



## AETN: INVESTING \$600 MILLION IN NEW FARE

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A&E Television Networks plans to invest more than \$600 million in new programming, media and technology, its executives are telling advertisers. AETN President/CEO Abbe Raven made that promise to media buyers this morning at the company's New York upfront show, bettering the \$500 million promised she made at last year's upfront.

To that end, the company's A&E and The History Channel each unveiled several TV and broadband series in development. A&E pitched five new scripted dramas in development, two new unscripted series, one unscripted pilot and a handful of new web projects ([B&C, April 30, 2007](#)). History [previewed six new specials and several web projects](#) of its own.

"Our expertise is storytelling and the investments we are making in original content and new technology will further establish our success as a leading global content company," Raven said.

A&E's new scripted dramas in development, almost all of which focus on some form of law enforcement, join the previously announced four-hour miniseries *The Andromeda Strain* and the six the network announced in January. Together, they comprise [on the first major slate](#) to come out of the network's LA programming office [headed by Tana Nugent Jamieson](#).

They are: *The Beast*, an FBI thriller about a veteran who simultaneously trains and tricks his rookie partner (Sony Pictures Television); *Homestead*, an LAPD drama about cops who live in the neighborhoods they police (Fox Television Studios); *Takedown*, a thriller about US Marshals chasing fugitives (Warner Horizon Television); *The Cleaner*, the story of one man who conquers his own addictions by helping others (CBS Paramount); and *Under*, a drama about a thug-turned-NYPD cop.

A&E is aiming to put at least one original drama into production to debut as a companion for acquired series, including *The Sopranos*, in 2008, says network Executive VP/GM Bob DeBitetto. That would complete a [well-articulated three-pronged plan](#) the network has been pushing for the past few years: lowering its median age through reality shows, buying up pricey off-network dramas like *The Sopranos* and *CSI: Miami* and then adding dramas of its own. The six shows A&E announced at TCA in January included *Dry River*, a Texas-set crime drama produced by Joel Silver, an untitled legal drama from Steven Bochco, two NYPD shows and one on the LAPD.

At the same time, the network isn't neglecting the reality genre that's brought it double-digit median age drops and double-digit ratings gains in the past few years. Among the new unscripted shows in development are *Crime 360*, CGI animations of real-life

criminal investigations; *The Rookies*, stories of a new class of cops in post-Katrina Louisiana; and *The Two Corey's*, the modern-day travails of 1980s heartthrobs Corey Haim and Corey Feldman. Also still in the works are the previously announced *Confessions of a Matchmaker* (previously *Patti Novak: America's Toughest Matchmaker*) and *Paranormal State*, which will receive a companion website, [paranormalstate.com](http://paranormalstate.com).

History's specials, whose topics range from global warming to a Chinese emperor, join a slate of series the network announced in March (). With faster-paced and more lively topics, the network is aiming to lower its median age of 50 by about five years, says network chief Nancy Dubuc.