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Viacom threatens Alaska TV providers - KPU, GCI and MTA to lose 26 networks including Comedy Central, Spike and Nickelodeon

ANCHORAGE, Alaska, March 27, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- Alaska independent pay TV providers have banded together in negotiations with one of the world's largest media conglomerates, Viacom. Represented by the National Cable Television Cooperative, KPU, GCI, and MTA are among more than 700 small, independent pay TV operators that are at risk of losing Viacom's 26 networks due to stalled negotiations.

If a deal is not made by April 1, Viacom is demanding that its 26 networks, including MTV, Nickelodeon, Comedy Central and CMT, be pulled from more than 5 million subscribers across the country. In Alaska, an estimated 130,000 subscribers would be affected.

"We've unified to fight for Alaskans and to work toward a fair, long-term agreement that keeps prices stable for our customers," said Paul Landes, GCI senior vice president. "Viacom wants a rate increase that is 40 times that of the rate of inflation. Alaska pay TV providers, along with 700 small to mid-sized operators nationally, are saying 'no' to Viacom's take all 26 channels or nothing demands."

The National Cable Television Cooperative is negotiating on behalf of small cable providers to provide the best value and leverage for these local companies and their subscribers.

Viacom presented the NCTC members, including the three Alaska providers, with a 58 percent cost increase to carry its channels and was unwilling to negotiate a fair deal, forcing carriers to carry all 26 networks at a higher fee or carry none at all.

The Alaska providers stated that while the programming is off the air, negotiations will continue. "It's unfortunate that Viacom feels it necessary to withhold programming from consumers to try and pressure small cable operators," added Landes.

SOURCE GCI