

News Corp plans US Spanish-language TV network

January 23 2012, By RYAN NAKASHIMA , AP Business Writer

(AP) -- Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. is launching a Spanish-language broadcast TV network that aims to bring the flavor of the Fox network to Hispanic audiences in the U.S.

The move is touted as a bold entry into a market dominated by top-ranked Univision and No. 2 Telemundo, in the same way that Fox rattled broadcasters ABC, CBS and NBC a quarter century ago.

The company said Monday that the new network, MundoFox, will be launched in September or October in partnership with Colombia-based RCN Television Group. RCN already produces popular shows for Spanish-language networks in the U.S., such as "El Capo" and "Yo soy Betty la Fea."

"Just think of Fox vs. ABC, CBS and NBC," said Hernan Lopez, president of Fox International Channels, which is a 50-50 partner in the network with RCN. "Much of the content that we will create will have the same effect on Spanish viewers."

Over the next couple of years, RCN's popular programming will be available on MundoFox as its agreements with other networks such as Univision's TeleFutura expire, Lopez said.

MundoFox aims to be carried on stations covering 75 percent of U.S. households. RCN chief executive Gabriel Reyes said the network will be launched in major U.S. cities with large Hispanic populations such as

Miami, Los Angeles, New York, Dallas and San Diego.

Lopez said MundoFox is seeking affiliate agreements with large TV stations that are independent and already broadcast in Spanish, although it would also seek English-language or other language stations willing to make the switch.

The new network will be based in Los Angeles and will feature telenovelas - nightly dramas that can run to 200 episodes - teleseries with less than half as many episodes, and two daily newscasts, which would draw on the resources of RCN's 24-hour news channel NTN24.

MundoFox has yet to hire a chief executive.

Lopez declined to say if MundoFox news would take its conservative leanings from the Fox network, saying it would be editorially independent and its tone would be up to the joint venture's CEO.

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