

Castalia and Canada's APTN Partner On New TV Channel For Native Americans



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IMAGE COURTESY OF APTN

Jennie Punter

Atlanta-based Castalia Communications has partnered with Canada's APTN (Aboriginal Peoples Television Network) to develop a cable channel aimed at Native Americans and other viewers with an interest in the culture.

"APTN has done an excellent job of entertaining and informing Aboriginal audiences throughout Canada," said Castalia founder and prexy Luis Torres-Bohl, who confirmed his international media business development company is now in conversation with all major U.S. cable, satellite, and telcos. "We are excited by the opportunity to now bring this relevant, high-quality TV option to a clearly underserved segment of the U.S. population."

APTN — the first national indigenous television network in the world, which launched in 1999 — is a cable TV service with mandatory carriage in Canada, where it's seen in approximately 11 million households. The network, which does not receive Canadian government funding for operations, generates revenue through subscriber fees, advertising sales, and strategic partnerships.

"Castalia has a great reputation for successfully distributing international TV brands in the United States and beyond," said APTN CEO Jean La Rose. "They are the ideal partner to grow the reach of APTN's programming,

with the goal of connecting a whole new audience of Native Americans with content that speaks to their heritage."

In Canada, APTN serves the demographic spectrum with kids, animated, cultural, dramatic, news, and special-event programming by, for, and about the country's Aboriginal peoples. Content is 80% domestic, with the remainder indigenous fare from the U.S. and other countries.

Current APTN series include drama "Blackstone," which began lensing its fifth season in Alberta this spring, and "Mohawk Girls," a comedy-drama based on Tracey Deer's award-winning 2005 docu of the same title.

The new U.S. channel will gradually license U.S. content produced, written and directed by Native Americans, with a goal to nurture a production community similar to the thriving Canadian one that APTN has helped build.

A spokesperson for Castalia confirmed the company's goal is to launch the new channel in the first quarter of 2016, and said the launch could happen as early as Q4 of 2015.