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## RCN Wants Another Shot

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Remember RCN Corp.? The digital video-phone-data company wanted to wire Philadelphia so it could compete with Comcast Corp. 10 years ago, but was shocked when then-Mayor Ed Rendell and City Council leaders said they didn't want competition for their hometown favorite, Comcast. So no deal.

Last week, RCN reported higher sales and pointed to Philadelphia and Chicago as two of its fastest-growing markets. "It's almost a greenfield opportunity in Chicago and Philly today," programming chief Richard Ramlall told investors.

How did that happen? RCN was shut out of the city, but it didn't leave the region. It competes with market leader Comcast in Upper Darby, Ridley Park, and other off-Main Line towns in Delaware County, where 24,000 of the nearly 100,000 households now take RCN service. RCN hopes to double that with its all-digital Crush service, said RCN market manager John Filipowicz.

"We're absolutely gaining," with basic cable as well as premium users signing up, he told me.

What about coming downtown?



DAVID SWANSON / Staff Photographer

The cable business is booming for RCN Corp. in Delaware County. But the company has been excluded from operating in Philadelphia.

"We won't be able to offer cable unless we get a franchise. And things would have to open up" politically, Filipowicz told me Wednesday.

Yesterday, Verizon Communications Inc. said it was going to try to offer its FiOS service in Philadelphia, in competition with Comcast.

Councilman Darrell Clarke introduced a bill, at Mayor Nutter's request. Maybe RCN can slip in too? See Bob Fernandez's story in today's Inquirer.

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