

Disney, Time Warner make progress on program fees

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(AP) -- Walt Disney Co. and Time Warner Cable Inc. said Sunday that they have made "significant progress" in resolving their issues over programming fees with less than a week left to renew a pact that feeds TV channels like ESPN into American households.

"We are now focusing all our attention on a successful conclusion of these efforts prior to the Sep. 2 deadline," both companies said on their websites Sunday.

Both companies have agreed to pull marketing campaigns that they had launched this past summer aimed at persuading public opinion to their side, The [Wall Street Journal](#) reported online Sunday. They now expect to reach a deal without "blacking out any TV networks," the paper said, citing unnamed people familiar with the talks.

The Disney-Time Warner Cable feud marks the latest scuffle between subscription television providers and media companies that own the TV networks they distribute into consumers' homes. As the recession forced businesses to cut budgets for TV advertising - traditionally the main source of revenue for broadcast stations - television networks started asking for a higher fee per subscriber. The cable TV companies have resisted, saying higher fees will get passed along to customers in the form of bigger cable bills.

In March, [Cablevision Systems](#) Corp. customers lost their ABC station in New York in the hours leading up to the Oscars due to a programming

fee dispute. The two sides reached a tentative deal that night, and the channel was restored to viewers 15 minutes into the awards show. Other standoffs have pitted [Time Warner Cable](#) against News Corp.'s Fox stations, and Mediacom Communications Corp. against Sinclair Broadcasting Group.

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