

DirecTV CEO: Lead in 3-D TV is competitive edge

May 7 2010, By DEBORAH YAO , AP Business Writer

(AP) -- In the race for supremacy in 3-D television, DirecTV Inc. wants to be king.

DirecTV's exclusive NFL Sunday Ticket package of out-of-market football games has been a hit. Now the company has eyes on creating what it hopes to be its next competitive edge: extensive 3-D programming including movies, documentaries and events. In June, [DirecTV](#) will debut four 3-D channels: ESPN 3D and three of its own channels.

But DirecTV has to snag exclusive 3-D content to stand apart from cable TV rivals that also want to ramp up 3-D TV. DirecTV CEO Michael White also acknowledged that wide adoption of 3-D TV requires that more content be produced in 3-D. More consumers also must buy 3-D TV sets and be comfortable with 3-D glasses.

"How many consumers will buy a 3-D TV set? Time will tell," White said in an interview Friday.

Not all shows are suitable for 3-D. White said the best 3-D programming are in the areas of children's animation and sports.

"Is someone going to watch the evenings news in 3-D? Probably not," he said.

Still, 3-D seems to be the next technology trend in TV. Samsung and

Panasonic have started selling 3-D TV sets as 3-D movies such as "Alice in Wonderland" and "Avatar" packed theaters. Hollywood hopes to bring the 3-D experience to the living room. But whether 3-D sticks is another matter.

White said DirecTV is not planning to buy another company to get more 3-D or other content. Its rival, [Comcast Corp.](#), made the opposite bet with its proposal to buy a 51 percent stake in NBC Universal from General Electric Co.; federal regulators are reviewing that deal.

Separately, White dismissed talk that DirecTV might be interested in purchasing Sirius XM Radio Inc. They both use satellites, and DirecTV could add a radio service to its bundle of TV plans. But White indicated that DirecTV wants to stay focused on providing the best TV entertainment to retain its highest-spending customers.

"We want to be the best, not necessarily the cheapest," White said.

Shares of DirecTV, based in El Segundo, Calif., rose 95 cents, or 2.7 percent, to close Friday at \$35.89.

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