

The Big East conference is looking to add another school, and may sign a TV package that includes multiple networks, commissioner Mike Aresco said Monday.

Aresco spoke at a local chamber of commerce breakfast, and talked to reporters afterward.

He said the Big East wants to keep its name as it rebrands, and no longer has any plans to expand further west than Texas.

"We probably at some point will add a 12th team," Aresco said. "We are going to have 11 when Navy comes in '15. We'll have 10 this year. There's no urgency, but we think we'll probably think about adding a 12th team."

Aresco believes the conference realignment picture may be settling down, following the departure of the so-called Catholic seven basketball schools from the Big East and the decisions of Boise State and San Diego State to return to the Mountain West.

He said the remaining Big East schools all are large research schools, with similar goals, and have good working relationships.

"I do think as conferences consolidate, as they get bigger, I think they rethink what they are doing, and I think there will be a period of calm," he said. "It doesn't mean it's over."

Aresco said the conference is getting close on a TV package that he said will add stability to the picture, but could not say when it might be finalized.

"We think we could end up doing a deal with multiple networks, we just don't know yet," he said.

Aresco lamented the role of money in ending some traditional rivalries in college sports, and cautioned executives that a balance must be maintained between doing what is best financially and doing what is best for college athletics and the college athlete.

He said TV games will lose much of their luster if they are played in half-empty arenas or stadiums.

He also said he doesn't believe the departure of the Catholic schools from the Big East necessarily means an end to some of the old Big East rivalries. He said because the separation has been amicable, he believes many of those schools will continue playing each other.

"We want our schools to play really good nonconference games," he said, "whether its football or basketball, because that's how you rebuild your brand — prove it on the field."

Aresco dismissed talk that the Big East might reconsider its postseason ban for Connecticut's men's basketball team, allowing the Huskies play in this year's Big East tournament.

UConn was barred from the postseason by the NCAA because of previous low Academic Progress Rate scores, and the Big East followed suit. School officials have been lobbying against the ban, noting the team has improved those scores and no current players were involved in the previous problems.

"They've got a terrific APR now, they're doing much better," Aresco said. "This is just one of those things. It happened, and it's something they're going to have to get through."