

THE JEWISH STAR

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Jewish TV, widely available

The Jewish Channel, now on Cablevision's Channel 291, across LI and the rest of the tri-state area

BY MAYER FERTIG

A Jewish-content television channel, with what may be the broadest distribution any Jewish channel has ever had, is now broadcasting across the Cablevision cable system, including Long Island, ending a race to air that has seen at least a half-dozen other, mostly failed, attempts in the last decade.

Without fanfare The Jewish Channel — a video-on-demand service seen on Cablevision's channel 291 — began what the company calls “a rolling launch” on Sept. 17. The service is expected to become available to viewers on several other cable

systems in the coming months. Weeks before the first advertisements appeared in Jewish publications, word-of-mouth led to what company spokesman Michael Tobman said was a subscription rate that is well ahead of expectations. “When people who don't know you're involved in it are coming over and saying, ‘Have you heard about this?’ he said, “That tells well.”

Tobman declined to specify exactly how far ahead of projections the subscriptions are running. Jokingly alluding to a concern about ayin horah to describe his reluctance, he said, “We're treating that right now like not giving the number of

how many grandchildren you have, but things have been good.”

A subscription to TJC costs \$4.95 a month and can be purchased on-screen with the press of several buttons on the remote control.

The Jewish Channel is available to tens of thousands of Jewish homes. It's available across the entire Cablevision system, including Nassau and Suffolk Counties, in parts of Brooklyn, the Bronx, Westchester, New Jersey and Connecticut. The company hopes to be in Florida next. By comparison, competitor Shalom TV, seen on Comcast, is available in



The front page of The Jewish Channel website, which includes a blog and program schedules.



Tal Cohen, Senior Manager of The Jewish Channel, uses an Avid video editing system at the channel's Manhattan offices to prepare a program for broadcast.

Philadelphia, Washington D.C., Baltimore and areas of Delaware and Virginia.

Unlike other incarnations of Jewish television, which tend to focus on educational programs, available for broadcast at little or no cost, The Jewish Channel has purchased broadcast rights to hundreds of Jewish and Israeli-themed movies and short-form "low commitment" documentaries.

"There's nothing stale about this," Tobman said. "New films. Modern films. Some peo-

ple think of it as a Jewish HBO, or a Jewish Showtime. I prefer to think about it as a Jewish Sundance, or IFC [International Film Channel].

The generally family-friendly fare is divided into categories that include America, Feature Films, History and Remembrance, Israel, and World Jewry. In the coming months, the company intends to add English-language news broadcasts from around the Jewish world, as well as original news programming produced in-house. Fur-

ther down the road, the company also plans to offer a 24-hour channel with scheduled programs.

At The Jewish Channel's Manhattan headquarters, there are high hopes for the project. "There's something special about it," Tobman said. "People crave tone and authenticity and this has that. And it's not expensive."

For more information about The Jewish Channel go to www.tjctv.com.