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## Discovery to Start Channel Focusing on Green Movement

By [RICHARD SIKLOS](#)

Discovery Communications, the cable channel operator, plans to start a 24-hour channel focused on eco-friendly living, as part of a push into the rising environmental movement.

The company, based in Silver Spring, Md., will next year rebrand its Discovery Home Channel with a name that has not been selected but will reflect its position as the centerpiece of an initiative called PlanetGreen.

In addition to the cable channel, which will be carried initially in 50 million homes, other Discovery outlets including its flagship Discovery Channel will carry documentaries and other programming highlighting the new green lifestyle channel, said the chief executive, David M. Zaslav.

The first such project is “Ten Ways to Save the Planet,” and is scheduled to be shown in the second half of next year.

Additionally, the company said the initiative, which is to be announced today at the company’s presentation in Manhattan, will feature Internet components. Discovery will also look at extending the green channel concept into the 170 counties where it has channels.

PlanetGreen is one of the biggest efforts that a media company has made to tap into the growing movement that has spawned everything from green cars, food and architecture to green weddings and talk of a green Olympics.

Magazines like Vanity Fair, Domino, Outside and Fortune have recently published green issues, and of course, the Oscar-winning documentary on [global warming](#), “An Inconvenient Truth,” which featured [Al Gore](#), is at the vanguard.

In addition to satisfying the interests of viewers, Mr. Zaslav said that advertisers now have distinct green budgets in the same way that they have online budgets.

Mr. Zaslav said that the Discovery Channel and its offspring, which includes the Animal Planet and the Learning Channel, have always championed environmental causes like wildlife preservation. However, the new cable channel would specifically promote an environmentally friendly lifestyle.

He noted that the channel would be in more homes — 50 million — than the media baron [Rupert Murdoch](#)’s anticipated business news channel, which is expected to start later this year.

“To be able to rebrand an existing channel and launch with over 50 million homes in 2008 is a big statement to where the world is today,” Mr. Zaslav said in an interview. “Five years ago, people would have said ‘who are those lefties talking about green?’ ”

He added: “Today, green means responsible.”

Mr. Zaslav, who has shaken up the executive ranks of Discovery since becoming its president and chief executive in November, said a priority was to create a companywide green initiative that he viewed as a natural progression of the cable operator’s core business in documentaries and other nonfiction programming.

As part of PlanetGreen, the company's headquarters is expected to become carbon neutral.

Also, Discovery plans to hold a PlanetGreen Innovation Conference gathering business leaders, scientists and conservation experts.

For the last two weeks, the main Discovery Channel has gained acclaim and viewers for a documentary series, "Planet Earth," which it produced with the British Broadcasting Corporation and began showing two Sundays ago.

Asked if the rebranding of Discovery Home suggested that some of the company's other 14 domestic channels might also be rebranded, Mr. Zaslav said he was looking closely at the portfolio.

Where Discovery Home was concerned, he said he wanted to differentiate the channel by featuring topics like home improvement, cooking and gardening. The channel's current lineup includes shows with titles like "Cookin' in Brooklyn," "Toolbelt Diva" and "Garden Police."

"The channel is doing well economically," Mr. Zaslav said, "but it's not serving this higher purpose."

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