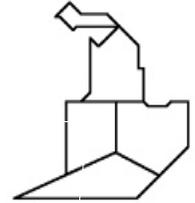


Alliance for Community Media
Central States Region



KEYLIGHT

March 2008

Volume XXIV No.2

MAKE PLANS FOR SPRING CONFERENCE IN CINCINNATI MAY 1ST-3RD!



Applications are now available for the Grassroots Scholarship to the Spring Conference in Cincinnati. Apply now - deadline is March 21st. Be sure to make your reservations for the conference soon. Deadline information is available on page 5.

www.csregionacm.org

CHAIR CHAT

with

Hap Haasch



If you're familiar with the documentary "Everyone's Channel" (1994) produced by David Shulman, you might recall a segment that explores how Public, Education, and Government access television has "lived a precarious life" within the development of the cable television industry. Fast forward to 2008 and not much has changed - at least in terms of PEG's "precarious" existence.

For PEG operations in the Central States Region of the ACM, we're entering a new (and potentially dangerous) era now that at&t has succeeded in getting very problematic state cable franchising legislation passed in Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio. Although many of us working to correct the glaring problems in this legislation knew it was going to be bad for PEG access, we're just now getting a first-hand look at just how bad.

Allow me to elaborate on what I saw of the at&t U-Verse system's handling of PEG channels in a real world demonstration project being conducted in Clinton Township, Michigan. You should note that Clinton Township (MI) and San Jose/Palo Alto, CA are the ONLY places in the country where at&t is distributing PEG channels on its U-Verse cable system.

In the Clinton Township demonstration project, a private residence is receiving

both Comcast cable and the at&t U-Verse service. Brand new, identical 32" LCD flat panel TV's are used for viewing each respective cable television product. When "surfing" traditional commercial cable programming (CNN, ESPN, local broadcast etc.), there is little to distinguish the two services in picture quality, however, the at&t service uses a customized channel guide. I found it to be cumbersome and confusing... but then I resisted having a cell phone for years so I'm probably not a good test subject for that aspect of the service!

The difference in how the two services handle PEG programming - in this case Clinton Township Television (CTTV), is alarming. As you would expect, the Comcast service has a full cable channel dedicated to CTTV - and the picture quality is very good. You can surf to CTTV and record it on your VCR or DVR. However, the at&t U-Verse system treats CTTV very differently: you go to channel 99, then select a PEG programming source from the on-screen menu, then wait at least 45 seconds (most of my attempts took about a full minute) for a small (320 X 240) video box to load onto your screen. Once you have video, you can use the remote to expand the video box to full screen... creating a noticeably grainy picture.

(Chair Chat cont'd on next page)

Chair Chat (Continued)

The U-Verse system makes it nearly impossible to watch PEG programming in any reasonable manner.

Clinton Township (MI) took the lead to help PEG centers evaluate the at&t U-Verse system. There may be other demonstration projects for this purpose - my own community is exploring this option. It will be critically important for PEG centers to share information and work together on technical solutions for carriage of PEG channels on the at&t U-verse platform. If you're attending the upcoming CS-ACM regional conference in Cincinnati (and I hope you are!), I'll make sure we have an opportunity for an update and dialogue on how best to respond to this latest challenge.

Hap Haasch

Chair - Central States Region, Alliance for Community Media

Public Policy Report

A team from the Central States Region recently traveled to Washington, D.C., for the Congressional Hearing on PEG Television in the Digital Age. Hap Haasch, Tom Bishop, Erik Mollberg, and Matt Schuster went to D.C. to represent the Central States Region and the ACM at this critical time in our organization's history. The team met with congressional representatives, assisted in the preparation of the ACM testimony for the hearing, and provided general support. Special thanks to Annie Folger, Palo Alto, CA, who represented the ACM and our interests on the hearing's witness panel.

We would also like to recognize Deborah Guthrie, and Lynn Mekiele, and the elected officials with the Charter Township of Meridian, MI for their leadership in filing a legal challenge to Comcast's attempts to relocate all PEG channels to the digital tier. Meridian Township, along with the City of Dearborn, were instrumental in gaining a stay which allowed for the hearing to be held before any harm was done by Comcast. We are still waiting for the final court ruling on the suit. In recognition of this effort and cost, the Central States ACM board decided to allocate \$1000 to help with their legal costs.

Community Media received a lot of positive attention at the congressional hearing and now it is time for us to stay in contact and further develop our relationships with our representatives to keep this momentum moving forward. Over the past few years, the ACM and Community Media has gained recognition on the "hill". We can not afford to lose this and must capitalize on our recent attention and success. Watch for information coming from the Central States Region in the near future regarding this effort.

While we tend to focus on the negative impacts of state legislation, there is some silver lining to the state legislation in Indiana. As a result of the legislation, we are beginning to see activity and interest in developing community media in new cities and areas.

by Matt Schuster

Treasurer's Report

Hello from the Treasurer's office at Access Fort Wayne

The good news is that 2007 was a financial success for Central States. We ended the year with a net profit of \$3,266. The revenue makers exceeded in the goals while expenses stayed below budget.

- + Special Thanks goes to Keith and Jeremy at Media Bridges for their running of the Philo's which brought in over \$5,600.
- + Special Thanks also goes to the Staff of Access Fort Wayne for a very successful Fall Conference. Thanks also goes to the major sponsor for the conference Leightronix. The Fall Conference had a net income just over \$3,450.
- + The investments of the Central States also had a good return earning over \$1,600 in interest for the year.

On the expense side:

Central States major expenses were Membership Services and Public Policy. Under Membership services we helped five people attend the Alliance National Conference and had four people attend the Fall Conference with Grass Roots Scholarships and stipends. We helped pay for our representatives to attend National Board Meetings. Central States made a \$1,000 donation to the Dirk Koning Memorial Garden. We donated \$4,000 to the National office as part of the Media Challenge Pledge.

The Central States Committees were active through out the year. In addition to the four board meetings, individual board members worked to represent the region on many fronts. Central States was represented in Washington DC, and in the region's state capitals working to secure Access in the telecom bills. Board members, put together the Keylight, updated the web site, kept track of our memberships, did mailings, held events within the states, and paid the bills.

For 2008 the Central States Board has already held a meeting in Cincinnati to gear up for the Spring Conference and we have pledged \$1,000 to support the legal battle that Meridian Township/HOM-TV is waging against Comcast cable who want to move Access to the 900 digital tier across the state of Michigan.

Now you know,
Norm

SAVE THE DATE!

May 1st - 3rd, 2008

Alliance for Community Media
Central States Regional Conference & Trade Show



visit our conference website at
www.csconference.mediabridges.org



Be sure to make plans to come to Cincinnati! Media Bridges will be hosting the Spring Conference. Hotel accommodations can be made through the Garfield Suites.

The room block deadline is April 1st.
Early bird registration deadline is April 4th!

Don't miss this amazing event!

Greetings from Grassroots by Sara Mahle

Scholarships now available to the Spring 2008 Conference!!

The Central State Region of the Alliance for Community Media (ACM) is offering scholarships for PEG access producers, volunteers, board members or access staff persons to attend the May 1st - 3rd Central States Regional Alliance Community Media conference in Cincinnati, OH!

The funds are to help offset conference costs in hopes of encouraging ACM regional leadership, invite greater diversity of participation, enhance and expand your access experience, improve production skills and expand your knowledge of public, education, and government access organizations.

The scholarships are provided by the ACM Central States Region. The Region will grant each applicant selected two nights in a hotel room May 1st and 2nd, and the room may be shared by other recipients. The selected individual awarded funds must attend the Cincinnati conference.

Who is Eligible?

Assistance is limited to (a) those current, paid individual members of the Alliance for Community Media who reside in the 4 Central States (OH, KY, IN, MI) or (b) you must be an active producer, board or staff member affiliated with an organizational member of the ACM (ask your access manager to see if your organization qualifies). You will be expected to submit a report of your experiences to the Grassroots Committee within two weeks after the conference.

How to Apply

Please provide the following information in a letter. Your name, mailing address, phone, fax. And the name and address of the ACM affiliated organization you belong to plus a brief statement outlining:

(1) How will you benefit by your attendance at the May 1st - 3rd

Central States Regional Conference in Cincinnati, OH?

(2) What have you done to support PEG access in your community? For how long? Why do you think PEG access is important to your community?

(3) If selected, how would you use the knowledge gained to invite an even greater diversity of "voices" in your community?

4) Are you an individual member of the ACM? Is your affiliated access organization a member of the ACM? You must include acknowledgment from your access center documenting your involvement in local programming, this can be done by the Volunteer Coordinator or Executive Director with a signature.

Please apply by email to sara@mediabridges.org

OR

U.S. mail to:
Central States Grassroots Scholarship
c/o Sara Mahle
Media Bridges
1100 Race

Membership

It seems that being in community media, we are in a constant struggle not to simply provide a valuable service to our communities, but to survive. 2007 was a difficult year for everyone in our region. Rules are changing and funding is drying up. What it has demonstrated emphatically is the need for us to gather together because we cannot battle the powerful interests individually. Yet in the last several years our membership has declined.

This is a problem in several ways. One is that whatever power and influence that we as an organization have depends on our number of members and the communities they represent. A second is simply money. All the action we take to defend ourselves in Washington and in state capitals requires funding. A cornerstone of that funding comes from membership dues.

We can only guess at why our numbers have declined. Some centers have closed, some of our members have moved out of the area or left community media altogether, sometimes the membership renewal notices have been misplaced, and a myriad of other reasons. More importantly, we don't even know what we don't know. New centers are started and it may be many months before we hear of it. There may be new faces at established centers, but we don't know them and they haven't been to a conference. Our community is in constant flux and it is difficult, maybe impossible, to keep up.

So what can we do? First of all, we need to be certain that our own membership is up-to-date. Several years ago and well into the year, I discovered that my organizational membership had lapsed. Where I misplaced the renewal notice is still a mystery. A quick call to Denise (202-393-2650 or dw@alliancecm.org) and the problem was resolved. Secondly, each of us needs to keep an ear to the ground when it comes to new centers and new people. When we do hear of some new place and/or some new person, we need to contact them, get to know them and invite them into the family. We all need to be recruiters.

Also, please let us (at the regional board, at the state chapter or at the next conference site) know about these potential members. Every new organization and every new member makes us stronger.

Tom Shubert



Attention ACM Members!



Applications are now being accepted for the Spring 2008 Grassroots Scholarship!

This year's conference will take place in Cincinnati, OH May 1-3. The Central States Region will provide recipients with free conference registration and accommodations.

To apply, submit a letter via email with the following information: your name, mailing address, phone number, fax number, and email address, along with the name and address of the ACM affiliated organization you belong to.

Provide a brief statement outlining the following:

- How will you benefit by your attendance at the May 1st – 3rd Central States Regional Conference in Cincinnati, OH?
- What have you done to support PEG access in your community? For how long? Why do you think PEG access is important to your community?
- If selected, how would you use the knowledge gained to invite an even greater diversity of “voices” in your community?
- Are you an individual member of the ACM? Is your affiliated access organization a member of the ACM? You must include acknowledgement from your access center documenting your involvement in local programming; this can be done by the Volunteer Coordinator or Executive Director with a signature.

All current, paid members of the Alliance for Community Media who reside in the four Central States (OH, KY, IN, MI) OR those who are active producers, board or staff members affiliated with an organizational member of the ACM are eligible. The scholarships are provided by the ACM Central States Region and cover conference registration and a hotel room for May 1st and 2nd ONLY. The room may be shared by other recipients. A report of your experience must be submitted to the Grassroots committee within two weeks after the conference.

Please Reply Via Email To:
Sara Mahle
sara@mediabridges.org

National Board Report

Transition is occurring in the National Office and plans are underway to ensure that we line up the next successful Executive Director for the Alliance for Community Media. Tony Riddle announced his resignation from the position of Executive Director of the ACM, and will be working part-time through the end of March. Tony is transitioning to a position with WBAI-FM in New York City, and we wish him the best of luck in his new endeavor.

The National Board of Directors hired the consulting firm of Meridian Services, Inc. to conduct the national search for our new executive director. Job posting information will be released in the next week. Please feel free to pass along the job posting to any related organizations and people whom you think may be a good fit for the position.

The board is finalizing details for an interim management plan for the national office to ensure that all services continue, and the organization continues to move forward during this time. There is a lot on our plate including organizing national advocacy, fundraising campaigns, conference

organization, and much more. So please be patient as we work through this transition period for the organization.

Watch for information on this year's fundraising campaigns for our legal defense fund and membership challenge. We rely on member donations to help provide and ever increasing level of service.

Information on National Grassroots Scholarships, the Brian Wilson Scholarship Award, and the National Leadership Awards will be sent out soon as well. Be on the look out and apply for one of these or nominate someone else!!

Plans for the National Conference and Trade Show in Washington D.C. are underway. Mark your calendars and plan to attend July 9-12 at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. There will be strong advocacy component to the conference as we encourage members to take advantage of the location to meet with your congressional representatives to keep Community Media on their minds and to further build those positive relationships. More information will be coming

from National and the Region on organizing efforts and materials to use on the hill. The conference will also be full of great educational sessions and the latest in gear for our market at the trade show. This is a conference not to miss.

The board also approved hotel contracts for our national conference through 2011. Mark your calendars and plan on attending the 2009 conference in Portland, OR; 2010 conference in Pittsburgh, PA; and the 2011 conference in Tucson, AZ. The 2012 conference will likely return to Washington D.C.

Also be on the lookout for a new e-newsletter that will debut within the next month from the board of directors to membership. It is our newest effort to keep all members informed about activities of the board and the National Organization.

If you have any concerns, please feel free to contact me, your Central States Representative, or any member of the national board of directors.

Matt Schuster
Chair, ACM Board of

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Hap Haasch, Chair

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The CS Board recently convened in Cincinnati at Media Bridges. All enjoyed the barbecued chicken provided by Media Bridges.



In pictures, Frank Jamison (top), Tom Bishop and Frank Clark (above), and members of the Board (pictured below).

