

## **LONGEVITY AND HISTORY**

### West Bend Community Cable T.V

The work toward a Public Access Channel in West Bend started in 1978, with a strong Cable Committee consisting of seven community representatives who were appointed by the Mayor. In 1979, West Bend Community Cable was started, with a Cable TV Coordinator (Liza Schlick) hired on a part time basis. City Common Council and School Board meetings made up most of the programming with one to two studio productions per month.

At that time, the studio was located in the Badger Middle School basement because of running the community's School Channel at no charge. The facility was not a very pleasant place. All of the equipment was "used" and the signal going over the air was weak. The studio did not have a time base corrector.

In 1980 the second coordinator (Mark Landvatter) was hired, now making the position full-time. The hours were Sunday through Thursday from 2:00-10:00 p.m. Most of the programming was not local. Only 20% of the programs were local programs.

In 1986, the third coordinator (Lisa Branston) was hired. The hours then changed to Monday through Friday from 1:00-9:00 p.m. Equipment was improved on the playback system and the editing system, but *we* were still only at 20% local programming, with no weekend playback.

In September of 1988, the fourth coordinator (Diane DuKatz) was hired. By December of that same year, 108 new local programs were accomplished, including nine studio productions and sixteen live broadcasts:

In 1989 an automatic system was purchased and weekend programs began. New local programs taped in 1989 totaled 365, including twenty-one studio and forty-nine live broadcasts. A new service was added in 1989 ..., making copies of programs for the public ... amounting to thirty for that year. The local Recreation Department won a "Silver Star Award" from the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Association for a presentation on their gymnastics program. The presentation was on a videotape, and was produced by West Bend Community Cable TV.

In 1990, we had 373 new programs added to the schedule, and also accomplished 54 studio productions and 49 live broadcasts. Copies for the general public totaled 38. In 1990, a new Super VHS 45Q" Camera was purchased.

In 1991, West Bend Community Cable TV moved to the first floor of the newly purchased/remodeled City Hall. Along with the move, came new hours of 1:00-9:00 p.m. Mondays and 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Tuesday through Friday. These new hours were instituted to meet the needs of studio producers. This new facility is larger, with a separate editing area. New programs for the year totaled 447, along with 93 studio productions and 54 live broadcasts. Copies of tapes for the general public skyrocketed to 137. Equipment purchases for the year included a Super VHS playback deck, in addition to the two current VHS decks, adding 6 hours of programming on the weekend,

Longevity and History - West Bend Community Cable T.V.

In 1992, studio and Common Council live broadcasts were improved with a direct line to the cable company. New programs for the year were 616, with 96 being non-local. Studio productions totaled 103 and live broadcasts were 59. Copies for the general public jumped to 151.

In 1993, WBCC-TV started covering all Common Council meetings, which brought the need to hire a part-time person to cover the local School Board meetings held on the same evening. New programs for 1993 came to 651, including 72 non-local. Studio productions totaled 133, and live broadcasts reached 71. Copies for the general public increased slightly to 154.

In 1994, WBCC-TV began live broadcasts of the City's Plan Commission meetings on the first Tuesday of the month. The West Bend Joint School District won an award for a Youth Apprenticeship program that was done with the assistance of WBCC-TV. The videotape is used state-wide in presentations. Copies of the tape have also been sent to six different school districts in different states. A new series entitled "The Job Center" was started. The programs have been very successful, and the State office in Madison now wants all of the Job Centers in Wisconsin to do the same type of programs. A new Franchise Agreement was signed for another twelve years. With that agreement came two new studio cameras. Also purchased that year was a Video Toaster which is being used to "enhance" productions. In October, a permanent part-time person was hired for twenty-five hours per week. Time away from the studio resulted in fewer programs for the year, down to 645 (-6), including 68 non-local programs. There were 94 studio productions, 86 live broadcasts, and 146 copies made for the general public.

In 1995 a three-camera system was set up in the Common Council Chambers. This now gives live broadcasts a more professional look for all City meetings, voter's forums, and Senator and State Representative Town Hall meetings. A climate control unit was installed in the editing room for the preservation of the equipment and historical tapes.. Equipment to be purchased this year includes a Super VHS playback deck, making the system complete Super VHS whereby producing a "quality" picture; and a wireless microphone system for the studio.

Statistics for the years 1988 through 2006 are as follows:

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Programs	108	365	373	447	616	651	645	702	716
Non-local					96	72	68		
Studio	9	21	54	93	103	133	94	121	135
Live Meetings	16	49	49	54	59	71	86	93	82
Copies			38	137	151	154	146	204	431

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Programs	905	916	866	871	1070				336
Non-local									*
Studio	139	120	101	103	94				*
Live Meetings	91	95	118	90	80				*
Copies	322	329	247	304	212				*

\* paper records not categorized.

	2006								
Total New Programs	623								
Outside Productions	302								
Studio	35								
Live Meetings	58								
Copies									

*Mike Ryan Note: I'm still combing through paper files for the information.*

Changes have continued at WBCCTV. In September 2005 Duane DuKatz retired and a fifth coordinator (Mike Ryan) was hired. New Equipment purchased in early 2005 upgraded the City Council Chambers with new cameras and video projectors for PowerPoint presentations. Playback was upgraded with two Leightronix TCD-RP Digital Video Recorders each capable of storing up to 70 hours worth of program material. Playback hours now extend 8-10 hours per day, depending upon available programming. Weekend playback is now more varied, instead of the stripping of the same program at the same time each day. Two Canon GL-2 mini DV camcorders were also bought. We now have interns from UWWC again and are working with Iva Thelen at UWWC and her Mass Media class. As well as with Jeff Nenning, Warren Arndt and Tim Harder at the School District.

As you may know, there are legislative efforts regarding Cable TV. These bills (AB 207/SB107) are supposed to increase competition in the cable TV industry, by allowing companies, such as AT&T to bypass local Common Councils and get a franchise direct from the State. There's been a lot of discussion of these bills. When they started out, they were harsh, almost punitive towards local governments and PEG (Public, Education and Government Access) Channels. They would have drastically cut franchise fees and eliminated any funding for PEG.

This is all in the name of “competition” even though Federal Law prohibits cities from granting exclusive franchises. That means that AT&T could have had a franchise here in West Bend, if they would agree to terms consistent with the Franchise Agreement we now have with Charter. The big stumbling blocks to such an agreement are AT&T’s refusal to agree to serve all areas of West Bend and their refusal to carry PEG in the same manner Charter does.

If you look at the current forms of AB 207 and SB 107 you will see that AT&T will only be required to offer its U-verse cable service to 35% of the homes in Wisconsin its phone lines pass, going maybe to 50% if they hit sales targets. That means AT&T will likely offer U-verse in only parts of your district and not others, as they see fit. As far as PEG goes, they want us to put our two channels on the internet at our cost (about \$20,000 initially plus whatever it costs for upgraded capacity), then they will send out a ¾ sized You-Tube picture to subscribers. Not exactly watchable on a regular or Hi Def TV. Cities will have little power over placement of the equipment boxes needed for the U-verse service (which are roughly the size of your refrigerator). Cities will have only ten days to respond to a state franchise or lose fees and channel space. Cities will have 15 days to issue permits for work in the right of ways or the permits will be automatically granted. There will not be time to deal with issues such as sight triangles or public safety.

We now regularly deal with customer service issues directly with Charter, resolving consumer complaints. Under the new laws that responsibility would go to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Consumers in West Bend will have a more difficult trail through the State Bureaucracy.

While we would all like to see cable rates come down, there is no empirical evidence that that will ever happen. It hasn’t happened yet in other states where this type of bill was passed. Mostly what is happening in Texas, California, North and South Carolina, etc. is that PEG operations are closing for lack of funding.

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