

SOUTH WASHINGTON COUNTY  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

CABLE TELEVISION ACCESS CHANNEL POLICIES



May 26, 2011

## CHANNELS DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

As part of the non-exclusive franchise granted to Comcast (Xfinity) in 2002, Comcast agreed to provide five cable television channels for Access television to the South Washington County Telecommunications Commission (the “Commission”), a joint powers commission consisting of the cities of Cottage Grove, Newport, St. Paul Park and Woodbury and Grey Cloud Township (singularly a “member city” and collectively the “member cities”). The Commission operates four of the five cable access television channels. They can be viewed on Channels 14, 16, 18 and 95 on the Comcast cable system. The programming responsibilities for the remaining access channel, Channel 15, have been designated to Independent School District 833. The Commission may also secure additional access channels pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 238.084.

Through the Comcast cable franchise, the Commission has the right to operate, administer, promote, and manage access programming on the designated channels. The Commission also has the right to rename, reprogram or otherwise change the use of these channels at any time, in its sole discretion, provided such use is Noncommercial and public, educational, governmental or religious in nature.

Historically, Channel 14 was originally programmed by the cable operator with public access and religious programming. The Commission took over responsibility for programming the channel. At that time, the Commission made it clear that Channel 14 would not be a public access channel. Instead, the Commission determined to continue to program cablecast religious programming and community programming highlighting the member cities.

Channel 16 has historically been a government access channel. The Commission programs Channel 16 to send each member city its own government meetings. This includes live broadcasts of all city council and commission meetings in the cities of Woodbury, Cottage Grove, St. Paul Park, and Newport. These meetings are also replayed along with Grey Cloud Island Town Board meetings throughout each week. This channel also airs local programming produced by SWCTC government producers.

Channel 18 airs programming 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Viewers can enjoy locally produced programming about the South Washington County area and surrounding communities produced by our professional production staff.

Channel 95, was reclaimed from Comcast around 2007 and has been programmed with government access programming primarily from NASA.

Programming responsibilities for Channel 15 have been designated by the Commission to Independent School District 833 for educational access purposes.

## **PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND POLICY**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this document is to state the Commission's objectives, programming policies and operational procedures regarding the operation of the Commission's access channels.

### **OBJECTIVES**

The primary objectives of the Commission's government access channels are the following:

- To provide public service information to citizens of each member city;
- To Widen the dissemination of information regarding the activities of member city legislative and advisory bodies;
- To increase the knowledge of citizens as to various functions performed by their city government;
- To provide additional information to citizens needing access to various member city departments;
- To show community events of a local interest, such as parades and sporting events; and
- To provide information of local interest from regional and national governmental agencies.

### **GENERAL POLICY**

To provide direct, non-editorial information to the citizens of each member city concerning the mandates, programs, services, and deliberations of their city government and other regional and national governmental information of local interest. Programming shall consist of video, character-generated information and webcast applications. The Commission's government access channels are not intended as a political forum. Use of the government access channels is limited to the Commission and its member cities. The government access channels are not intended for public use.

## CHANNEL DESIGNATIONS

The Commission designates its access channels as follows:

### GOVERNMENT ACCESS CHANNELS

---

#### Channel 14.

Channel 14 shall be a government access channel. It will be referred to as “Community Channel 14”. The primary purpose of Community Channel 14 is to cablecast professionally produced local and regional programming, including community events and local and regional information on governmental agencies, of local interest. Programming of Community Channel 14 shall be in the sole discretion of the Commission. The Commission shall not accept programming from the general public.

---

#### Channel 16.

Channel 16 shall be a government access channel. It shall be referred to as “Government Access Channel 16”. The primary purpose of Government Access Channel 16 is to cablecast live and recorded local public meetings of interest to the citizens of the member cities. Programming of Government Access Channel 16 shall be in the sole discretion of the Commission. The Commission shall not accept programming from the general public.

---

#### Channel 18.

Channel 18 shall be a government access channel. It shall be referred to as “City 18”. The primary purpose of City 18 is to cablecast programming produced by the Commission’s professional production staff to inform residents of community events throughout the member cities. Programming of City 18 shall be in the sole discretion of the Commission. The Commission shall not accept programming from the general public.

---

#### Channel 95.

Channel 95 shall be a government access channel. It shall be referred to as “Government Access Channel 95”. The primary purpose of Government Access Channel 95 will be to cablecast programs produced by governmental entities of regional or national interest. This programming includes, but is not limited to programming produced by NASA and other departments and agencies of the United States government. Programming of Government Access Channel 95 shall be in the sole discretion of the Commission. The Commission shall not accept programming from the general public.

## EDUCATIONAL ACCESS CHANNEL

### Channel 15.

Channel 15 shall be an educational access channel. Programming responsibilities for Channel 15 are designated to Independent School District 833.

## COMMISSION OPTION

The Commission will not operate a public access channel, but shall operate only government access channels, as indicated above, on channels 14, 16, 18 and 95. Independent School District 833 shall operate an educational access channel on channel 15. The Commission reserves the right to rename, reprogram or otherwise change the use of these channels at any time, in its sole discretion, provided such use is noncommercial and public, educational, governmental or religious in nature. The Administrator for the Commission is the point of contact for all of the channels and is responsible for carrying out these policies.

## PROGRAMMING

### MODES OF CABLECASTING

#### Live Cablecast

This may consist of cablecasts of member city Council meetings and other public meetings and events of general community interest.

#### Delayed Cablecast

Many public meetings and events will be recorded for cablecasting at a later date. Some meetings, such as City Council meetings, will be cablecast live and replayed by tape at another convenient time during the week.

#### Locally-Produced Programs

The Commission may produce or contract for the production of programs which illustrate the functions or operations of local government. These may include videographed documentary programs on the various member city services provided to and for citizens, public service announcements, crime prevention outreach programs, emergency response and management information, and community events of local interest.

#### Outside Source Programs

Programs about local government operations are available elsewhere in the country and may be borrowed for local use. This material will be used when appropriate. In addition,

programming from Federal, State and County government agencies may also be used when such programming comply the objectives and policies stated herein.

---

#### Character-Generated Announcements

During all hours of operation, when no other programming is scheduled, a character generator will provide a continuous display of current messages of interest to the public.

---

#### Public Service Announcements

Video promotional announcements (usually 2-3 minutes in length) of Commission or member city-sponsored events or informational messages about Commission or member city programs and services are produced as needed.

---

#### Emergency Messages / Announcements

Government use of the Government Channel during emergencies and disasters declared by any member city's Emergency Management Director (or equivalent) or his designee.

### **GENERAL PROGRAMMING POLICY**

1. To make public proceedings and events more accessible to residents of the member cities by providing live and recorded, gavel to gavel coverage of Council meetings.
2. To assist the public's understanding of the government system by providing information about policies, procedures, resources, City-sponsored events, activities and services.
3. To aid in member city growth and economic development efforts by providing information on projects, goals and services.
4. To provide more information on local topics and community events not fully covered by broadcast media.
5. To identify, explain, and promote action taken by any member city.
6. Requested access to any Government Access channel for the purpose of advocating a personal viewpoint shall be denied.
7. Commission staff shall produce or arrange for the production of programming highlighting events of local interest in the member cities, such as legislative updates, City Council updates, construction activity, parades, and sporting events.

### **PROGRAMMING PRIORITY FOR EMERGENCY MESSAGES**

Emergency messages have absolute priority over all other programming. During such emergencies or disasters, the government access channel shall be permitted to accept live, recorded, character-generated or audio information from other governmental or non-governmental entities when such announcements are deemed necessary by the member city's Emergency Management Director to provide important public information pertaining to the emergency or disaster or other conditions requiring protection of the public health, safety and welfare.

## **POLITICAL PROGRAMMING**

1. Political programming related to political candidate forums, where all candidates for a particular office have equal opportunity to participate may be produced and cablecast by the Commission.
2. Candidates for elected office may not use the Government Channel as a part of a campaign effort. This exclusion does not apply to persons who receive air time as part of official public meeting coverage, candidate forums, special election coverage and coverage of incumbents performing official duties which warrant cable casting.
3. The government access channels are not subject to the FCC's "equal time" time rules for political candidates under 47 C.F.R. 76.205.

## **PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Public Service Announcements may be cablecast on the government access channels. Public Service Announcements will identify the Commission or member city and department, where appropriate, as sponsor or producer. The government access channels will use government-provided Public Service Announcements when possible and appropriate within the following guidelines:

1. Such Public Service Announcements must comply with the stated objectives and policies for operation of the government access channels;
2. Public Service Announcements produced by other governmental entities that are appropriate for local use may be sought and used where appropriate to supplement local programming.
3. Priority shall be given to announcements produced or provided by a member city;
4. Any public service announcement must be approved by the Commission's Administrator.

## **CHARACTER GENERATION MESSAGES**

The Commission shall accept community event and non-profit announcements for posting through character generation messages on one or more of the government access channels. Interested persons desiring to place announcements through character generation messages on the government access channel may either mail or email the information to the Commission. Typical announcements focus on who, what, when, and where and include contact information. The announcements must conform to these policies and are subject to editing and playback at the sole discretion of the Commission.

---

## **COMMUNITY CHANNEL 14 MESSAGES**

Only the following type of information will be posted on Community Channel 14:

1. Commission programming information.
2. Must be a community event, and open to the public (Happy Birthdays, Anniversaries, Congratulations are not events).
3. Member city non-profit organizations.
4. Washington County Government sponsored events.

5. The State of Minnesota Government sponsored events.

---

#### GOVERNMENT ACCESS CHANNEL 16 MESSAGES

Only the following type of information will be posted on the Government Channel 16:

1. Commission programming information.
2. Member city Information.
3. An Event sponsored by a member city.
4. An event co-sponsored by a member city.

---

#### CITY 18 MESSAGES

Only the following type of information will be posted on City 18:

1. Commission programming information.
2. Strictly City Community Events (Festivals, Parades, etc.).

---

#### GOVERNMENT ACCESS CHANNEL 95 MESSAGES

Only the following type of information will be posted on Government Access Channel 95:

1. Commission programming information.
2. Government announcements of local interest.

#### **PROGRAM SPONSORSHIP/PARTNERSHIP**

The Commission will follow the PBS model of rules and guidelines for program sponsorship as set forth by the FCC (Appendix B).

1. The Commission will not accept sponsor support from businesses selling products such as cigarettes, tobacco products or alcohol, including distilled spirits, wine and beer.
2. Sponsors that sell personal hygiene products or similar products of a highly personal nature may not refer to those products in sponsor credits.
3. The Commission reserves the right to refuse sponsor support from entities that may be viewed as controversial or that promotes any product or position that may be contrary to the mission and goals of the Commission and/or a member city.
4. A sponsor may not exercise editorial control over the content of any portion of the Commission's programming or shows.
5. The public must not perceive that a sponsor has editorial control over the Commission's programming or shows.
6. The public must not conclude that any Commission program promotes a sponsor's products, services or other business interests.
7. All sponsor credits must identify a sponsor by name and/or logo. The Commission will not accept support without proper identification.
8. The Commission retains the absolute right to reject any sponsor or modify any sponsor or sponsor's material for any reason.

#### **PROHIBITED CABLECASTING**

The following activities are not permitted to be cablecast on the Government Channel:

1. Any programming not otherwise in compliance with these policies.

2. Commercial advertising or other information which promotes the sale of any product or service, including but not limited to any lottery, gift enterprise or similar promotion.
3. Subject matter which is defamatory in nature (e.g., slander).
4. Programming content which, in the opinion of the Commission is indecent, obscene or illegal.
5. Programs containing copyrighted materials without proper copyright authorization. Outside agencies submitting programming for telecast are responsible for obtaining all necessary copyright clearance and shall hold the Commission, the member cities and its successors, departments, officers, employees, servants, attorneys and agents, harmless in any case of copyright infringement.
6. Any programming that would violate federal, state, or local law.

## **EDITING POLICY**

### **Public Meetings**

Any live or delayed cablecast public meetings shall not be edited or subject to editorial comment. Meeting coverage shall be from gavel-to-gavel.

### **Departmental Programs**

Any programming prepared or provided by an individual member city department or agency is the responsibility of that department or agency, and will not be edited.

### **Character-Generated-Messages**

Announcements programmed into the character generator may be edited to provide clarity and to maximize the use of the character generator.

## **REQUESTS FOR CABLECAST & USE OF FACILITIES**

1. The Government Access studio and other facilities are available for the use by a member city's departments and agencies, their employees, contractors, volunteers or other designated representatives on a first come, first serve basis.
2. Requests for use of facilities and/or staff as well as government access channel time must be submitted in writing at least two weeks prior to the intended use. Exceptions to the two week requirement will be considered when possible.
3. Besides the coverage of a member city's full session of City Council meetings, requests for live or delayed cablecast coverage of additional meetings will be submitted by the member city through the Commission Administrator.
4. Coverage of other City Boards and Commissions will be provided when possible, following the written request of a member city.
5. When technically possible, all meeting coverage will be carried "live" on a government access channel.

6. When “live” coverage is not possible, a delayed cablecast will begin as soon as possible following completion of the meeting. Factors affecting the availability of a delayed cablecast may include but not be limited to:
  1. Adequate advance notice of the request for meeting coverage.
  2. The need for "post-production," namely adding on-screen graphics and the transfer of footage from an original tape to a "playback master," and
  3. The availability of programming slots of the appropriate length.

#### **CLOSED CAPTIONING**

The Commission’s governmental access channels are not required *per se* to provide closed captioning programming under either the American with Disabilities Act or the Communications Act of 1934, as amended. The Commission should however accommodate requests from disabled viewers to the maximum extent possible. The Commission should focus on providing the benefit of government access programs to disabled individuals who request accommodation, in ways that are not unduly burdensome to the City.

#### **MEMBER CITY DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

A member city Board or Department requesting program development must be willing to assist in writing and producing the program in its entirety. The requesting entity shall be responsible for content development and must identify a contact person to provide necessary information, including but not limited to research, data, persons, and props to be used for the production. The contact person must be available to be present on-site during production and post-production as needed.

#### **COPYRIGHT AND PUBLIC RELEASE**

The Commission shall retain copyrights to all video produced by or for the Commission. Video cannot be used for commercial purposes without the written consent of the Commission’s Administrator or a designated representative.

#### **OUTSIDE RESOURCES AND INTERAGENCY COOPERATION**

##### **CITY USE OF OUTSIDE RESOURCES AND PERSONNEL**

In order to maximize programming, outside resources may be used to develop materials for cable casting. Contracts may be awarded to local freelance production personnel to perform production services as needed, including, but not limited to voice talent and miscellaneous audio and video production services. In addition, outside vendors may be awarded contracts for equipment maintenance and engineering services. The Commission may seek intern students and/or volunteers who can perform production services.

## **OUTSIDE USE OF CITY RESOURCES AND PERSONNEL**

Because of cost, susceptibility to damage, and the heavy requirements of day-to-day programming, outside use of Commission-owned video and audio equipment shall be limited. The Commission Administrator shall be responsible for use of all equipment.

## **INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION**

The Commission recognizes that there are many well-regarded cable government access television production facilities in the Twin Cities area. The Commission's institutional network is also interconnected through a fiber Prisma-ring with other cable access television production facilities in the Twin Cities. In order to maximize programming and Commission resources, the Commission Administrator shall attempt to cooperate with other access television production facilities, where appropriate, to interconnect facilities, obtain regional and national government access programming of local interest, talent and equipment to further the production goals of the Commission.

## **OPERATIONS**

### **CHANNEL OPERATING HOURS**

It shall be the general goal to provide some sort of programming on the government access channels continuously. The general approach will be to utilize "live" and recorded programming when available and have to have a continuous character-generated announcement service at all other times, 24 hours a day.

### **COMMERCIAL USE FEES**

The Commission has established a schedule of "Commercial Use" Fees for Services (Appendix A). A credit line must be given in the finished project.

### **DATA PRACTICES REQUESTS**

All requests for viewing programming or duplicating programming shall follow the Minnesota Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13.

### **DUPLICATION SERVICES FOR THE PUBLIC**

Duplication of Commission and member city council meetings and all other programming produced by the Commission may be made available to the public for a fee. The public shall request duplication of such programming pursuant to the Commission's Duplication Policy and Fee Schedule. See Appendix C (Duplication Policy and Fees).

### **RECORD CLASSIFICATION**

The Commission's videotapes and/or digital copies are not considered an official record, and there shall be no liability for inadvertent erasure or omission.

## **RETENTION SCHEDULE**

Videotapes and/or digital copies of a member city's Council Meetings, Study Sessions, and other live or "live-on-tape" public meetings shall be retained for a one-year period, unless otherwise requested by a member city. It is the policy of the Commission to provide each member city a digital copy of each of its public meetings cablecast by the Commission within a reasonable time following the meeting.

## **USE OF VIDEO FOOTAGE**

On some occasions, video footage may be lent to other government entities for their use. In addition, stock video footage may be given to professional news organizations, educational entities and to non-profit organizations for public service work. This video footage may not be used for commercial purposes. A credit line must be given in the finished project, in graphic form stating "Video Courtesy of the South Washington County Telecommunications Commission". The Commission's Administrator shall approve requests for video footage.

## **USE OF COMMISSION EQUIPMENT**

Use of Commission-owned video and related production equipment shall be restricted to Commission activities and by Commission personnel. Loaning of equipment for personal or outside agency use shall not be authorized.

## Appendix A

### South Washington County Telecommunications Commission

#### STOCK FOOTAGE COMMERCIAL USE FEES

Stock footage is provided for use on a non-exclusive basis and is granted on a limited usage basis for a given production, and a given length of time as stated in the request. It may not be reused, resold, re-licensed, or re-cut in any other production. The following rates are for video stock footage copyrighted by the Commission

**Broadcast** \$100.00/shot

**Non-Broadcast**

Industrials, In-house Corporate, etc. \$ 50.00/shot

**Duplication and Handling**

Videotape/DVD stock, duplication, handling, and shipping costs are included. Commercial use fees are subject to change.

**Multiple Usage of a Single Scene**

Each additional use of a single scene in a given production is considered as a separate scene.

**Quantity Discounts**

Multiple scenes used in a given production will be discounted as follows: 10 shots, 10%, 20 shots, 20%, and 25 shots or more, 25%.

**Terms**

1. A letter of request detailing the commercial purpose and length of intended use must be sent to The Commission, at the Commission before request is processed. The request must be received no later than two weeks in advance of need.
2. Commercial use fees must be paid before sub-master is shipped. Checks should be made payable to "SWCTC".
3. No duplication of master element is allowed.
4. A digital copy of the completed project must be sent to the Commission.
5. All masters ordered would be charged at the full amount of the commercial use fee, whether used or not.

All requests for video are subject to availability of staff time.

## APPENDIX B

### South Washington County Telecommunications Commission

#### PROGRAM SPONSORSHIP – PARTNERSHIP STANDARDS AND PRACTICES

The South Washington County Telecommunication Commission (the “Commission”) has established the following standards and practices for developing and accepting sponsorships and partnerships for its government access channels as a whole, as well as individual programs or time periods.

Questions on this policy should be directed to:

The South Washington County Telecommunications Commission  
6939 Pine Arbor Drive South #106  
Cottage Grove, MN 55016  
(651) 458-9241  
[www.swctc.org](http://www.swctc.org)

#### **WHO MAY BE IDENTIFIED AS A SPONSOR**

- Corporations or Divisions or Subsidiaries of a Corporation
- Endowments and Foundations
- Small Businesses
- Individuals

#### **SPECIAL RESTRICTIONS**

- The Commission does not accept sponsor support from businesses selling products such as cigarettes, tobacco products or alcohol, including distilled spirits, wine and beer.
- Sponsors that sell personal hygiene products or similar products of a highly personal nature may not refer to those products in sponsor credits.
- The Commission reserves the right to refuse sponsor support from entities that may be viewed as controversial or that promote any product or position that may be contrary to the mission and goals of the Commission.

#### **GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR DETERMINING ACCEPTABILITY**

- The sponsor may not exercise editorial control over the content of any portion of the Commission’s programming or shows.
- The public must not perceive that the sponsor has editorial control over the Commission’s programming or shows.
- The public must not conclude that any the Commission program promotes sponsors’ products, services or other business interests.
- **Preferred Text for Sponsor Credits:** “This program is made possible (in part) by funding from [Sponsor name and brief message].” Also acceptable is “Sponsored by [Sponsor name]” or “brought to you by [Sponsor name].”

## **GUIDELINES**

1. Identification: All sponsor credits must identify the sponsor by name and/or logo.

The Commission will not accept support without proper identification.

2. Sponsor credits may not include:

- Any call to action or solicitation to purchase a product (Examples prohibited: any use of "you" or "your"; slogans such as "Get Met. It Pays")
- Superlatives (Example: ". . . the most intelligent car ever built.")
- Direct comparisons (Example: ". . . when a Cadillac just isn't good enough.")
- Price or value information (Example: ". . . for only \$100 down and \$100 per month.")
- Inducements to buy (Example: "six months free service when you buy.")

3. Toll-free numbers or web site addresses are acceptable in sponsor credits if their purpose is for the viewer to obtain more information. If their purpose is to solicit sales, however, the information is prohibited.

4. Children's Programming: Sponsor credits may not exploit or take unfair advantage of the child audience.

5. Sponsor credits may not create the perception that there is a connection between the program content and the sponsor's products or services.

6. Frequency of Credits: Sponsors may receive credit only at the beginning and end of a program.

7. Program content may not be interrupted to provide a sponsor credit.

8. Duration of Credits: No one credit may exceed 15 seconds; a sequence of credits cannot exceed 60 seconds.

9. In-kind Goods and Services credits are permissible but they must appear in context with normal production credits and may not incorporate brands or logos.

**The Commission retains the absolute right to reject any sponsor or modify any sponsor or sponsor's material for any reason.**

## Appendix C

### South Washington County Telecommunications Commission

#### Duplication Policy and Fees

Duplication services shall be provided to the general public as staffing and time allows. The Commission shall retain copyrights to all video. Video cannot be used for commercial purposes without the written consent of the Commission Administrator.

1. Duplication will be delivered on a DVD format. Other formats may be available upon request.
2. Duplication requests can be submitted online at [www.swctc.org](http://www.swctc.org), or by phone 651-458-9241.
3. Duplication Fees: \$10.00 per DVD.
4. DVD requests made by the general public **must be paid for in advance**.
5. Payment can be made by check to "SWCTC". Payment shall be submitted to the Commission's Administrator. Exact cash payment is also acceptable. The Commission does not accept credit or debit cards.
6. A tape exchange is available for television news media in lieu of dub charges. Television media must supply a blank tape of equal quality for each dub request.
7. Requests for duplication of programs not produced by the Commission will not be accommodated.
8. The Commission DVD's are not considered an official record, and there shall be no liability for inadvertent erasure or omission.
9. For all delivery requests, there will be a shipping and handling fee of \$2.00 per DVD ordered. Shipping will be through the United States Postal Service.
10. Pick up requests will be held for a period of seven days following notification by the Commission that the DVD is ready for pick up.
11. Every effort will be made to complete DVD duplication requests within ten working days based on volume of request and availability of staff.

**South Washington County Telecommunications Commission**

**Duplication Request Form**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Requestor \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Charged \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Program Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Description of  
Program and/or  
Story \_\_\_\_\_

Date Seen on  
The Commission \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Copies \_\_\_\_\_

Pick up or Deliver \_\_\_\_\_

- **PLEASE ALLOW TEN (10) BUSINESS DAYS FOR DUB REQUESTS.**
- **DVD WILL NOT BE SHIPPED UNTIL PAYMENT IS RECEIVED.**
- **PLEASE INCLUDE A COPY OF YOUR REQUEST WITH THE CHECK.**
- **MAIL TO:       The South Washington County Telecommunications Commission, 6939 Pine Arbor Drive South  
                  #106, Cottage Grove, MN 55016**

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

Date Completed \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Member \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Collected \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Delivered to Date \_\_\_\_\_

Picked up by Date \_\_\_\_\_

Mailed to Date \_\_\_\_\_