the potential to "exceed human capacity to identify subtle cues that the human eye and brain aren't able to perceive," Lehman added. Although computers have not been "super helpful" so far, "what we've shown at least in tens of thousands of mammograms is the tool can actually make a very well-informed decision," Etemadi said.

The study has some limitations. Most of the tests were done using the same type of imaging equipment, and the U.S. group contained a lot of patients with confirmed breast cancers. Crucially, the team has yet to show the tool improves patient care, said Dr Lisa Watanabe, chief medical officer of CureMetrix, whose AI mammogram program won U.S. approval last year. "AI software is only helpful if it actually moves the dial for the radiologist," she said. Etemadi agreed that those studies are needed, as is regulatory approval, a process that could take several years. — **Reuters**

Even if you pay just scant attention to the politics of our time, you likely know Pennsylvania's key to the presidential race -- key, as in who wins the state also wins the White House.

So that's thing one: we're the center of the universe, white-hot and worshipped. We'll be inundated with polls, candidate visits, surrogates, TV ads, mailers, rallies, robocalls, Tweets, door-knocks, all the delights employed these days in the wonderful world of politics. Our state's a mirror of divided America, urban areas at either end with fly-over folks in between, that clearly could go either way: four more years or no more years. So, smile Pennsylvania, you're the focus of lights, cameras, action. And it could get hotter sooner.

Because of thing two. It's possible Democrats, being Democrats, won't decide on a nominee before our primary April 28. (It's so late because just about everything Pa. pols do is late.) Four candidates — Joe Biden, Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, Pete Buttigieg -- have the following and funding to get that far and beyond. One or more others could (maybe) catch fire, and moneymen Michael Bloomberg's a wild card. Point is, in addition to picking the next president, Pennsylvania

could pick the Dem nominee, which might end up being one in the same.

In interviews with politicos across the state in both parties, some asking anonymity because they are working on campaigns, two constants emerged: How Pa. goes depends on who's the Dem candidate, and Joe Biden has staying power. Both Pittsburgh Democratic strategist Mike Mikus and Harrisburg GOP consultant Chris Nicholas spoke of Biden's ongoing, stable support. And Philadelphia Democratic consultant Larry Ceisler said, "I just don't see Sanders or Warren carrying Pennsylvania."

Thing three is a great unknown: Voting changes. Not only new machines all over the place, and what holy chaos they could cause, but also a new law expanding absentee voting but ending straight-party voting. No longer can you hit a button, pull a lever or touch a screen and be done. Got to look at candidates for president, Congress, state House, state Senate, attorney general, auditor general, treasurer. Or not. Will voters who've voted straight-party take time to vote the whole ballot?

Both parties benefitted from straight-party voting. Some counties say 50 percent or more of their vote was straight ticket. Insiders suggest the change could be off-putting and slow the process. And some say big-city voters especially won't wait in line or bother with down-ballot candidates. Does that, coupled with changes to mail-in ballots, cause confusion to impact results? Who knows? It's experimentation in real time.

Thing four is a low flame compared to the high heat of national campaigns, but still important to state politics: legislative races. Normally, these are horrible. Incumbents never lose, results are predictable and life (or low life) in the Capitol goes on. But. Heretofore hapless Democratic legislative campaigns see a higher-than-normal Dem turnout giving them at least a shot at grabbing majorities in the state House and (less likely) Senate. And whoever has legislative control after 2020 has greater say in drawing new congressional and legislative maps in 2021, maps that last for a decade.

Finally, thing five is the congressional race in the 10th District (Dauphin County, parts of Cumberland and York counties), a race watched for national trends. It's Republican U.S. Rep. Scott Perry's seat. He narrowly kept it 2018, beating political novice George Scott, after the district was redrawn in a less-red hue. (The district changed as part of a Democratic state Supreme Court ruling that Pa. congressional maps were unconstitutionally rigged to favor Republicans.) Perry now will face either established Democrat Eugene DePasquale, a former York County legislator and current state auditor general, or Democratic millennial first-time candidate Hershey lawyer Tom Brier.

It's a race of national note. And perhaps, like every such race, decided by what happens at the top of the ticket. Which depends on who tops the Dem ticket. And how that person fares in the face of what's certain to be a vigorous defense of incumbency by President Donald Trump – all played out under hot lights here in Pennsylvania. – **John Baer's column in *Harrisburg Patriot-News***

In addition to **Comcast dropping PCNC** as 2020 dawned, Verizon's Fios TV has dropped NBC affiliate WPXI-TV and all its associated channels (PCNC, Me-TV, Laff). In a **statement posted to WPXI.com**, station management say they continue to negotiate with Verizon. And in a replay of New Year's Day 2017 **when Hearst-owned stations, including Pittsburgh's WTAE-TV, went dark on DirecTV** for about a week, there's a threat that AT&T's DirecTV could again drop Hearst properties, including WTAE, **although the two sides continue to negotiate**. Retransmission kerfuffles such as these have become routine in the TV industry, particularly around the new year, inconveniencing viewers and perhaps contributing to the cord-cutting phenomenon. – ***Pittsburgh Post-Gazette***

