

TV BUSINESS CONFIDENTIAL[®]

THE DAILY REPORT FOR TELEVISION EXECUTIVES

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THE WEATHER CHANNEL GOES UP FOR BIDS. The Weather Channel is being put up for sale. Early estimates put a potential price tag north of \$5 billion on one of the last privately owned cable channels. The channel and its rapidly growing Web site, weather.com, have already attracted interest from some of the biggest names in media, including NBC, News Corp. and Comcast. One potential suitor approached by Landmark described the Weather Channel as “beachfront property.” Perhaps more appealing for some big media companies may be the Weather Channel’s Web business, which was started in 1995. Weather.com ranks as the nation’s 18th-largest media site by traffic, with more than 32 million unique users in November, according to Nielsen/NetRatings. The sale of the Weather Channel is part of a larger breakup of parent company, Landmark Communications, a privately held company controlled by the Batten family of Norfolk, Virginia. Landmark’s other assets include CBS-affiliated broadcast stations in Nashville, Tenn., and Las Vegas; three metro dailies and a slew of community newspapers; an Internet marketing unit; and managed data-network service. JPMorgan will advise on the sale of TWC and Lehman Bros. on the other media assets of Landmark, although it is still unclear whether the company will be sold in whole or in parts.

VIEWERS FLOCK TO EMBRACE RETURN OF LATE-NIGHT TV SHOWS. Late-night TV hosts returned to the air Wednesday after a two-month hiatus created by the writers strike, and viewers were eager to see how they handled themselves. **Jay Leno’s** “Tonight Show” scored a 5.3 rating and 12 audience share in the nation’s 55 largest markets, according to Nielsen Media Research, for his best ratings in two years -- 47% higher than he had before the strike began. **David Letterman’s** “Late Show” had a 4.3 rating and 10 share, 39% better than his pre-strike average. It was much the same story for **Conan O’Brien’s** “Late Night” on and **Craig Ferguson’s** “Late Late Show.” O’Brien had a 2.5 rating and 8 share, up 56% from his pre-strike average; Ferguson had a 1.9 rating and 6 share, for a 27% increase. “Jimmy Kimmel Live” posted a 1.4/4, while “Last Call With Carson Daily,” the first to return to originals without writers in December, averaged 1.4/6 Wednesday.

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NBC TO HOST DIGITAL OUT-OF-HOME UPFRONT. As the writers strike drags on, it's growing more likely that the big broadcast networks will pull back from their May upfront presentations for their primetime schedules. In a sign of the emerging power of TV outside the home, NBC Universal will hold what media buyers are likening to an upfront presentation for its digital out-of-home assets Jan. 16. The media company is hoping to get more advertisers to consider NBC for placing ads on TV screens in supermarkets, near gas-station pumps, in taxi cabs and arenas, among other places. The NBC presentation will address approximately 200 advertisers and media buyers. At this point, media buyers say the out-of-home screens require better measurement than currently in use. Mark French, senior vice president and general manager of NBC Everywhere, NBC Universal's digital out-of-home media unit, says the company has taken pains to build a network that reaches a "captive measurable audience," or one that only measures the people who get value from seeing the content -- such as a person who watches an NBC movie-review segment in the back of a New York cab without turning the presentation off.

RICHLAND TOWERS ACQUIRES NEW TOWER FACILITY IN TOP 10 MARKET. Richland Towers has acquired an 1800 foot broadcast tower facility from NBC O&O WTVJ/Miami. In announcing the new tower acquisition, Richland Chief Marketing Office **David Denton** said, "Richland Towers is proud to finally announce our entrance into the Miami market. This top 10 market has been of strategic interest to us for quite some time, and we look forward to serving the radio and television broadcast community for many years to come."

LANDRUSH BEGINS FOR CONVERTER COUPONS. During the first 40 hours of availability, more than 500,000 people have requested more than 1 million \$40 coupons toward the purchase of DTV-to-analog converters, according to National Telecommunications & Information Administration spokesman **Todd Sedmak**. With the NTIA given enough money by Congress to subsidize a total of 33.5 million coupons, this means that if the initial pace were maintained, all of the coupons could be spoken for almost before the first ones hit viewers' mailboxes at the end of February.

KINCAID RETURNS TO KCBS/KCAL FOLLOWING MEDICAL LEAVE. **Mike Kincaid** returned to the nation's largest duopoly of KCBS/Los Angeles and KCAL/Los Angeles as Senior Vice President of Sales, following a two-month medical leave of absence. **Don Corsini**, President and General Manager of the duopoly, announced Kincaid's return, saying, "This is a great New Year's gift. Mike is beloved by our entire staff as well as all of our clients and we are thrilled to have him back in the saddle again and rejoining his family here at CBS 2 and KCAL 9."

DISCOVERY NAMES COO. Discovery Communications created a chief operating officer position and named longtime executive **Mark Hollinger** to the role. Discovery President and CEO **David Zaslav** said, the announcement codifies what has been the reality for a long time.

COOKSON NAMED PRESIDENT OF SONY PICTURES TECHNOLOGIES. **Christopher Cookson** has been named president of Sony Pictures Technologies, a newly created position where he will help shape the studio's technology policy. In accepting his new position, Cookson noted, "So much is changing in the way we make movies and television, the way we distribute it, the way we store it and the way people are able to use it when they get home. I can't imagine there's a more exciting time to be involved in trying to reframe how the industry is going to develop its next phase."

USELESS FACTOID: After this weekend, unless they see a production of *Music Man*, most Americans probably won't hear too much about Iowa again for another four years.

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CLOSING STOCK QUOTES

Dow Industrials: 13,056.72 +12.76 Nasdaq: 2,602.68 < 6.95 >

Daily Composite Gain or <Loss> of Stocks tracked by TVBC: < 2.35 >

STOCK	CLOSE	CHANGE	%	STOCK	CLOSE	CHANGE	%
ACME	2.54	0.00	0.00	ION MEDIA	1.36	0.00	0.00
AMERICAN TWR	40.46	-0.78	-1.89	JOURNAL COMM	8.52	-0.28	-3.18
BELO	16.41	-0.29	-1.74	LIN TV	11.53	-0.36	-3.03
CBS	25.89	-0.53	-2.01	LINCOLN NAT'L	55.88	-0.37	-0.66
CLEAR CHANNEL	34.17	-0.32	-0.93	MEDIA GEN	17.15	-2.40	-12.28
COMCAST	17.34	-0.36	-2.03	MEREDITH	53.27	-0.51	-0.95
DIRECTV	22.42	-0.09	-0.40	McGRAW HILL	41.97	-0.75	-1.76
DISNEY	31.77	-0.07	-0.22	NEW YORK TIMES	17.67	+0.22	+1.26
EMMIS	3.19	-0.35	-9.89	NEWS CORP	20.65	-0.05	-0.24
ENTRAVISION	7.21	-0.41	-5.38	NEXSTAR	8.50	-0.40	-4.47
E.W. SCRIPPS	43.14	-0.24	-0.55	WASHINGTON POST	800.59	+9.29	+1.17
FISHER	36.45	-1.33	-3.52	SINCLAIR	8.09	-0.11	-1.34
GANNETT	36.50	-1.19	-3.16	TIME WARNER	16.33	+0.04	+0.25
GEN. ELEC	36.80	+0.04	+0.11	TIME WARNER CABLE	26.75	-0.72	-2.62
GRAY TELEVISION	7.36	-0.09	-1.21	VIACOM	42.58	+0.06	+0.14
HEARST-ARGYLE	20.79	-0.61	-2.85	YOUNG B'CASTING	0.98	-0.09	-8.41

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