

Altice moving News 12 Connecticut studio production to New Jersey

By Alexander Soule Updated 2:59 pm, Friday, October 7, 2016



IMAGE 1 OF 2

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Cablevision offices in Norwalk, Conn., where it also has its Connecticut News 12 studio.

Only weeks after announcing plans to close a Shelton call center that employs hundreds of people, new Cablevision owner Altice is slashing jobs at its News 12 staff in Norwalk, moving production work there to Edison, N.J. with plans to keep a small number of reporters, photographers and support personnel based in Connecticut.

A source told [Hearst Media Connecticut](#) that the restructuring will be completed by March 2017 and that station founder and anchor [Tom Appleby](#) is among the people being let go. Altice is also said to be moving its Westchester and Hudson Valley, N.Y., bureau operations to production studios on Long Island.

In an internal memo obtained by Hearst Media Connecticut, News 12 Networks President Patrick Dolan described News 12 as “a place that feels almost like family” and said that the consolidation was a business decision. In his own email to staff, Appleby stated “while today’s developments were a challenge to all of us here at News 12 Connecticut, they also served to show our mettle” and acknowledged “the wide range of emotions in the days to come” while praising his colleagues for producing a news program an hour after being told of the restructuring at 1 p.m. Thursday.

Appleby has been the backbone of News 12 Connecticut since its 1982 launch, with the studio having its offices above Altice’s Optimum retail store on Cross Street in Norwalk. News 12 Connecticut has won several New York region Emmy Awards over the years, including two this past March for photography and arts news. In addition to its regular on-air and production staff, News 12 has offered internships and freelance work to area professionals over the years.

Local officials expressed disappointment. “I think this is a mistake by Altice to consolidate operations, because Cablevision’s strongest asset has been News 12 and that part of their family,” said state Sen. **Bob Duff** (D-Norwalk, Darien), who is majority leader of the **Connecticut Senate**. “Nature abhors a vacuum – we in Fairfield County have gotten very used to News 12 and have come to rely on it.”

In a statement forwarded by spokeswoman **Deborah Koller-Feeney**, News 12 stated the relocation “will enable us to more effectively and consistently deliver high-quality hyper local news for viewers in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.” Koller-Feeney declined to provide additional information on the record, including the number of staff impacted. News 12 plans to maintain production studio space in Norwalk to accommodate interviews as needs dictate locally.

A separate Altice spokeswoman emailed a statement saying News 12 is “an important and valuable part of our business.”

Altice acquired control of Cablevision in June from founder **Charles Dolan** and his son James, with the senior Dolan having endowed the **Charles F. Dolan School of Business** at **Fairfield University**. In August, the company announced plans to consolidate its call center operations long located in Shelton that employs about 600 people.

That restructuring is now extending to News 12, which has long been a major selling point for Cablevision and more recently Altice covering breaking news as well as offering magazine-format shows exploring topics of importance to residents of southwestern Connecticut.

"We're seeing a lot of this for a few years now, ever since it's (become) easier to broadcast," said **Ben Bogardus**, assistant professor of journalism at **Quinnipiac University** in Hamden. "The actual process of putting news together can be done anywhere."

— **Robert Koch** *contributed to this report.*

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