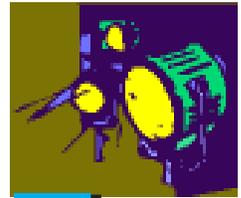


**Alliance for
Community Media**

Central States Region

KEYLIGHT



Summer 2005

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A Michiganders view of Monterey

One foggy night on the Californian peninsula many people gathered to discuss the fate of the world. When it was all over the fog had lifted, the world still stood, and another Alliance for Community Media National Conference had ended. What happened in between is the stuff of legends.

Other than flying into northern California in the fog, the weather was great. The room at the hotel was unbelievable (1,800 sq/ft and two stories) thank you Tom Bishop! (it's good to be King). The seminars were jammed packed with little time between them. The trade show was the largest I have ever seen at any ACM conference. The Hometown awards were upbeat and finished on time. The other events, like the Keynote, opening and closing ceremonies, and organized group fun were done with taste and just a pinch of humor. All-in-all the National Conference in Monterey, California was a great place to visit and have a wonderful times with friends and colleagues.

~ Mark Monk, photo by Tim



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See page 8 for more information

EMBARK ON AN EXPLORATION OF COMMUNITY MEDIA
IN THE NEW WORLD OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS
FALL CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW
CENTRAL STATES REGION - ALLIANCE FOR COMMUNITY MEDIA

On the Threshold of Discovery

NOVEMBER 3 - 5, 2005 -- LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY
MARRIOTT DOWNTOWN CONVENTION CENTER

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Community Media Professionals
Media Educators
Access Volunteers
Media Center Board Members
Independent Media Producers

City and County Telecommunication
Administrators
City and County Managers
City and County Attorneys

CHAIR CHAT

with

Hap Haasch

Greetings from new digs! I am thrilled to be composing this edition of Char Chat as the newly appointed Executive Director of the Community Access Center serving the greater Kalamazoo (MI) area. The words of our colleague, Dirk Koning, ring truer than ever... "change is good."

As I learn the nuances of a new community and the rhythm of a new community media center, some things remain the same. In this case, the omni-present threat of telecommunications legislation that is not favorable to community-based media. Specifically, I'm referring to HR 3146 and the S. 1349 – companion bills in the U.S. Congress that, once again, purport to advance "competition" in video delivery services at the expense of local control (franchising by local government) and compensation for use of public property (franchise fees that form the basic financial support for PEG access).

- Although it must feel like a "road well traveled" at this point, we can't afford to be complacent. So, the Alliance for Community Media has hatched a plan and is asking you to pitch in. Here's the scoop:
- It appears that the House and Senate would like to have these bills out of committee and on their respective "floors" in time for Congress to consider them when they return from an August recess.
- The ACM has created an excellent public policy statement on this issue. Please check out the ACM website at www.alliancecm.org for this statement and other pertinent information.

- You (and/or your volunteer producers, programmers, crewmembers etc.) can help by identifying your U.S. Representative(s) and U.S. Senators and sending them a personal letter that asks them to oppose legislation that threatens the future of PEG access television. Simple statements are most effective. You might consider something like: "PEG access television is important to me/my organization because..." and "Please do not support legislation that undermines localism in regulatory oversight and funding for PEG access television." **Be concise and clear.**
- **Time is certainly critical** – SBC and Verizon are pushing this legislative package as fast as they can, hoping that it can speed through Congress before municipalities and grassroots groups can react. Although e-mail communication may seem to be the most cost and time efficient approach, the sheer volume of electronic communication going to your Congressional representatives makes it less effective than you might think. A mailed, faxed, or hand-delivered letter might work best.

I understand you've heard this plea to engage in the legislative process before.

Unfortunately, it is a critical part of what we do in community media. I want to point out the effectiveness of the grassroots effort to overturn the FCC's media ownership ruling as a case in point – **we can make a difference in this process!**

Thank you in advance for helping the Alliance for Community Media "fight the good fight."
Best wishes!

Hap Haasch
Chair – Central States Region
Alliance for Community Media

Action Alert! Action Alert! Action Alert! Action Alert! Action Alert! Act

GET UP, STAND UP GET COUNTED, MOVE!

At the 2005 ACM National Conference and Trade Show, Alliance for Community Media Executive Director Tony Riddle announced the ACM's new initiative "Get Up, Stand Up, Get Counted, Move!" In order to support critical public policy and political work, the ACM needs to compile a list of the hundreds of thousands of organizations that Community Media and PEG Centers have served over the years.

The access community has served hundreds of thousands of organizations over the years. The ACM needs to list these organizations to support your political work. **What are the names of the organizations that have used your facilities in any way over any years you can remember?**

This includes organizations which have:

- produced programs
- submitted programs
- guested on programs
- submitted announcements for your bulletin board
- used the facility for meetings
- used the facility for any purpose

It does not matter if the organization is strictly local or not. We want the names. Please include each individual elected official as an organization. We encourage you to include groups large and small — institutions, churches, businesses, clubs, schools ... *whatever!*

The fields we would like most are as follows:

- organization name
- contact person
- email address
- phone number
- address
- address 1
- city
- state
- zip code
- organization type (where possible, if not obvious)

If you can send this to us as an excel file, great! If you need to send as Facil, Access, FileMaker Pro or similar delimited export, great! If you have only hard copy, such as an annual report or newsletter, send it. If you have to jot the names by hand, do so. The whole ACM will have access to the results. The number you have to submit will vary greatly according to size of community. We all understand and respect the work that we do in communities large and small.

We need 250,00 organizations by August 31, 2005

So send them in as soon as possible! Don't worry if it's not perfect yet

Send to getup@alliancecm.org

**For more information, call Anthony Riddle at
(202)393-2650**

Greetings from Grassroots

Grassroots Update

Sure, you're basking in the sunshine, taking in the extra daylight hours, and generally trying not to think about the fact that summer will end. But it's not all snowy and gray. Nope. There is the Fall Central States Conference, and while it won't take place during the winter, it's close enough for me. From what we've been hearing from Matt Schuster, our conference host, it will be an event not to be missed.

Now, you realize that you just so happen to be a bit short on cash to attend or perhaps your access center had to cut costs and won't be able to send you to Louisville this year. What to do? If you are a volunteer, producer, access staff or board member, you can apply to the Grassroots Scholarship, which provides no cost conference registration and accommodations. What's not to like? Information about the Grassroots Scholarship program will be available on the CS Region website sometime in September. Until then, grab some sun sunscreen, check out a camera from your favorite access center and go make a TV show.

Grassroots Report

While mere mortals, like me, spent the early portion of the month doing exciting things such as painting my bathroom, the Central States Region sent five individuals to the ACM Conference in Monterey, CA on Grassroots Scholarships. The lucky recipients were Mark Christopher, Patricia Jessee, Kevin King, Erik Mollberg and Mark Monk. They received full conference registration as well as a stipend of \$375 to be used towards expenses.

What did they do to deserve all this, you ask? They filled out an application! Yes, it's that simple and yes, you could be going to the conference in Boston next year. But only if you apply...
~Felicia Jamieson

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Public Policy Update

Current legislation affecting PEG access

by Matt Schuster
Central States Public Policy Chair

Things are heating up and it's time for everyone to become involved in talking to your state and federal legislators as well as your local elected officials to oppose several key pieces of federal legislation, H.R. 3146, S. 1349, and the Ensign Bill S. 1504.

As the bills currently exist, they do not meet public interest needs. Please visit the Alliance for Community Media's website at www.alliancecm.org and NATOA's website at www.natoa.org for talking points and sample letters to write to your representatives.

We need people at all levels to get involved, so have your center take a position on the bills, and encourage your city council's, and state representatives to oppose the bills. And don't forget the power of numbers and mobilize your center's membership to contact their representatives to oppose the legislation.

Below is some information and talking points regarding the bills. More information is available on-line. Please contact your representatives before August 31.

Alliance for Community Media Position:

H.R.3146 and S.1349 are contrary to ACM's goals and will not even accomplish their own stated purposes. In addition, H.R.3146 and S.1349 are unnecessary. The bills allow telephone companies to enter the video market today as common carriers, as open video service providers, or under the same franchising framework as cable companies.

H.R. 3146 and S.1349:

- Nationalize franchising, which prevents state and local governments from meeting local

community needs.

- Eliminate financial and technical support that is critical to the creation of local programs.
- Put existing PEG facilities at risk.
- Put at risk facilities, such as i-nets, that support public safety, schools, emergency services and municipal communications.
- Launch a race to the lowest common denominator of public service.
- Abandon long-standing commitments to localism.
- Undermine universal service commitments to rural and low income communities.
- Invite the redlining of entire communities.
- Transfer effective local enforcement to the federal bureaucracy or the courts.

H.R. 3146 and S.1349 do not serve the public interest. The ACM and thousands of its members nationwide urge rejection of H.R. 3146 and S.1349.

Ensign Bill S. 1504 - the Broadband Investment and Consumer Choice Act

Introduced by Senators Ensign and McCain

The Broadband Investment and Consumer Choice Act replaces local cable franchises with a standard national franchise for cable and telephone companies providing cable video services. Telephone and cable industry incumbents are informing Congress members that local governments and community media centers are not harmed by this legislation. The bill does NOT protect local government revenue, provides inadequate capacity for PEG, eliminates PEG capital support and

see next page

Public Policy, *continued*

I-Nets, and turns over consumer protection to the FCC for development and the states for enforcement. The act does NOT serve the public interest.

S. 1504:

- Eliminates all current cable franchising authority.
- Preempts all current cable franchise agreements
- Eliminates the 5% cable franchise fee and replaces it with a fee that must be both “reasonable” and limited to rights-of-way management costs and not exceed 5%. It also allows the industry to petition the FCC to reduce the fee further. This results in a huge subsidy to the industries, paid from local government’s budgets.
- Reduces the revenues that can be included in gross revenues, thereby further reducing payments to local

governments for use of public right-of-way.

- Restricts PEG to a maximum of 4 channels, and specifies that local government has the responsibility, where the number of channels must be reduced, for determining which PEG users will no longer be provided access.
- Eliminates all PEG support - capital and operating grants for PEG are eliminated. This directly threatens the continued viability of much PEG programming.
- Eliminates any build-out requirements for any video service provider.
- Eliminates local government’s ability to acquire I-Nets.

S. 1504 does not serve the public interest. The ACM and thousands of its members nationwide urge rejection of S. 1504.

Financial Report

The Central States financial status is good. Our current balance is \$37,043.83 as of 8/5/05. This is diversified over three accounts. Year to date expenses have been:

\$ 132.58	Administrative and Committee expenses
\$4,045.28	Membership Services
\$1,000.00	Telecommunications Education Fund
\$2,000.00	Donation to the National Organization
\$7,177.86	Total

We are looking to the Fall Conference and the Philo awards to add revenue to the \$1,296.92 that the Spring Conference brought in.

Norm Compton
Central States Treasurer

Michigan Chapter Report

by Mark Monk, Chair

Our last meeting took place on March 31, 2005 during the Central States Regional Spring Conference. The Membership Drive started off with applications in the most recent newsletter. Currently we are looking for a new E.O. committee chair.

Current MI-ACM chapter has \$ 1,241.51 in the bank as of 6/30/05. A draft budget was talked about and should be put into place at our next meeting. The Fall MI-ACM Chapter meeting will be in Battle Creek on Friday, September 9, 2005.

Where are they now?

Former ACM Central States Board members may be gone (from Board meetings) but are not forgotten. They turn up at conferences and in our In boxes, now and then. Here are the latest sightings:



Melissa Mills with her new son, Jake



Erik Mollberg and Belinda Rawlins reunite at the Monterey conference

Our old friend, and now ACM National Director Tom Bishop, speaking in Monterey



Two lower photos by Tim Goodwin

The Mandala of Dirk

Mandala : a circle, polygon, community,
connection

Left: The many conference name
badges collected by the late
great Dirk Koning, of the
Grand Rapids Community Media
Center, displayed at the
Monterey conference



photo by Tim Goodwin

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Louisville, Kentucky

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