

CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday, October 19, 2006 – 7 p.m.
Conference Room C - Troy City Hall

Call to Order

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at Troy City Hall.

Roll Order

Richard Hughes
Penny Marinos
Lisa Martinico
Brian Wattles
Nancy Chen, Student rep

Kent Voigt
Bryan Wehrung
Cindy Stewart, City Liaison
Alan Manzon

Approval of Minutes

Approval of minutes of the Regular meeting of May 18, 2006 – motion by Martinico, seconded by Manzon. Approved unanimously.

Introduction of New Student Rep

Nancy Chen – 10th grader at Troy High. Very impressive resume, well rounded student with strong recommendations from teachers. Members welcomed Nancy to the Committee.

Correspondence

- A. WideOpenWest – JD Powers & Associates Rank WOW! Highest among High-speed Internet Providers – September 20, 2006 – 56% of residential ISP customers subscribe to high-speed internet service (up 11% from 2005). Average amount subscribers spend per month for high-speed internet service has decreased since 2004 by \$1.99. J.D. Powers looks at 7 factors: performance reliability, cost of service, image, customer service/technical support, billing, email services and offerings/promotions.
- B. Comcast – Channel Line-up changes – September 14, 2006 – Effective 10-16-06, Comcast will reposition Bridges TV to their digital classic program tier. This is a Muslim-American community channel. AZN (Asian Americans) moving from Channel 108 to 191.
- C. WideOpenWest – JD Power & Associates Announce WOW! Earns Top Carrier Position in 2006 Cable/Satellite Satisfaction Survey – Aug. 16, 2006 –

Top carrier position on the 2006 cable/satellite satisfaction survey for second year in row. WOW! serves customers in metro areas of Detroit, Chicago, Columbus and Cleveland. Definitely a growing company.

- D. Comcast – Updated Privacy Policy – June 26, 2006 – Sent to customers annually. Subscribers entitled under Section 631 of the Cable Communications Privacy Act of 1984 (the cable act). If customer's information is breached, are they liable to tell customers? No, not in Michigan. We do not have a law unlike California.
- E. Comcast – Multiple Options for Paying Cable Bill and Channel Changes - May 26, 2006 – Options include mailing a check, charge on credit card, automatic withdrawal from back account, pay online or pay in person at one of the service centers. Customers may also make payments via phone. All options will continue to be available but effective July 15, 2006, a processing charge of \$1.99 will be added for customers who elect to call and have their payment processed by a live agent instead of using the automated payment system. Additionally, some channels will be repositioned (Cspan2, MGTV and Hallmark) and 3 digital channels will be added (Current TV, Gospel Music Network, and Daystar).

Articles

- A. Foster Cable Competition with Less State Regulation – Editorial: Detroit News – October 3, 2006. Michigan's outdated cable franchising system is finally getting some attention. Technological advancements and an outdated, uncompetitive system justify a change. Overall rates show significant increases. In Troy, cable customers pay an average of \$43.49/month, compared with \$20 in 1991. The legislature should revamp the state's archaic cable franchise system.
- B. Voters have time to pressure legislators on cable measures – Editorial: Oakland Press – September 28, 2006. Legislators are very close to a decision on cable legislation that would allow phone companies such as AT&T to come into the state and compete for Michigan's cable TV dollars. House Bill 6456 and SB1157 would place control of cable services in the hands of the state rather than local communities. The legislation would also give regulation authority to the Secretary of State.
- C. Other States Take the Lead in Cable Franchise Reform – Troy Eccentric Sept. 24, 2006. Opinion by Brian Meakin, Livonia City councilman. He states that passing legislation that would promote competition, lower prices, better services and provide a substantial capital investment is not only a shot in the arm for Michigan's economy, but is also a building block in securing Michigan's future.

- D. JD Power & Associates Reports: Although cable continues to lose market share to satellite providers, cable subscribers are switching to digital service at a rapid rate – August 16, 2006. Although Cable TV service continues to lose market share to satellite, penetration of digital cable has increased 11%. Currently, 29% of US households subscribe to satellite service, up 2% from 2005, while 58% of households subscribe only to cable, down from 60% in one 2005 study.
- E. AT & Ts Video Service – New York Times – June 27, 2006. In San Antonio, TX, customers are happy with AT&T's new television service, U-verse. While traditional cable and phone services run on separate lines, U-verse crams video, data, and in time, phone calls down one high speed broadband line. Introduced in San Antonio in June, 2006, the service allows users to view multiple channels at once, get information about programs instantly and eventually access some internet via their television. Everyone wants a major share of the market. As more and more players come in what will drive it? Price - - content! Check out U-Tube and My Space.

There are other interests moving into this arena. An alternative will be offered first to businesses and then to residential. No more information available, but it will be coming within a year. Technology is marching on.

Tech shows - IPTV, wireless, cell phones – people are looking at new technology. Companies need to determine what the next generation wants – how they will want to receive their information. Cell phones will offer much more in the near future.

Including video, entertainment via cell phones. Are cable companies, network TV a thing of the past? Nancy said her friends are using cell phones and I-Pods for more. People can watch top TV programs now on their computers via the internet. A whole new world of information is coming.

New Business

Budget: City budget is July 1 – June 30. This budget year we are installing remote two-camera system in lower level conference room. We are also looking to replace our playback system. The existing one is very old and we're starting to have problems.

House Bill 6456 - HB-6456 would reduce funding between 30% and 50%, Limit our channel capacity and force us to buy costly transmission equipment and expensive data lines. CAC members should write letters to legislators and spread the message to citizens that they can pursue communication with their legislature related to HB 6456. It appears that things will move very quickly after the November election.

Bryan will draft a letter from the CAC and seek input from the other members before sending on to council and legislators.

Old Business

Report on web publications from members.

Lisa Martinico – article from the Columbus Dispatch “Unsightly Big Boxes Herald New Technology.” The article addresses the fact that AT&T has installed these unsightly, refrigerator-size boxes on front lawns throughout Westerville, Ohio.

MML – local officials stop cable franchise vote in Michigan, Sept. 21, 2006. Considered a huge victory, local officials stopped a full House vote on HB6456. After hundreds of phone calls and letters by local leaders, the legislature decided to wait until after the November election to continue discussions on the bill.

MML – HB 6456 breaks all existing franchise contracts, Sept. 18, 2006.

Staff Report –

- C. WTRY Cable Guide – a lot of new programming: Museum lectures, Troy Daze coverage, Library & Museum concerts.
- D. CAC Member Listing changes as noted.
- E. ICCA Meeting Notes – final – July 19, 2006

Next Meeting: Thursday, January 18, 2007

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Marinos, seconded by Manzon. Meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Brian Wehrung, Chairman

Cindy Stewart, Staff Liaison