South Washington County Telecommunications Commission

2017 Annual Report

Proudly serving the communities of:

- Woodbury
- Cottage Grove
- St. Paul Park
- Newport
- Grey Cloud Island Township
During 2017, the Commission completed the organizational transition activities began in 2015 and were also a focus throughout 2016. In addition, it was a year of innovation relative to new technologies, programming services, and relationships. The Commission is well-positioned to provide high quality, cost effective services for its member communities going forward!

In 2016 the Joint and Cooperative Agreement ("JPA” – Joint Powers Agreement) that defines the membership and governance structure of the Commission was reviewed and updated. This past year, other policies including the Commission's Bylaws were brought into conformance with the revised JPA. In addition, a Reserve Policy was developed that defines the appropriate level of financial reserve for the Commission. The purpose of the reserve is to address operational cash flow needs and facilitate the schedules of projects involving capital equipment. Best practices of public entities (including member cities) and nonprofits were examined and provided the basis for the policy.

In January, Mark Martinez joined the Commission as Administrator. During the first quarter, he transitioned into the position and established goals for the year. This included identifying opportunities for internal process improvement and researching the potential for new technologies and service offerings. Mark and other Commission staff established regular meetings with member communities to increase customer focus and address emerging requirements and needs. A new HR Handbook was developed for the Commission in cooperation with member communities and industry associations. In his report, Mark will highlight some of the new technologies being employed by the Commission.

A significant effort during the next couple years will be franchise renewal with providers Comcast and CenturyLink. Both franchises – held by the Commission on behalf of member communities – will be renewed in a 2-year process that authorizes providers to continue to offer services to subscribers. Research for the renewal process began in 2017.

The Commission Board of Directors was vital in defining and supporting the changes that have occurred during the past 2-3 years. I want to especially thank the Executive Committee including Rich Irvine (Vice Chair – St. Paul Park), Dave Thiede (Treasurer – Cottage Grove), and Virginia Keenan (Secretary – Newport) for their efforts in these activities. Staff from member communities were key in recommending desired changes and supporting the implementation. In addition, new incoming Commission Directors have extensive experience and expertise in technologies and services relevant to the Commission.

While there is always work to be done – nothing is ever finished – the Commission has the capability and leadership to excel going forward!
2017 was a year of transition as I assumed the Administrator role for SWCTC and worked toward becoming the best municipal media service provider SWCTC can be in service toward and collaboration with our member cities of Woodbury, Cottage Grove, St. Paul Park, Newport, and Grey Cloud Island Township.

I began strengthening working relationships with our key stakeholders and together, with our commission, accomplished our major organizational goals of revising the SWCTC bylaws, updating our employee handbook, and establishing a financial reserve policy for the future. Our key strategic initiative for 2017 was to incorporate storytelling into our productions to better support the messaging of our member communities’ comprehensive plans. This is a principle part of what we do.

We explored emerging technologies such as Facebook Live and 360° VR cameras. We upgraded our field cameras to digital cinema cameras and completed both AV upgrades in the Woodbury and Cottage Grove council chambers.

I was fortunate to attend the NAB, MACTA, ACM, and NATOA conferences and met professionals from Minnesota and around the country within our PEG communities. There is a close knit community within cable franchise authorities: one that offers a network of knowledgeable people working to support local control of public rights-of-way, customer advocacy, legislative and regulatory oversight, and professional development.

We ended the year working on capital investments in Cottage Grove and planning for improvements in Grey Cloud Island, Woodbury and St. Paul Park. In 2018, our strategic plan includes continued collaboration with our member cities to maximize our efforts and align our internal workflow to reflect the voting structure of the JPA and revenue distribution. A new formula for determining our return of value will be implemented as well.

Finally, I am very proud of our talented and dedicated staff, and honored to serve as the Administrator of the South Washington County Telecommunications Commission.
2017 Commission Directors

Members

CITY OF COTTAGE GROVE
Dave Thiede (elected official) TREASURER
Roger Peterson (council appointee)
Jack Lavold (alternate)

CITY OF NEWPORT
Tracy Rahm (elected official)
Virginia Keenan (council appointee)
Barbara Wilcziek (alternate)

CITY OF ST. PAUL PARK
Tim Jones (elected official)
Richard Irvine (council appointee) VICE-CHAIR
Kevin Franke (alternate)

CITY OF WOODBURY
Julie Ohs (elected official)
Craig Johnson (council appointee) CHAIR
Robert James (alternate)

GREY CLOUD ISLAND TOWNSHIP
Elizabeth Bell (elected official)
Jerry Taube (appointee)
Ron Glubka (alternate)

Mission

The mission of the South Washington County Telecommunications Commission shall be to govern and facilitate, in the public interest, cable and telecommunications services in South Washington County.

Channel Objectives

The primary objectives of the Commissions’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
SWCTC
Organizational Chart

Commission Directors
Member Cities

Administrator
Mark Martinez

Operations Manager/Producer
Ann Schweisguth

Lead Producer
Bob McSherry

Producer
Brian Schmidt

Producer
Justin Atkinson

Producer
Jon Lyksett

Master Control
Lonnie Garland

Master Control/Cablecaster P/T
Vacant

Production Assistant/Cablecaster P/T
Janell Bute

Cablecaster P/T
Kristina Bunde

Cablecaster P/T
Amanda Webster
SWCTC

Financial Review
Revenue And Expenses

Operating Income (Loss)
2017: $250,907
2016: ($57,361)
2015: $38,387
Comcast Fee Distribution

Woodbury 63%
Cottage Grove 30%
St. Paul Park 4%
Newport 3%
Grey Cloud Island Township >1%

Total Comcast Revenue
$1,758,570.79
CenturyLink Fee Distribution

Total CenturyLink Revenue
$93,125.63

- Woodbury 56%
- Cottage Grove 20%
- St. Paul Park 10%
- Newport 3%
- Grey Cloud Island Township 11%
2017 Capital Expenditures

Budgeted Capital Expenditure
$500,000

Actual Capital Expenditure
$494,116.52
2017 Return to Cities

Budgeted Capital Expenditure
$300,000

Actual Capital Expenditure
$400,000
Changes in Net Position

- 2015: $3,588,524
- 2016: $3,535,566
- 2017: $3,799,836
SWCTC
Operations
In 2017 SWCTC made some BIG improvements to the council chambers in the City of Woodbury and City of Cottage Grove. New audio/visual systems were designed and installed in each chamber and feature a full high-definition upgrade including new Panasonic cameras, Broadcast Pix switcher, improved DSP sound system, display monitors and for the first time both systems are tapeless and recording directly to hard drives. The chambers are now more user friendly with new presentation stations installed at the podium and a Crestron control system that allow city staff to display various sources with the push of a button. The upgrade was completed in Woodbury to coincide with the City’s council chamber remodel in May 2017. Additional A/V was added to the new cherry conference room and to the main lobby. In December 2017 the upgrade to the Cottage Grove council chambers was completed. Additional A/V was added to the training room.

Smaller projects in 2017 included a new projection screen in the Ash/Birch conference room at Woodbury city hall, monitors installed for menu boards at Central Park and the HealthEast Sports Center, A/V equipment was ordered for the new Cottage Grove Central Fire Station, and several repairs were completed at various locations.

SWCTC production staff welcomed the addition of new Sony FS5 field cameras. The cameras replace the four-year-old Sony PMW cameras and offer improved image quality, increased shooting options, changeable e-mount lenses, and an overall better end product. Staff is now working in a complete HD workflow with our studio, cameras, editors, and master control now upgraded to HD.

Ann Schweisguth
Operations Manager/Producer
Capital Investments

Significant Investments

• Woodbury Council Chamber AV Integration
• Cottage Grove Council Chamber AV Investment and Integration
• Fiber Optic Runs
• SWCTC Field Cameras - Sony FS5 Digital Cinema Camera and lenses
Fiber optic runs were completed from all member cities council chambers in 2017. This enables us to go live, and in HD, from any city. In June, Woodbury became our first city to cablecast their meetings live in HD. Cottage Grove upgraded to HD in December. St. Paul Park is scheduled to upgrade to HD in 2018. Although prerecorded, Grey Cloud Island Township is also cablecast in HD. We hope to upgrade Newport in the future.
Municipal Meeting Coverage

SWCTC cablecast 170 meetings live on [www.swctc.org](http://www.swctc.org) and on Comcast channel 16 and CenturyLink channels 8041, 8043, 8044, 8045.
Woodbury
Meeting Coverage

Total Meetings: 37
City Council: 27
Planning: 10

City Council: 73%
Planning: 27%
Cottage Grove Meeting Coverage

Total Meetings: 59
City Council: 22
Planning: 10
EDA: 7
Park: 5
Arts: 5
Environmental: 5
Public Services: 5
St. Paul Park Meeting Coverage

Total Meetings: 30
City Council: 21
Planning: 9

City Council: 70%
Planning: 30%
Newport Meeting Coverage

Total Meetings: 45
City Council: 24
Planning: 9
Heritage: 6
Parks: 6
Grey Cloud Island Township Meeting Coverage

Total Meetings: 13
Town Board: 12
Annual Meeting: 1
Page Views by Mobile, Desktop or Laptop

- **Total Page Views**: 24,418
- **Total Visits**: 6,816
- **Total Unique Visitors**: 5,798
- **74% Desktop, 26% Mobile**
Granicus
Webstream
Trends

Total Views
2014: 11,392
2015: 25,798
2016: 23,121
2017: 24,418

Mobile Device Viewers
2014: 22%
2015: 21%
2016: 16%
2017: 26%
In 2017 we continued to create videos to promote our member cities. SWCTC also produced the 100th Woodbury Citystyle episode for the city. We also continued to promote Woodbury Public Safety with our First Response show. One of the highlights from last year was Woodbury 50 year celebration. The city sponsored a large event at central park in March, which included a 20-minute video showcasing the History of Woodbury. For this production we interviewed more than 20 people involved in the community. Which gave us a great history as we chronicled Woodbury's journey from “Farm town to Hometown”. Later in the year we did a series of Code Enforcement videos that the communications department is currently sharing on social media. We also experimented with the 360 camera and made a 360 tour of the HealthEast Sports Center.

In Cottage Grove we collaborated with the Communications department to provide shorter segments for social media. This was a shift in strategy moving away from long form TV segments to short videos that can be compiled together for TV and work well as individual pieces for the web.

We kept our hit streak alive by producing 52 new episodes of Weekly Wire that focused on current events for all member cities. Wire is produced by all government producers throughout the year.

Bob McSherry
Lead Government Producer
St. Paul Park
Newport
Productions

St. Paul Park Videos
Newport Videos
River Cities Episodes
Government Producer Awards

Bob McSherry
Government Programming: Military Category (First Place)
“Woodbury Citystyle: The Man Behind The Name”
Government Programming: Public Education (Second Place)
“Woodbury Citystyle: The Amazing BFF’s”

Justin Atkinson
Honored with a Regional Emmy Nomination For:
“A Soldiers Journey”
Government Programming: Public Safety (Third Place)
“Ride Along With Pat Nickle”

Brian Schmidt
Government Programming: Community Events (Third Place)
“Flags for Memorial Day”
**ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS**

**Q1**
- Launched CG meetings in HD
- Realigned staff workflow

**Q2**
- Cottage Grove Central Fire Station AV Integration
- Begin franchise renewal with Comcast and CenturyLink
- Scope of Services Guidelines

**Q3**
- Franchise and PEG Fee Audits
- Org Structure and Compensation
- St. Paul Park Council Chamber

**Q4**
- Woodbury Fleet Services
- Granicus Upgrade (Equivalent)
- Rebranding?

**OUTLOOK**

- Strategies for long-term sustainability
- Continuing franchise renewal process
- Pursue alternative revenue streams
- Capital investments toward HERO Center
- Woodbury Public Works and Ojibway Park
- Sound improvements at CG Ice Arena
The SWCTC staff would like to thank you for the opportunity to proudly serve the member cities of Woodbury, Cottage Grove, St. Paul Park, Newport, and Grey Cloud Island Township.

Thank You!

Administrator