

Public TV goes digital

Subscribers of Verizon's fiber-optic FiOS TV service will now have an option of high-definition public television.

Verizon signed an agreement with The Association of Public Television Stations and Public Broadcast Service to carry local public television stations' digital programming.

"This is a wonderful example of the diverse digital programming content Verizon can provide through the power of fiber-optics," said Kathryn C. Brown, Verizon senior vice president for public policy development and corporate responsibility. "Verizon is excited to add this programming, as well as public television's new offerings available through its digital multicasts, to FiOS TV subscribers in all our markets. When Congress enacts television choice legislation this year, we hope to make quality content like this available more quickly to consumers."

Under the multi-year agreement, "every FiOS TV system will carry the full digital signal of up to three public television stations within the system's service area, as well as any additional noncommercial station that does not duplicate programming of another station in the market."

This includes PBS and local public television stations' HDTV programming and local stations' digital multicasts.

"This agreement is a major step forward for public service media in our country," added APTS President and Chief Executive Officer John Lawson. "It is the culmination of hard work by APTS, PBS and Verizon to ensure that public television's content is available to consumers who choose to receive their television programming from Verizon."

"At a time when some in Congress question the important contribution that public television stations make to the communities they serve, Verizon's commitment to public television and to delivering high-quality programming to its growing television-customer base is significant," he added. "The agreement also recognizes the unique role that public broadcasters play in national homeland defense efforts and provides for carriage of emergency public safety information."

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