

Scripps launches Scripps Sports division to further its sports programming initiatives

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CINCINNATI – The E.W. Scripps Company (Nasdaq: SSP) is launching a new Scripps Sports division to further leverage its local market depth and national broadcast reach for partnerships with sports leagues, conferences and teams. Brian Lawlor, who has led the company’s Local Media division since 2009, will assume the role of president of the new division.

Already with one of the nation’s largest local television portfolios, Scripps’ acquisition of ION Media last year positions it with unparalleled national reach through over-the-air broadcast, pay TV and connected TV. At the same time, changes in the television landscape and in the sports marketplace open opportunities for new models to partner on live sports distribution.

“There is no better way to reach every generation of sports fan than through live broadcast television,” said Adam Symson, Scripps’ president and CEO. “Scripps is working with the leagues and teams that recognize the role our assets can play in increasing reach and visibility for audience engagement.

“In addition, Brian Lawlor is a highly regarded broadcast executive who has transformed our local media business – building the division from 10 TV stations in 2009 to 61 today. For the last year, he has already been leading the Scripps sports plan, bringing the same commitment to entrepreneurship and creativity for the company.”

In addition to the market depth of 61 local stations, ION boasts the fifth-largest national broadcast viewership and reaches 100% of U.S. television households through broadcast, cable/satellite and connected TV platforms. It can run localized, regionalized and national programming since Scripps controls all operations.

“Sports is one of the most important content genres in television, with its consistently large and dedicated audiences,” Lawlor said. “But the sports viewing marketplace has become extremely fragmented. Cable subscriptions are down, and regional sports networks are challenged, keeping fans from watching their home teams. Between our vast number of local stations and ION, a national network that can be customized in many markets, we believe Scripps is positioned to widely showcase leagues and players that are currently limited by aging distribution deals.”

Broadcasting sports rights is nothing new to Scripps. Beyond the sports provided by its affiliated networks, Scripps has a long history of acquiring sports rights for local markets including the National Football League, National Hockey League, Major League Soccer, National Women’s Soccer League and multiple college sports rights, including several Historically Black Colleges and Universities and the Big Sky Conference.

Lawlor serves on the board of Misfits Gaming, one of esports’ top gaming companies, with professional teams in the League of Legends, Overwatch and Call of Duty Leagues. He is a board member of the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) and the Broadcasters Foundation of America. Lawlor also serves on the advisory board of the Howard Center for Investigative Journalism at the Walter Cronkite School of Mass Communication at Arizona State University. He is a past chairman of the ABC Board of Governors and a former president and chairman of the NBC Affiliates Board. He also previously served as the television board chairman for the NAB.

Broadcasting & Cable magazine named him “Broadcaster of the Year” in 2012 and one of the “80 Most Influential People in Television.” In 2021, Radio + Television Business Report named him “Broadcast Television’s Best Leader.”

Lawlor will continue to report to Symson. He also will continue to lead Local Media while Scripps works to identify its next steps for division leadership.

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About Scripps

[The E.W. Scripps Company](#) (NASDAQ: SSP) is a diversified media company focused on creating a better-informed world. As one of the nation's largest local TV broadcasters, Scripps serves communities with quality, objective local journalism and operates a portfolio of 61 stations in 41 markets. The Scripps Networks reach nearly every American through the national news outlets Court TV and Newsy and popular entertainment brands ION, Bounce, Defy TV, Grit, ION Mystery, Laff and TrueReal. Scripps is the nation's largest holder of broadcast spectrum. Scripps runs an award-winning investigative reporting newsroom in Washington, D.C., and is the longtime steward of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Founded in 1878, Scripps has held for decades to the motto, "Give light and the people will find their own way."