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May 24, 2016

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scheme'

Wall Street
Journal
Should
Consumers
Be Permitted
to Provide
Their Own
Set-Top
Cable and
Satellite
Boxes?

Media Life
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USA Today
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buoyed by
Wall St.
upgrades

West Chester
Daily Local
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Comcast
opens first
interactive
Xfinity store
in Chester
County

Unionized Verizon workers have been on strike for more than a month. During these weeks, we've seen Verizon spend millions of dollars in advertising trying to convince customers that their telecommunications issues are being handled. In fact, customers would be much better off if Verizon would bargain a fair contract that gets Verizon workers back on the job. Instead, too many customers are being put at risk by Verizon's inadequate and deficient checks of the replacement workers it's hiring.

Instead of working to resolve this dispute, Verizon has decided to hire contract workers who already have been responsible for several incidents of damage due to their use of unsafe working practices. Several contractors even have been arrested. At a time when too many criminals are targeting the unsuspecting customer, Verizon has chosen to overlook background checks, experience and training, and safety.

In one incident last week, a Verizon contractor was arrested and charged with assault and battery for running down a picketer and striking a police officer with his vehicle in Massachusetts. It turns out he was intoxicated at 8:30 a.m., charged with his fourth Driving-Under-the-Influence (DUI), and driving on a suspended license.

This week, another replacement worker hit a striking Massachusetts worker with a car. A Verizon contractor nearly dropped a utility pole on a house. A contractor pulled out a machete-type knife to threaten picketing workers at a Verizon mobile store in New York.

Many businesses are complaining that they can't get their service properly repaired, from restaurants to retail operations. A small business owner in Syracuse went without service for more than a week because replacement technicians – despite coming out to the site multiple times – were unable to identify the cause of the problem and perform the repair.

In Lehigh County, Pennsylvania, a tree fell on utility lines, closing a road and causing a public safety hazard that Verizon failed to clear for three full days.

In New York, a reporter wrote that Verizon sent a lobbyist to climb a telephone pole in their backyard to perform an installation. Police had to close a street to conduct an investigation near a New Jersey school because a Verizon replacement worker left a bag with exposed wires behind. Though these troubling incidents have intensified during the strike, Verizon has a long history of valuing profits over treating workers and customers fairly.

Philadelphia Daily News
Oh, those Pennsylvania taxes!

pennlive.com
Op-ed: With Internet gaming vote coming, lawmakers need to tread carefully

philly.com
Dem convention in Philly could be 'messy'

In Pennsylvania, Verizon has accepted large amounts of taxpayer money in exchange for promises to build out FiOS high speed broadband in the state. Verizon failed to deliver on



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that promise, deciding not to build out the network except in extremely limited areas. Even worse, it is not maintaining the copper network, resulting in safety hazards and loss of service to the millions of customers who depend on their landline service.

Verizon customers, who pay their bills month after month, deserve better than this. They deserve timely service performed by workers who have passed background checks and are trained to do their jobs properly and safely. Verizon's working men and women deserve better, too. We don't want to be on strike. It's a hardship for us, our families and our customers.

If Verizon cared about customers and the public, it wouldn't be placing them in harm's way every day with a potentially criminal work force and unsafe work practices. Despite

Verizon's PR efforts, customers aren't fooled. Consumer opinion of Verizon is at its lowest in three years. While Verizon has made its bottom line the top priority, it now is learning a costly lesson: that providing poor quality service from unscreened replacement workers will actually hurt their profits.

Verizon workers stand ready to return and provide the well-trained, dedicated service that Verizon customers have come to know and love. If there are Verizon replacement contractors working in your neighborhood, we urge every customer to be on guard, protect your family and look out for your neighbors. We care about the customers we serve, and we look forward to taking care of your needs once this dispute is resolved. – **Op-ed in pennlive.com** by James Gardler, president of Local 13000 of the Communications Workers of America; **Philadelphia Inquirer reports strike will trim \$200M from VZ profits**

IAC/Interactive Chairman Barry Diller, who upended the media landscape in 1986 when he created Fox Broadcasting to battle the existing three TV networks, could soon enter the race to take on cable operators by creating an over-the-top streaming video service.

Diller's IAC, a collection of Internet companies that includes dating site Match.com and the Daily Beast news site, on May 2 acquired VHX, whose technology provides back-end services for content owners offering video via subscription. IAC is combining VHX with Vimeo, its own service for content creators to show videos to a streaming audience that IAC estimates at 280 million users.

What exactly Diller's troops intend to do with the combined entities so far is unclear. In a letter to shareholders, CEO Joey Levin said IAC likely won't pay large amounts of money for content to take on large over-the-top service providers such as Netflix, Amazon.com and Hulu that are creating original content to differentiate themselves. "We don't intend to get into the multibillion-dollar war on content," Levin wrote. "Our efforts here will be targeted, with the goal of building out the marketplace that enables creators to access Vimeo's audience."

Over the next year, IAC will "recruit and curate the right programming and creators" as well as "build out the consumer experience," he wrote, while alluding to a plan that could siphon viewers away from cable or satellite operators by offering a slimmer bundle of targeted channels. "The paid video market in the U.S. is about \$120 billion -- \$100 billion of which is subscription to a cable or satellite bundle that my children will barely use in their lifetime," Levin said in the letter. An IAC spokeswoman did not return calls seeking further comment.

One indication that Diller may be thinking about adding mainstream content aimed at TV viewers is his hiring of Garth Ancier, a former top programmer for NBC and The WB television network, as a consultant to Vimeo and IAC executives. Ancier also was Diller's top programming executive when Fox took on CBS, ABC and NBC to become the fourth network, and in 2013 he advised Intel on its failed attempt to take on cable operators with its own over-the-top video service. Ancier would not comment for this article.

Diller has tried to take on cable and satellite operators with a slim bundle in the past. In 2012, IAC backed Aereo, a subscription service that offered live and time-shifted TV programming delivered to Internet-connected devices through over-the-air antennas. The service, which charged \$1 a day for 28 channels, built to about 80,000 subscribers in New York and Boston before suspending its service in 2014 after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled it violated copyright laws. Aereo filed for Chapter 11 protection on Nov. 20, 2014, and subsequently sold its assets for \$1.55 million in three separate transactions. — **The Street**

Imagine IP newsgathering, distribution of commercials, syndicated or network programming and even something as on-the-edge as remote sports and entertainment production done from a centralized control room with cameras hundreds of miles away in a world where 750 Mbps internet upload and download speeds are available over copper telephone lines and coax.

A new technology known as G.Fast — perhaps an allusion to the broadband speed Google is offering with its fiber-to-the-home deployment — is promising exactly that, and even more, up to 1.5 Gbps in its next-generation implementation.

One leader in the technology, SCKiPiO, says G.Fast deployment will begin later this year in the United States, and that it would take a phone company about four years to deploy the technology nationwide, according to a recent CNN Money story. The obvious advantage for a phone company is that if G.Fast can deliver on its promise, fiber-optic-like internet speeds and beyond will be available via existing copper lines. No overbuilding. No endless trenching. No municipalities from which to secure approvals.

For broadcasters, these sorts of speeds could bring a new twist to IP newsgathering where a wireless IP link transports a report to an on-site, G.Fast-enabled telephone line access point. Or, it might mean more affordable internet distribution of content as high-speed connectivity becomes ubiquitous and competition surges. Or, it could even make the approach the Pac 12 Networks and others are taking to some remote production easier to implement at more locations.

Whatever the specifics, if G.Fast becomes a reality, it will likely have a major role in future content contribution and distribution. – **TV NewsCheck**



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