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Analysts say they are surprised by the reported financial and subscriber strength of Atlantic Broadband, the main U.S. subsidiary of Montreal-based cable and internet provider Cogeco Communications Inc. Notes issued by RBC Dominion Securities and Canaccord Genuity say Cogeco added more than 14,000 internet subscribers in the United States during the company's fiscal third quarter ended May 31.

They also say Cogeco's preliminary outlook for the 2020 financial year, which begins Sept. 1, is slightly stronger than anticipated because of Atlantic Broadband. However, they say overall third-quarter results included unexpectedly weak subscriber performance at Cogeco's Canadian cable TV and internet operations across southern Quebec and Ontario. Cogeco Communications reported late Wednesday that it had \$587.3 million of revenue for the third quarter, up 3.6 per cent from a year ago or 1.7 per cent after adjusting for \$10.8 million in positive currency effects.

Net profit was \$182.0 million, including \$82.45 million from discontinued operations that have been sold. Diluted earnings per share totalled \$3.59, including \$1.65 from discontinued operations. Cogeco Communications and its parent Cogeco Inc. are scheduled to discuss their reports in a conference call Thursday. — *The Canadian Press*

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Nexstar Media Group on Thursday issued a statement that it said was designed to “set the record straight … with legislators, regulators, consumers and others related to ongoing negotiations between the parties on a distribution agreement that will allow AT&T to continue to offer Nexstar’s highly rated network and local community programming to its subscribers.” Nexstar said “the misinformation campaign began when AT&T indicated that ‘Nexstar pulled 120 of its local broadcast stations....’

Nexstar did not pull its stations or ask for their removal from AT&T’s DirecTV, U-verse or DirecTV NOW platforms. Rather, Nexstar’s offer for a 30-day extension would have allowed consumers in the affected markets to continue viewing their favorite network shows, special events, sports, local news and other programming while the parties continue negotiations.”

Nexstar said that AT&T in its “External Fact Sheet” and in communications to elected officials, “erroneously asserts that Nexstar has been involved in blackouts with Cox Cable, Dish Network, Charter Spectrum ‘and others’ when in fact Nexstar has never had Dish Network or Charter Spectrum remove its stations from their consumer video offerings.”

Nexstar said it has a long-term record of completing hundreds of agreements with multichannel video programming distributors for the carriage of its television stations and “is proud that it has never, in its 23-year history, had a service interruption related to distribution agreements of the magnitude of the AT&T/DirecTV interruption. Over the past 20 months alone, Nexstar has successfully renewed more than 390 distribution agreements with cable providers for the carriage of Nexstar’s stations, including a new agreement with Cox.”

In contrast, Nexstar said, following its 2015 acquisition by AT&T, DirecTV has been “routinely involved in disputes with content providers and has dropped or threatened to black out network and local community programming from Viacom, SJL Broadcasting/Lilly Broadcasting, and others.” AT&T, Nexstar said, also failed to mention that between May 30, 2019, and June 10, 2019, alone, “AT&T/DirecTV customers lost access to the network and local content of at least 20 other non-Nexstar stations due to its failure to reach fair agreements with 10 other broadcasters.

At this time, AT&T has disputes with broadcasters and dropped local broadcast stations from several station operators (including Deerfield Media, MPS Media, GoCom Media of Illinois, Howard Stirk Holdings, Roberts Media, Second Generation of Iowa, Waitt Broadcasting, Mercury Media Group, Northwest Broadcasting and Nexstar), resulting in concentrated blackouts of local programming and service for its customers in 13 U.S. markets.”

Nexstar said that it “wants nothing more than to bring its programming back to viewers by completing a new fair market agreement with AT&T and continues to negotiate in good faith to establish a mutually agreeable contract with DirecTV. Nexstar has offered AT&T/ DirecTV the same rates it offered to other large distribution partners with whom it completed successful negotiations with in 2019 to date.

"Nexstar remains hopeful that a resolution can be reached immediately, but should AT&T fail to come to terms with Nexstar, Nexstar intends to continue to actively educate consumers in affected markets on how they can continue to receive their favorite network programming, in-depth local news, other content and programming relevant to their communities, and critical updates in times of emergencies. AT&T's attempts to disparage Nexstar will not be tolerated and their misguided efforts to fool their viewers as well as legislators and regulators, the investment community and the public at-large warranted a response." – ***TVNewsCheck***

Philadelphia's legislative delegation wants a do-over for new legislation giving state Attorney General Josh Shapiro equal jurisdiction in Philadelphia gun-related cases now handled by District Attorney Larry Krasner, who sees the measure as a troubling undercutting of his authority.

State Sen. Vincent Hughes, a Philadelphia Democrat, said **he will introduce legislation** this fall to reverse the section of the law that sparked controversy. "It's clear that nobody wanted it," Hughes said Thursday. That might be true now. But Hughes and every other member of the Senate voted in favor of it a few weeks ago, and it cruised through the House before being signed into law by Gov. Tom Wolf.

Hughes said lawmakers, in the chaotic budget season, were focused on other priorities. And he said nobody sounded the alarm about the now-controversial amendment, a trimmed-down version of a broader provision Shapiro originally supported. The final version was developed in part by State Rep. Martina White, Northeast Philadelphia's lone Republican and ally of the Krasner-hating police union.

Shapiro says he did not push for the Philadelphia-only version of "concurrent jurisdiction" in the new law and **insisted he would continue collaborating with Krasner's office**. Clout was curious: Did Hughes think lawmakers read the bill before signing it? "I think people read the legislation ... and I think no one said anything was wrong with it," he replied. The do-over can't be introduced until September, and Hughes acknowledged it will be a tough sell to the Republican-dominated Legislature. – ***Chris Brennan's "Clout" column in Philadelphia Daily News***

