

NORTH METRO TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION MEETING

October 21, 2020

6:00 p.m.

SPRING LAKE PARK CITY OFFICES

1301 81ST Avenue NE

AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Public Comments
3. Approval of the Agenda
4. Consent Agenda [pp. 1-12](#)
 - a. Minutes of regular meeting of September 16, 2020
 - b. September financial reports and bill list
 - c. Minutes of Operations Committee meeting of October 6, 2020
 - d. Minutes of Executive Committee meeting of October 7, 2020
5. Executive Director Report
 - a. Monthly Report [pp. 13-21](#)
6. Legal Counsel Report
 - a. CenturyLink Ending Prism Service [pp. 22-24](#)
 - b. Franchise and PEG Fee Review Settlement Update
 - c. Miscellaneous Items
7. Old Business
8. New Business
 - a. Recognition of Commissioner Richard Swanson
9. Recommended Reading [pp. 25-40](#)
10. Community Calendar
 - A. Next Meeting Dates:
 - a. Operations Committee – November 3, 2020
 - b. Executive Committee – November 4, 2020
 - c. Cable Commission – November 18, 2020
11. Adjournment

NORTH METRO TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Commission Meeting – September 16, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

Chair D. Stoesz called the regular meeting of the North Metro Telecommunications Commission to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Directors Present: Dick Swanson; Blaine, Matt Montain; Centerville, Brandon Winge; Lexington, Steve McChesney; Circle Pines; Dale Stoesz; Lino Lakes, Bob Nelson; Spring Lake Park

Directors Absent: Brian Kirkham; Ham Lake

Others Present: Heidi Arnson; Executive Director, Mike Bradley; Legal Counsel

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The September 16, 2020 North Metro Telecommunications Committee meeting agenda was approved as presented. **Motion for approval made by M. Montain. Second, S. McChesney. Motion passed unanimously.**

CONSENT AGENDA

- **Minutes, Bill List, Financial Reports**

The June 17th, 2020 NMTC meeting minutes, the September 2, 2020 Executive Committee meeting minutes, the September 1, 2020 Operations Committee meeting minutes, and the June, July, and August bill lists and financial reports were approved as presented. **Motion for approval made by D. Swanson. Second, M. Montain. Motion passed unanimously.**

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

H. Arnson reported on the following items:

- Sports productions including events, Sports Den and Coach & Captain segments are back in production.
- Candidate forums are being recorded in studio. Candidates for contested city, state, county and school board races are being scheduled for segments.
- As expected, second quarter franchise and PEG fees were down from first quarter numbers, but still well within the estimates for the 2021 Commission budget.
- A request was made to include North Metro TV in the city CARES Act grant conversation. Tables outlining COVID19 related expenses, incurred by North Metro TV, were provided. They included protective equipment and disinfecting supplies, equipment for interfacing city Zoom meetings with the Tightrope playback system, equipment for remote productions and safer truck crew experiences, and two costs for upgrading the building's doors and restroom fixtures to touch-less. The Operations Committee was very supportive of including North Metro TV.

MOTION: To recommend that Member Cities include reimbursement of North Metro TV's COVID19 related expenses from city CARES Act grants. **Motion for approval made by B. Nelson. Second, S. McChesney. Motion passed unanimously.**

REPORT OF LEGAL COUNSEL

M. Bradley reported on the following items:

- Briefs have been filed in the appeal of the FCC's 621 Order which is in front of the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. It is expected that oral arguments may take place early in 2021, with a decision being made some time in mid 2021.
- Settlement talks are still underway regarding the Franchise and Peg Fee Review. There should be a recommendation to present to the Operations Committee and Cable Commission at the October meetings.
- The North Metro Telecommunications Commission is going through franchise renewal. A draft franchise document has been submitted to Comcast.
- M. Bradley was a speaker at the 2020 virtual NATOA Convention. He presented on the FCC's 621 Order, and what it does not say.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

- Chair D. Stoesz stated that Vice Chair D. Swanson is not running for re-election and would not be on the Commission next year. He requested that a plaque be presented to Vice Chair Swanson in recognition of his many years of service on the Cable Commission.

MOTION: To present D. Swanson with a plaque in recognition of his many years of service on the Cable Commission. **Motion for approval made by B. Nelson. Second, M. Montain. D. Swanson abstained. Motion passed.**

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Upcoming meetings include:

1. The Operations Committee on October 6, 2020
2. The Executive Committee on October 7, 2020
3. The Cable Commission on October 21, 2020

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 6:12 p.m. **Motion for approval made by S. McChesney. Second, D. Swanson. Motion passed unanimously.**

The next meeting of the NMTC will be held on **Wednesday, October 21 , 2020 at 6:00 p.m.** at the city offices of Spring Lake Park.

Matt Montain; Secretary, NMTC

**NORTH METRO TELECOMMUNICATION
BILL LIST**

SEPTEMBER 2020

Date	Check #	Payee	Amount	
SEPTEMBER	COMBINED	PAYROLL	41,413.22	WAGES
SEPTEMBER	COMBINED	IRS/US PAYABLE	13,455.07	WAGES
SEPTEMBER	COMBINED	MN REVENUE PAYABLE	2,220.09	WAGES
SEPTEMBER	COMBINED	PERA PAYABLE	7,493.11	WAGES
SEPTEMBER	COMBINED	PEACHTREE	44.20	MONTHLY SERVICE
SEPTEMBER	COMBINED	DISCOVERY BENEFITS	1,062.50	HEALTH SAVINGS EMPLOYEE
13737	9/1/20	Richard D. Larson	316.00	JANITORIAL/MAINTENANCE
13738	9/1/20	Michael S. Johnson	32.20	EXPENSES
13739	9/5/20	B Harris, Inc.	225.00	MONTHLY SERVICE
13740	9/5/20	Bradley Law, LLC	1,325.00	LEGAL-GENERAL
13741	9/5/20	Siemens Industry, Inc	834.18	QUARTERLY SERVICE
13742	9/13/20	Jeremy Millington	50.97	EXPENSES
13743	9/14/20	Alpha Video & Audio, Inc	1,343.94	STUDIO EXPENSES (MICS/CONNECTORS
13744	9/14/20	Coastal Wintergreen LLC	780.00	BUILDING MAINTENANCE
13745	9/30/20	Michael S. Johnson	52.90	EXPENSES
EPAY-01	9/1/20	Principal Financial Group	485.79	STD/LTD/LIFE/ADD
EPAY-02	9/2/20	POPP TELECOM	215.99	MONTHLY SERVICE
EPAY-03	9/3/20	Comcast	289.67	MONTHLY SERVICE
EPAY-04	9/3/20	T-Mobile	102.16	MONTHLY SERVICE
EPAY-05	9/3/20	Speedway	36.89	GAS/OIL
EPAY-06	9/9/20	Circle K/Holiday Station Stores	14.00	GAS/OIL
EPAY-07	9/12/20	AT&T Wireless	427.47	MONTHLY SERVICE
EPAY-08	9/14/20	Republic Services	207.42	MONTHLY SERVICE
EPAY-09	9/15/20	CenterPoint Energy	27.79	MONTHLY SERVICE
EPAY-10	9/15/20	Comcast Business 200M/200M	1,074.66	MONTHLY SERVICE
EPAY-11	9/1/20	U.S. Bank Card Service	1,860.73	SPMTG/TECH/POSTAGE
EPAY-12	9/22/20	HealthPartners	12,136.76	HEALTH/DENTAL
EPAY-13	9/26/20	City of Blaine-utilities	1,019.02	MONTHLY SERVICE
EPAY-14	9/26/20	Connexus Energy	2,330.22	MONTHLY SERVICE
EFILE	9/1/20	Authorize.Net	30.90	MONTHLY SERVICE
EFILE	9/8/20	Chase Visa Card Services	7,050.06	OS/SFTWR/TECH/STUDIO/MEDIA/VIDEO
EFILE	9/20/20	Chase Visa Card Services	778.04	PROTECTION BARRIERS (COVID-19)
EFILE	9/1/20	Virtual Merchant Credit Card	10.00	MONTHLY SERVICE
AUGUST SALES TAX	9/15/20	MN Dept. of Revenue	132.00	SALES TAX

98,877.95

North Metro Telecommunications Commission

Balance Sheet
September 30, 2020

ASSETS

Current Assets

Cash - Checking Account	\$ 2,371,457.53
Petty Cash	150.00
A/R - NMTC	194,954.36
Prepaid Insurance - NMTC	11,182.00

Total Current Assets 2,577,743.89

Property and Equipment

Office Equipment - NMTC	1,433,026.18
Accum Deprec - NMTC	(2,730,012.72)
Bond Equipment 2016	1,985,000.00
Building-Polk/125	1,572,799.17
Land-Polk/125	225,700.00

Total Property and Equipment 2,486,512.63

Other Assets

Deferred Out Related/Pension	40,333.00
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Total Other Assets 40,333.00

Total Assets \$ 5,104,589.52

LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL

Current Liabilities

A/P - NMTC	\$ 7,243.70
Accrued Payroll Taxes & W/H's	449.54
PERA - CORRECTIONS	310.09
Garnished Wages	86.40
Garnished Wages	(86.40)
PERA PAYABLE - PRIOR	(3,371.42)
Accrued Vacation	103,311.30
Accrued Wages	23,585.19
Franchise Fee App	942,358.52
Due to City of Blaine	554,758.00
Due to City of Centerville	34,402.00
Due to City of Circle Pines	49,336.50
Due to City of Ham Lake	143,788.00
Due to City of Lexington	18,347.00
Due to City of Lino Lakes	169,950.00
Due to City of Spring Lake Par	59,328.00
Deferred In Related/Pension	110,477.00

Total Current Liabilities 2,214,273.42

Long-Term Liabilities

Net Pension Liability	536,291.00
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Total Long-Term Liabilities 536,291.00

Total Liabilities 2,750,564.42

Capital

Net Equity	359,252.88
Net Equity - Media Ctr	(206,243.34)
Net Equity - NMTC	2,517,656.37
Net Income	(316,640.81)

Total Capital 2,354,025.10

Total Liabilities & Capital \$ 5,104,589.52

North Metro Telecommunications Comm

Cash Receipts Journal

For the Period From Sep 1, 2020 to Sep 30, 2020

Date	Transaction Ref	Line Description	Debit Amnt	Credit Amnt
9/3/20	AUGUST PAYPAL	AUGUST PAYPAL		60.00
		AUGUST PAYPAL-FEES	2.04	
		AUGUST PUBLIC ACCESS		304.00
		AUGUST PUBLIC ACCESS-FEES	10.32	
		PAYPAL	351.64	
9/27/20	SEPT CC SALES-AMEX	SEPT CC SALES-AMEX		150.00
		SEPT CC SALES-AMEX-FEES	5.85	
		Credit Card Sales	144.15	
9/28/20	SEPT CC SALES-SQUARE	SEPT CC SALES-SQUARE		536.71
		SEPT CC SALES-SQUARE-FEES	18.68	
		Credit Card Sales	518.03	
9/30/20	SCAFFOLD RENTAL	SCAFFOLD RENTAL		53.56
		Miscellaneous receipts	53.56	
9/30/20	TAPE DUBS-CHECK	TAPE DUBS-CHECK		250.00
		Miscellaneous receipts	250.00	
9/30/20	DRONE PRODUCTION	DRONE PRODUCTION		500.00
		Miscellaneous receipts	500.00	
9/30/20	INTEREST	INTEREST COMMISSION CHECKING		40.15
		INTEREST - COMMISSION	40.15	
			<u>1,894.42</u>	<u>1,894.42</u>

North Metro Telecommunications Comm

Check Register

For the Period From Sep 1, 2020 to Sep 30, 2020

Filter Criteria includes: 1) Accounts Payable only. Report order is by Date.

Check #	Date	Payee	Amount
EFILE	9/1/20	Discovery Benefits	22.50
EFILE	9/1/20	Authorize.Net	30.90
EFILE	9/1/20	Virtual Merchant Credit Card	10.00
13737	9/1/20	Richard D. Larson	316.00
EPAY-01	9/1/20	Principal Financial Group	485.79
13738	9/1/20	Michael S. Johnson	32.20
EPAY-11	9/1/20	U.S. Bank Card Service	1,860.73
EPAY-02	9/2/20	POPP TELECOM	215.99
EPAY-04	9/3/20	T-Mobile	102.16
EPAY-03	9/3/20	Comcast	289.67
EPAY-05	9/3/20	Speedway	36.89
13740	9/5/20	Bradley Law, LLC	1,325.00
13739	9/5/20	B Harris, Inc.	225.00
13741	9/5/20	Siemens Industry, Inc	834.18
EFILE	9/8/20	Chase Visa Card Services	7,050.06
EFILE	9/9/20	Discovery Benefits	520.00
EPAY-06	9/9/20	Circle K/Holiday Station Stores	14.00
PEACH	9/11/20	Peachtree/Sage Software	22.10
EFILE	9/11/20	MN Dept. of Revenue	1,092.08
EFILE	9/11/20	Public Employees Retirement	3,639.33
EFILE	9/11/20	IRS/US BANK	6,211.86
EPAY-07	9/12/20	AT&T Wireless	427.47
13742	9/13/20	Jeremy Millington	50.97
EPAY-08	9/14/20	Republic Services	207.42
13743	9/14/20	Alpha Video & Audio, Inc	1,343.94
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North Metro Telecommunications Comm

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EFILE	9/23/20	Discovery Benefits	520.00
PEACH	9/25/20	Peachtree/Sage Software	22.10
EFILE	9/25/20	MN Dept. of Revenue	1,097.65
EFILE	9/25/20	Public Employees Retirement	3,639.33
EFILE	9/25/20	IRS/US BANK	6,238.18
EPAY-13	9/26/20	City of Blaine-utilities	1,019.02
EPAY-14	9/26/20	Connexus Energy	2,330.22
EFILE	9/30/20	Public Employees Retirement	214.45
EFILE	9/30/20	MN Dept. of Revenue	30.36
EFILE	9/30/20	IRS/US BANK	1,005.03
13745	9/30/20	Michael S. Johnson	52.90
Total			<u>57,464.73</u>

North Metro Telecommunications Comm

General Journal

For the Period From Sep 1, 2020 to Sep 30, 2020

Date	Reference	Trans Description	Debit Amt	Credit Amt
9/1/20	ACCRUED VAC/COM/SICK	ACCRUED VAC/COMP/SICK ACCRUED VAC/COMP/SICK	102,232.79	102,232.79
9/1/20	ACCRUED WAGES	ACCRUED WAGES ACCRUED WAGES	15,964.56	15,964.56
9/30/20	ACCRUED DEPRECIATION	ACCRUED DEPRECIATION ACCRUED DEPRECIATION	12,900.00	12,900.00
9/30/20	ACCRUED VAC/COM/SICK	ACCRUED VAC/COMP/SICK ACCRUED VAC/COMP/SICK	103,311.30	103,311.30
9/30/20	ACCRUED WAGES	ACCRUED WAGES ACCRUED WAGES	21,286.08	21,286.08
Total			255,694.73	255,694.73

**NORTH METRO TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
UNAPPROVED OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES**

Tuesday, October 6, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting began at 10:35 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

B. Petracek, M. Wolfe, P. Antonen, S. Cotton, D. Webster, D. Buchholtz

MEMBERS ABSENT

M. Statz,

OTHERS PRESENT

H. Arnson

APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES

The meeting notes of September 1, 2020 were approved unanimously.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

- Comcast and Commission Legal Counsel, Mike Bradley, have negotiated a settlement agreement for the Comcast Franchise/PEG Fee Review, that seems agreeable to both parties. The monetary amount and several agreements regarding how franchise fees will be calculated going forward were considered. The Operations Committee recommended that the Cable Commission accept the recommended settlement and approve drafting the final settlement document for consideration.
- CenturyLink has provided 90 days notice that they will be ending their Prism TV service in the North Metro franchise area. The letter states that CenturyLink will work with all remaining subscribers to find alternate video sources. Service will cease on December 16, 2020.
- Updates were given regarding the 621 appeal and the North Metro franchise renewal.
- NMTV election programming has over 3,700 hits on YouTube, to date.
- The Sports department is working to stream every game from all three high schools. Most will be streamed live with a single camera. A director at the studio will add graphics. Each game will have an announcer.

OLD BUSINESS

- An update was given regarding CARES Act grant funds.

NEW BUSINESS

- There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:49a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Meeting of October 7, 2020

Executive Cmte. Present: Dick Swanson; Blaine, Dale Stoesz; Lino Lakes, Matt Montain; Centerville

Absent: Bob Nelson; Spring Lake Park

Others Present: Heidi Arnson; Executive Director

CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the September 2, 2020 Executive Committee meeting minutes was made by D. Swanson. Second, M. Montain. Motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR / OPERATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

- Comcast and Commission Legal Counsel, Mike Bradley, have negotiated a settlement agreement for the Comcast Franchise/PEG Fee Review, that seems agreeable to both parties. The monetary amount and several agreements regarding how franchise fees will be calculated going forward were considered. The Operations Committee recommended that the Cable Commission accept the recommended settlement and approve drafting the final settlement documents for consideration.

MOTION: To Accept the Recommended Franchise/PEG Fee Review Settlement Agreement and Approve Drafting a Final Settlement Agreement Document. **Motion made by M. Montain. Second, D. Swanson. Motion passed unanimously.**

- CenturyLink has provided 90 days notice that they will be ending their Prism TV service in the North Metro franchise area. The letter states that CenturyLink will work with all remaining subscribers to find alternate video sources. Service will cease on December 16, 2020.
- Updates were given regarding the Appeal of the FCC's Third Report and Order and the North Metro franchise renewal.

OLD BUSINESS

- An update was given regarding CARES Act grant funds.

NEW BUSINESS

- Chair Stoesz recognized Vice Chair Swanson's 23 years on the Cable Commission, representing the City of Blaine. As Vice Chair Swanson is not running for reelection, and will no longer be on the Cable Commission in 2021, a plaque recognizing his service will be presented to him at the next Cable Commission meeting.
- NMTV election programming has over 3,800 hits on YouTube, to date.
- The Sports department is working to stream every game from all three high schools. Most will be streamed live with a single camera. A director at the studio will add graphics. Each game will have an announcer.

ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn made by M. Montain. Second, D. Swanson. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

North Metro TV

September 2020 Update

Program Production

In September, a total of 92 **new programs** were produced utilizing the North Metro facilities, funds, and services. This constitutes **76:45:00 hours of new programming.**

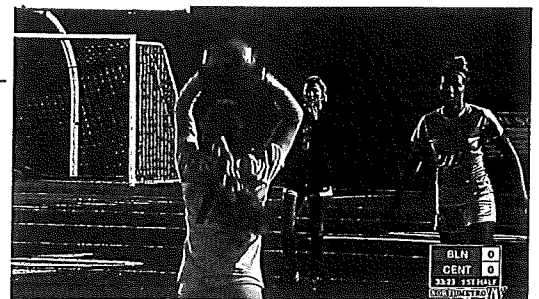
- 16 programs were produced by the public
- 57 programs were produced by NMTV staff
- 19 programs were produced by City staff



Van Shoots

The HD production truck is finally back in action! It was utilized for 32:15:00 hours to cover 7 games.

- Girls Soccer: Maple Grove vs. Blaine
- Boys Soccer: Maple Grove vs. Blaine
- Girls Tennis: Centennial vs. Blaine
- Girls Tennis: Spring Lake Park vs. Blaine
- Girls Tennis: Centennial vs. Spring Lake Park
- Girls Soccer: Park Center vs. Spring Lake Park
- Boys Soccer: Park Center vs. Spring Lake Park



Workshops

Workshop	Instructor	Organization	Students
Lecture Series – The Marilyn Monroe Story	Eric Houston	General Public via Youtube Live	27 Live, 37 VOD
Mini-Lecture Series – Caroline Munro	Eric Houston	General Public via Youtube	10 VOD
Lecture Series –The Birth of Animation: Mickey, Bugs, and Betty Boop	Eric Houston	General Public via Youtube	14 VOD
Mini-Lecture Series– Nick at Nite: A TV Viewer's Dream	Eric Houston	General Public via Youtube	55 VOD
Lecture Series – VOD Quiz Show Scandals and Other Game Shows of the 50s and 60s	Eric Houston	General Public via Youtube	25 VOD
Lecture Series – VOD-The Three Stooges: Comedy's Heavy Hitters	Eric Houston	General Public via Youtube	4 VOD
Lecture Series – VOD -	Eric Houston	General Public via	9 VOD

Come On Down! Game Shows of the 70s and 80s		Youtube	
Lecture Series – VOD - Mary Pickford: The World's First Movie Star	Eric Houston	General Public via Youtube	6 VOD
Lecture Series – VOD - The Marx Brothers: Groucho, Chico, Harpo, and Sometimes Zeppo	Eric Houston	General Public via Youtube	384 VOD
Lecture Series – VOD - Hollywood Goes to War	Eric Houston	General Public via Youtube	14 VOD
Lecture Series – VOD - Hollywood Goes to the Dogs	Eric Houston	General Public via Youtube	2 VOD
1 Live Workshop			27 Live Students, 560 Students w/VOD

Home Movie Transfers

Home movie transfers have become one of our most popular services. Residents can transfer their family videos themselves for free, or pay NMTV to do it. NMTV can also transfer film, slides, and photos for a fee.

Month	Hours Transferred	Tapes	Film Reels	DVDs	Photos/ Slides	Fees Paid
January	192.75	69	4	13	415	\$639.00
February	286	69	86	18	1,020	\$3,595.00
March	343.25	58	107	0	3,587	\$627.00
April	0	0	0	0	341	\$0.00
May	0	0	0	0	495	\$0.00
June	333.5	107	25	0	1,258	\$1,153.00
July	387	60	139	0	0	\$1,114.00
August	455.5	55	133	25	191	\$1,653.22
September	309	20	22	0	0	\$962.40
TOTAL:	2,307.00	438	516	56	7,307	\$9,743.62

Public Usage Stats

For statistical purposes, the public access department documents total numbers of unique individuals and total hours of usage of the facility by the general public, every month. These numbers include regular users, class participants, individuals transferring videos, people who attend events, and any other public usage of the facility. The numbers do not take into account the many members of the public who work with any other NMTV department, such as news, sports, municipal, or educational.

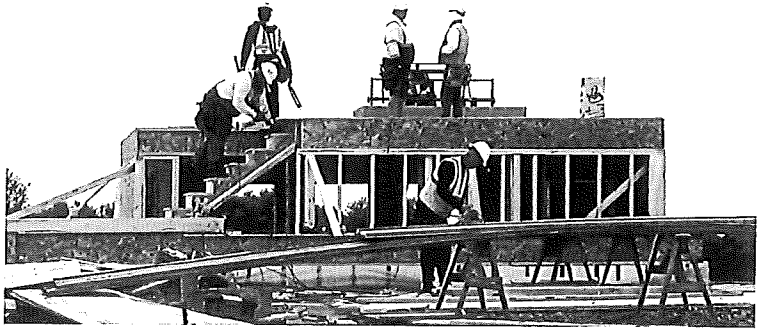
Month	Unique Individuals	Total Usage Hours
January	131	504.75
February	155	636.5
March	59	466.75
April	0	0
May	0	0
June	93	702.00
July	45	660.75
August	54	748.00
September	48	844.00
TOTAL PUBLIC USAGE:		4,562.75

Production Highlights

NMTV News Highlights

Each week Danika Peterson and Rusty Ray create a news program that highlights events, people, issues, and information important to citizens of our Member Cities. Some September highlights include:

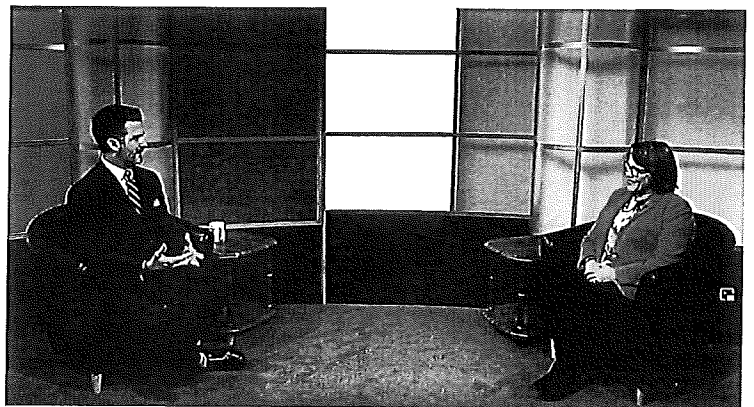
- Quad Area Chamber of Commerce Members Hear From Famous Red Wing Bakery Owner
- Anoka County Campgrounds See Late Summer Surge in Business
- High School Sports Fans Allowed Back to Games This Fall With Rules in Place
- Anoka County Employment Improves Slowly
- Absentee Voters in Blaine Have New Option
- Blaine Police K-9 Team Win National Award
- Anoka County Library Doubles Book Sorting System
- Non Profits Pivot in Pandemic
- Anoka County Expands COVID Grants
- Spring Lake Park Man Builds Replica Water Tower
- Anoka County Preps for Early Voting By Mail
- Local Fire Fighters to Travel to Oregon to Combat Wildfires
- Former Chief Helps Centennial Fire Transition to New Staffing Model
- Blaine to Name Park in Tom Ryan's Honor
- Lino Lakes YMCA Undergoing RE-Imagining With Community Input
- Spring Lake Park Rental Moratorium Draws Attention of Real Estate Professionals
- Blaine Sees Boom in Construction and Home Sales



In addition to daily playbacks of North Metro TV News on the cable systems, there are 729 local stories archived for viewers on the NMTV YouTube channel. The channel can be accessed through the northmetrotv.com website.

Local Decision 2020

A lot of election programming was produced in September. Because of the COVID19 virus, and the confined space of the studio, having all individuals running for a particular office, on-stage, at one time, was not a safe option. As such, a decision was made to produce only one-on-one "Meet the Candidate" interviews hosted by NMTV News Producer, Rusty Ray. Each candidate for office was given up to 15 minutes to answer questions and share their vision for their community. Candidates for Mayoral, City Council, County Board, School Boards, and State House and Senate offices were scheduled. In



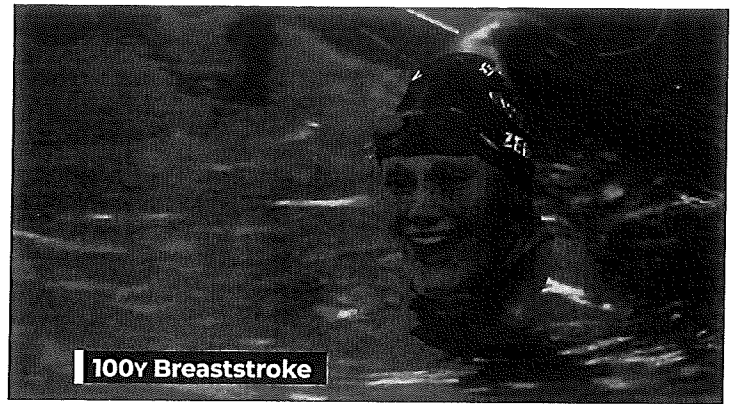
total, Rusty and Danika recorded 15 shows in September. School Board and County Commissioner interviews are scheduled for the first week in October. In addition to the "Meet the Candidate" forums, Special Events Coordinator, T.J. Tronson, worked with the League of Women Voters and the Ham Lake Chamber of Commerce to record their candidate debates. In total T.J. recorded 7 debates.

Mary Ann Young Center Concert

Special Events Coordinator, T.J. Tronson, worked with City of Blaine staff to provide a live feed of a concert for seniors at the Mary Ann Young Center. Video Engineer, Matt Waldron, and Municipal Producer, Trevor Scholl, worked with T.J. to make sure the video and audio would work via the Zoom format. The concert was discreetly provided to viewers at the Center and was not available via the channels or internet.

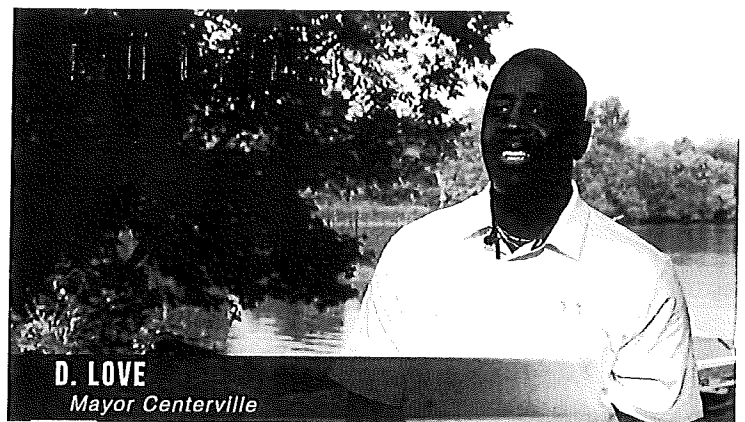
Live Streaming Sports

Sports are back at NMTV and in a big way! Not only are we using our production truck to cover high school sports, we are also sending out single camera teams to additional sporting events for live coverage. The goal is to cover every high school sporting event, at all three high schools we cover, live. The idea of covering all of our high school sporting events resulted from the realization that in-person crowds might not be allowed, or at least would likely be restricted. Video Engineer, Matt Waldron, and Sports Director, Kenton Kipp, along with Sports Producer, Jeremy Millington, determined the equipment and staffing that would be required to accomplish that feat and then went to work. With a minimal amount of equipment purchases and by utilizing the public internet and free software, we are able to live stream single camera games to the NMTV facility, where a director adds graphics and then sends it out live via various outlets including Facebook, YouTube, and on our streaming and cable channels. It takes a lot of work and coordination, but so far the Sports crew has been phenomenal.



City Productions

In September, Municipal Producer, Trevor Scholl, completed three productions, including a Fall Mayor's Minutes with Centerville Mayor, D. Love, coverage of a Quad Area Chamber of Commerce Event, and the Cars for Neighbors Gala. In addition, he worked all month assisting Danika Peterson and Rusty Ray with Candidate forums, and also assisted T.J. Tronson with coverage of League of Women Voters sponsored forums and a private concert at the Mary Ann Young Center. Programs completed include:



- Fall Mayor's Minutes: Centerville
- Cars for Neighbors Gala
- Quad Area Chamber of Commerce Event

New and ongoing projects include:

- Continuing Centerville business profiles
- Car seat videos with the SBM
- Night to Unite previews for each City
- Fall Mayor's Minutes
- Grandma's House non-profit
- Circle Pines Virtual Tour

Trevor touches base with contacts on a regular basis and also encourages Cities to contact him whenever they have an idea for a new show.

Production Equipment Consulting for Cities

Blaine

- 9.10.20: Handled technical testing and issues for live zoom broadcast of a concert for seniors through the Mary Ann Young Center.

Centerville

- No assistance required.

Circle Pines

- No assistance required.

Ham Lake

- 9:8:20. Counter numbers on DVD recorder stopped functioning, then DVD recorder stopped working. Ran some tests and reset the recorder. Seems to be working.

Lexington

- No assistance required.

Lino Lakes

- No assistance required.

Spring Lake Park

- No assistance required.
All Cities
- No assistance required.

City Channel Playback Stats

City	Number of Times Long-Form Programs Played	Hours Programmed on Channel
Blaine	304	301:54:31
Centerville	86	105:05:33
Circle Pines	164	163:34:08
Ham Lake	108	76:28:32
Lexington	119	63:52:36
Lino Lakes	90	106:43:21
Spring Lake Park	125	138:23:57
Totals:	996 Program Playbacks	956:02:38 Hours of Video Programming on Channels

Public Programs

Title	Producer	Runtime
Toastmasters Live	Jason Sonnek	01:00:00
Bad Movie Bros	Eric Housont	00:27:46
Nocked & Loaded TV	Dave Perkins	00:45:00
Lovepower (2 episodes)	Rick Larson	02:00:00
The Power of Love (2 episodes)	Rick Larson	01:00:00
Rice Creek Watershed District Meeting (2 episodes)	Theresa Stasica	02:18:49
Christ Lutheran Church (4 episodes)	Chance Amundson	03:50:38
Oak Park Community Church (3 episodes)	David Turnidge	01:44:34
27 New Programs		22:53:23 New Hours

NMTV Staff Programs

Title	Producer	Runtime
Anoka County Board Meeting (9/8/20)	T.J. Tronson	00:36:21
Anoka County Board Meeting (9/22/20)	T.J. Tronson	01:35:26
NMTC Cable Commission Meeting (9/16/20)	T.J. Tronson	00:12:40
LWV Candidate Forum City of Blaine Mayoral	T.J. Tronson	00:37:49
LWV Candidate Forum Ward 3 Blaine City Council	T.J. Tronson	00:33:23
LWV Candidate Forum Ward 1 Blaine City Council	T.J. Tronson	00:35:29
Ham Lake Chamber State Senate District 31 Forum	T.J. Tronson	00:30:40
Ham Lake Chamber MN House District 31B Forum	T.J. Tronson	00:27:29
Ham Lake Chamber Anoka County Commissioner District 2 Forum	T.J. Tronson	00:28:32
Ham Lake Chamber Ham Lake City Council Forum	T.J. Tronson	00:05:33

Mary Ann Young Center Presents: North Country Jamboree	T.J. Tronson	00:32:44
NMTV News (3 episodes)	Danika Peterson/Rusty Ray	01:11:02
Local Decision 2020: Blaine Mayor	Danika Peterson/Rusty Ray	00:28:10
Local Decision 2020: Centerville City Council Special Election	Danika Peterson/Rusty Ray	00:11:34
Local Decision 2020: Spring Lake Park City Council	Danika Peterson/Rusty Ray	00:39:04
Local Decision 2020: Spring Lake Park Mayor	Danika Peterson/Rusty Ray	00:30:24
Local Decision 2020: Blaine City Council Ward 1	Danika Peterson/Rusty Ray	00:28:42
Local Decision 2020: MN Senate 37	Danika Peterson/Rusty Ray	00:22:40
Local Decision 2020: MN House 37B	Danika Peterson/Rusty Ray	00:33:55
Local Decision 2020: MN Senate 38	Danika Peterson/Rusty Ray	00:38:20
Local Decision 2020: MN House 38A	Danika Peterson/Rusty Ray	00:29:10
Local Decision 2020: NM Senate 41	Danika Peterson/Rusty Ray	00:28:50
Local Decision 2020: MN House 37A	Danika Peterson/Rusty Ray	00:25:09
Local Decision 2020: MN House 41A	Danika Peterson/Rusty Ray	00:25:36
Local Decision 2020: NM House 31B	Danika Peterson/Rusty Ray	00:29:25
Local Decision 2020: MN Senate 31	Danika Peterson/Rusty Ray	00:30:39
Local Decision 2020: Blaine City Council Ward 3	Danika Peterson/Rusty Ray	00:31:55
Spring Lake Park Man Builds Replica Water Tower	Danika Peterson/Rusty Ray	00:02:44
Blaine K-9 Team Wins National Award	Danika Peterson/Rusty Ray	00:02:54
Conversations with Linda Bryant: Hope 4 Youth	Danika Peterson/Rusty Ray	00:18:48
Cars for Neighbors Gala	Trevor Scholl	00:07:57
Fall Mayor's Minutes: Centennial	Trevor Scholl	00:05:06
Quad Area Chamber of Commerce Event	Trevor Scholl	00:44:36
Boys Soccer: Maple Grove/Centennial	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:44:16
Girls Soccer: Maple Grove/Centennial	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:39:34
Girls Tennis: Centennial/Blaine	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:01:18
Girls Tennis: Spring Lake Park/Blaine	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:15:40
Boys Soccer: Centennial/Spring Lake Prk	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:32:10
Girls Soccer: Centennial/Spring Lake Prk	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:32:22
Girls Swim & Dive: Spring Lake Park/Centennial	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:26:04
Girls Soccer: Maple Grove/Blaine	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:39:17
Boys Soccer: Maple Grove/Blaine	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:38:40
Girls Swim & Dive: Armstrong/Blaine	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:14:32
Girls Tennis: Centennial/Spring Lake Park	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:16:52
Girls Soccer: Park Center/Spring Lake Park	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:34:24
Boys Soccer: Park Center/Spring Lake Park	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:44:17
Coach & Captains (1 episode)	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	00:06:33
Sports Den (4 episodes)	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:35:22
49 New Programs		37:10:01 New Hours

City Meetings

Title	Producer	Runtime
Blaine Traffic Commission Meeting (9/1/20)	Blaine Staff	00:57:06
Blaine City Council Meeting (9/7/20)	Blaine Staff	01:30:16
Blaine Planning Commission Meeting (9/8/20)	Blaine Staff	00:41:49

Blaine City Council Meeting (9/21/20)	Blaine Staff	02:11:44
Blaine Park Board Meeting (9/22/20)	Blaine Staff	00:26:09
Centerville Planning & Zoning Meeting (9/1/20)	Centerville Staff	02:45:43
Centerville Park & Rec Meeting (9/2/20)	Centerville Staff	01:05:09
Centerville City Council Meeting (9/9/20)	Centerville Staff	02:04:10
Centerville EDA Meeting (9/16/20)	Centerville Staff	01:19:49
Centerville City Council Meeting (9/23/20)	Centerville Staff	00:53:29
Circle Pines City Council Meeting (9/8/20)	Circle Pines Staff	01:00:36
Circle Pines Utility Commission Meeting (9/16/20)	Circle Pines Staff	00:25:42
Circle Pines City Council Meeting (9/22/20)	Circle Pines Staff	01:11:04
Ham Lake City Council Meeting (9/8/20)	T.J. Tronson	00:15:52
Ham Lake Planning Commission Meeting (9/14/20)	T.J. Tronson	00:20:11
Ham Lake Park & Tree Commission Meeting (9/16/20)	T.J. Tronson	00:43:55
Ham Lake City Council Meeting (9/21/20)	T.J. Tronson	01:00:07
Ham Lake Planning Commission Meeting (9/28/20)	T.J. Tronson	00:13:33
Lexington City Council Meeting (9/3/20)	Lexington Staff	00:08:52
Lexington City Council Meeting (9/17/20)	Lexington Staff	00:31:04
Lino Lakes Planning & Zoning Meeting (9/9/20)	Anne Serwe	01:31:55
Lino Lakes City Council Meeting (9/14/20)	Rusty Ray	02:07:15
Lino Lakes City Council Meeting (9/28/20)	Lino Lakes Staff	00:21:53
Spring Lake Park City Council Meeting (9/7/20)	Spring Lake Park Staff	00:52:41
Spring Lake Park City Council Meeting (9/21/20)	Spring Lake Park Staff	00:44:53
Spring Lake Park Planning Commission Meeting (9/28/20)	Spring Lake Park Staff	00:13:07
26 New Programs		26:38:04 New Hours

If you have any questions or comments regarding this monthly report please contact Heidi Arnson at 763.231.2801 or harnson@northmetrotv.com.

NORTH METRO TV

Production Statistics 2020

Programming Statistics													20 Average			
	J	F	M	A	M	J	JU	A	S	O	N	D	20 Total	20 Average		
Cablecast Programs																
Cablecast Hours	2606.00	2626.00	2682.00	2449.00	2632.00	2338.00	2463.00	2620.00	3067.00				23483.00	1956.92		
Programs Produced - Public	2260.50	2106.50	2251.00	2145.25	2296.25	2081.50	2063.00	2105.00	2217.50				19526.50	1627.21		
Program Hours Produced - Public	14.00	20.00	15.00	7.00	0.00	13.00	16.00	18.00	10.00				113.00	9.42		
Program Hours Produced - Affiliated Public	11.00	15.75	11.50	2.50	0.00	8.00	13.25	14.00	8.25				84.25	7.02		
Program Hours Produced - Affil. Public	7.00	12.00	5.00	16.00	9.00	10.00	7.00	9.00	6.00				81.00	6.75		
Program Hours Produced - City Staff	5.50	8.25	5.00	12.00	9.50	10.00	9.00	8.75	4.75				72.75	6.06		
Program Hours Produced - NMTV Staff	24.00	21.00	22.00	23.00	24.00	20.00	26.00	17.00	19.00				196.00	16.33		
Program Hours Produced - NMTV Staff	53.00	61.00	28.00	31.50	29.75	24.25	29.25	19.50	26.50				228.75	19.06		
Program Hours Produced - NMTV Staff	26.75	30.00	10.00	12.50	9.00	8.75	7.25	13.25	57.00				348.00	29.00		
Total Public Programs Produced	21.00	32.00	20.00	23.00	9.00	23.00	23.00	27.00	16.00				154.00	12.83		
Total Internal Programs Produced	77.00	82.00	50.00	68.00	56.00	42.00	45.00	48.00	76.00				194.00	16.17		
% Staff Produced Programs	98.00	114.00	70.00	91.00	65.00	68.00	68.00	75.00	92.00				544.00	45.33		
% Public Produced Programs	78.57%	71.93%	71.43%	74.73%	86.15%	64.62%	66.18%	64.00%	82.61%				738.00	61.50		
External Programs Submitted	21.43%	28.07%	28.57%	25.27%	13.85%	35.38%	33.82%	36.00%	17.39%				73.71%	73.71%		
External Program Hours	16.00	25.00	24.00	20.00	16.00	37.00	24.00	25.00	27.00				26.29%	26.29%		
Total New Programs	12.00	16.25	19.50	12.00	13.00	24.50	17.50	20.00	19.00				214.00	17.83		
Total New Program Hours	114.00	139.00	94.00	111.00	81.00	102.00	92.00	100.00	119.00				153.75	12.81		
Equipment Usage Statistics																
Facility Hours Available																
Public Field Equipment Uses	182.00	169.00	144.00	2.50	0.00	161.00	175.00	191.00	180.00				1204.50	100.38		
Studio A	8.00	12.00	4.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.00	2.00				34.00	2.83		
% of Available Time	52.75	36.50	18.00	2.50	0.00	0.00	18.00	52.00	92.00				271.75	22.65		
Studio B	28.98%	21.60%	12.50%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	10.29%	27.23%	51.11%				22.56%	22.56%		
% of Available Time	4.00	20.50	1.75	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				26.25	2.19		
Public MAC A Edit Suite	2.20%	12.13%	1.22%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%				2.18%	2.18%		
% of Available Time	94.25	222.25	178.00	0.00	0.00	53.00	75.50	88.50	44.50				756.00	63.00		
Public MAC B Edit Suite	51.79%	131.51%	123.61%	0.00%	0.00%	32.92%	43.14%	46.34%	24.72%				62.76%	28.31%		
% of Available Time	89.00	48.75	30.50	0.00	0.00	93.00	48.75	39.00	32.00				381.00	31.75		
Public MAC C Edit Suite	48.90%	28.85%	21.18%	0.00%	0.00%	57.76%	27.86%	20.42%	17.78%				31.63%	31.63%		
% of Available Time	47.50	102.75	86.00	0.00	0.00	152.00	252.00	298.00	223.00				1161.25	96.77		
Production Van Statistics	26.10%	60.80%	59.72%	0.00%	0.00%	94.41%	144.00%	156.02%	123.89%				96.41%	96.41%		
Production Van Statistics																
Production Hours	50.00	71.50	13.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	32.25				167.00	13.92		
Number of Van Shoots	8.00	9.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.00				24.00	2.00		
Average Hours Per Shoot	6.25	7.94	6.63	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.45				6.96	1.16		
Number of New Volunteers	6.00	8.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00				16.00	1.33		
Volunteer Hours	92.00	97.00	17.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	18.00				224.00	18.67		
Public Access Statistics																
Number of Workshops	8.00	13.00	3.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00				33.00	2.75		
Number of Students	94.00	130.00	38.00	173.00	51.00	70.00	25.00	23.00	27.00				631.00	52.58		
PAP Volunteer Hours	60.25	95.50	41.50	0.00	0.00	16.00	10.00	10.00	0.00				233.25	19.44		
Total Public Facility Usage Hours	504.75	636.50	466.75	0.00	0.00	702.00	660.75	748.00	844.00				4562.75	380.23		

2020 Time of Use Stats

Studio A	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	Average
Morning Available Hours	35.00	34.00	30.00	2.50	0.00	26.00	31.00	40.00	37.00				235.50	19.63
Morning Hours Used	7.50	7.75	5.50	2.50	0.00	0.00	6.00	27.00	36.00				92.25	7.69
Percent of Available	21.43%	22.79%	18.33%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	19.35%	67.50%	97.30%				39.17%	39.17%
Afternoon Available Hours	79.00	72.00	60.00	0.00	0.00	72.00	72.00	80.00	72.00				507.00	42.25
Afternoon Hours Used	8.00	9.00	6.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.00	20.00	36.00				84.50	7.04
Percent of Available	10.13%	12.50%	10.83%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	6.94%	25.00%	50.00%				16.67%	16.67%
Evening Available Hours	68.00	63.00	54.00	0.00	0.00	63.00	72.00	71.00	71.00				462.00	38.50
Evening Hours Used	37.25	19.75	5.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.00	5.00	29.00				103.50	8.63
Percent of Available	54.78%	31.35%	10.19%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	9.72%	7.04%	40.85%				22.40%	22.40%
Studio B														
Morning Available Hours	35.00	34.00	30.00	0.00	0.00	26.00	31.00	40.00	37.00				233.00	19.42
Morning Hours Used	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				0.00	0.00
Percent of Available	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%				0.00%	0.00%
Afternoon Available Hours	79.00	72.00	60.00	0.00	0.00	72.00	72.00	80.00	72.00				507.00	42.25
Afternoon Hours Used	0.50	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				3.50	0.29
Percent of Available	0.63%	4.17%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%				0.69%	0.69%
Evening Available Hours	68.00	63.00	54.00	0.00	0.00	63.00	72.00	71.00	71.00				462.00	38.50
Evening Hours Used	3.50	17.50	1.75	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				22.75	1.90
Percent of Available	5.15%	27.78%	3.24%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%				4.92%	4.92%
Public MAC A Edit Suite														
Morning Available Hours	35.00	53.00	46.00	0.00	0.00	26.00	31.00	40.00	37.00				268.00	22.33
Morning Hours Used	20.00	53.00	46.00	0.00	0.00	6.50	20.00	18.00	5.00				168.50	14.04
Percent of Available	57.14%	100.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	64.52%	45.00%	13.51%				62.87%	62.87%
Afternoon Available Hours	79.00	120.50	106.00	0.00	0.00	72.00	72.00	80.00	72.00				601.50	50.13
Afternoon Hours Used	53.75	120.50	106.00	0.00	0.00	38.75	40.50	43.50	27.50				430.50	35.88
Percent of Available	68.04%	100.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	53.82%	56.25%	54.38%	38.19%				71.57%	71.57%
Evening Available Hours	68.00	63.00	54.00	0.00	0.00	63.00	72.00	71.00	71.00				462.00	38.50
Evening Hours Used	20.50	48.75	26.00	0.00	0.00	7.75	15.00	27.00	12.00				157.00	13.08
Percent of Available	30.15%	77.38%	48.15%	0.00%	0.00%	12.30%	20.83%	38.03%	16.90%				33.98%	33.98%
Public MAC B Edit Suite														
Morning Available Hours	35.00	34.00	30.00	0.00	0.00	26.00	31.00	40.00	37.00				233.00	19.42
Morning Hours Used	13.50	6.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	18.00	5.50	8.00	4.00				59.00	4.92
Percent of Available	38.57%	17.65%	13.33%	0.00%	0.00%	69.23%	17.74%	20.00%	10.81%				25.32%	25.32%
Afternoon Available Hours	79.00	72.00	60.00	0.00	0.00	72.00	72.00	80.00	72.00				507.00	42.25
Afternoon Hours Used	35.75	17.75	13.00	0.00	0.00	43.50	26.00	24.00	21.50				181.50	15.13
Percent of Available	45.25%	24.65%	21.67%	0.00%	0.00%	60.42%	36.11%	30.00%	29.86%				35.80%	35.80%
Evening Available Hours	68.00	63.00	54.00	0.00	0.00	63.00	72.00	71.00	71.00				462.00	38.50
Evening Hours Used	39.75	25.00	13.50	0.00	0.00	31.50	17.25	7.00	6.50				140.50	11.71
Percent of Available	58.46%	39.68%	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	23.96%	9.86%	9.15%				30.41%	30.41%
Public MAC C Edit Suite														
Morning Available Hours	35.00	34.00	30.00	0.00	0.00	31.00	53.00	76.00	56.50				315.50	26.29
Morning Hours Used	3.25	13.50	14.00	0.00	0.00	31.00	53.00	76.00	56.50				247.25	20.60
Percent of Available	9.29%	39.71%	46.67%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%				78.37%	78.37%
Afternoon Available Hours	79.00	72.00	60.00	0.00	0.00	87.00	140.00	150.50	115.50				704.00	58.67
Afternoon Hours Used	29.00	18.25	26.75	0.00	0.00	87.00	140.00	150.50	115.50				567.00	47.25
Percent of Available	36.71%	25.35%	44.58%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%				80.54%	80.54%
Evening Available Hours	68.00	71.00	54.00	0.00	0.00	63.00	72.00	71.50	71.00				470.50	39.21
Evening Hours Used	15.25	71.00	45.25	0.00	0.00	34.00	59.00	71.50	51.00				347.00	28.92
Percent of Available	22.43%	100.00%	83.80%	0.00%	0.00%	53.97%	81.94%	100.00%	71.83%				73.75%	73.75%

NORTH METRO TV

TO: OPERATIONS COMMITTEE/CABLE COMMISSION
FROM: HEIDI ARNSON
SUBJECT: CENTURYLINK 90 DAY NOTICE REGARDING PRISM EXIT
DATE: 9/30/2020

The Commission has received an official 90-day notice from CenturyLink regarding ending their cable TV service, PRISM. We were originally notified of CenturyLink's plan to leave the market in January 2020.

Brief History of CenturyLink in the North Metro

- 2015 – CenturyLink franchises are approved by all Cities.
- 2017 – Minnesota Attorney General files a lawsuit against CenturyLink alleging consumer fraud and deceptive trade practices.
- 2017 – The Commission issues a Notice of Franchise Violation to CenturyLink, related to the lawsuit.
- 2018 – CenturyLink announces it no longer plans to add PRISM customers.
- 2018 – CenturyLink reports they do not intend to renew franchise agreements.
- 2018 – It is agreed that a settlement agreement should be produced that provides an orderly exit from the market for CenturyLink and provides the Commission with some certainty regarding the franchise renewal process moving forward.
- 2019 – A Settlement Agreement is signed, providing the map for CenturyLink's departure.
- The Settlement Agreement includes language requiring CenturyLink to provide notice to its subscribers with information on how to replace their cable service. CenturyLink agrees to pay for the return of any equipment from subscribers if applicable.
- 2020 – In January, CenturyLink notifies the Cable Commission that it will stop providing service at the end of its franchise term, or sooner.
- 2020 – The Commission receives a 90-day notice of expiration of the CenturyLink PRISM Franchise Agreement and termination of the PRISM product.

As of the end of June 2020, CenturyLink had 104 subscribers in the North Metro franchise area.

Service is scheduled to end on December 16, 2020.



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Rick.Gutierrez@CenturyLink.com

Rick Gutierrez
Public Policy

September 16, 2020

Executive Director North Metro Telecom Commission
12520 Polk Street N.E.
Blaine, MN 55434

RE: Expiration of Prism Franchise Agreement and termination of Prism product

Good day,

As indicated in our letter of January 29th, CenturyLink will soon be terminating our Prism product in your community. As we approach the expiration of the cable franchise agreement, and as required in the settlement agreement, we wanted to take this opportunity to provide official 90-day notice regarding our Prism exit.

Over the coming months we will reach out to each of the remaining Prism subscriber areas in your community via email, letter, set top box message and telephone outreach to explain the exit and offer each customer a video alternative to Prism. While we will provide return kits for each set top box, the return of the equipment will not be required, and no fees will be assessed if our Prism subscribers decided to dispose of the equipment on their own.

While we are ending the Prism product, CenturyLink will continue to provide reliable high speed digital services to the residential and small business customers in your community, and we look forward to a productive and positive relationship with you going forward.

If you have any questions or would like to set up a meeting to discuss the transition, please reach out to your local affairs director Kirstin Sersland (763) 400-5746.

Sincerely,

Rick Gutierrez
CenturyLink
Public Policy

Cc/Kirstin Sersland
Mike Bradley

POTs and PANs

Broadband for All

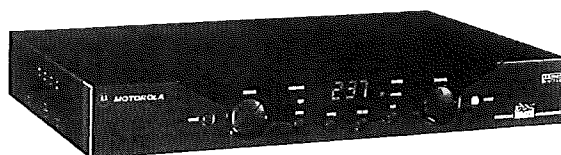
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October 9, 2020

FCC Kills CableCards

[Leave a comment](#)

The FCC Commissioners recently unanimously voted to eliminate the rules that require cable companies to support devices that use CableCard technology for connecting to video services. The largest user of the technology is TiVo, but consumers have also been able to buy settop boxes using the technology rather than paying monthly to lease a box from the cable company.



The requirement for CableCards came from the Telecommunications Act of 1996. The congressional authors of that act thought that consumers ought to have an alternative to leasing a mandatory settop box from a cable company. After some industry wrangling, the FCC ordered that cable companies be ready to allow devices with CableCards by July 2000.

The big cable companies hated the CableCard rule and refused to share network security keys with CableCard manufacturers, making it a major challenge for a customer to install a CableCard device. In 2005 the FCC clarified the original order and told cable companies that software had to be separate than settop box devices so that CableCards could connect to cable

company networks.

Over time, the software on cable networks has grown increasingly complex, and CableCard technology never became plug and play. Anybody who has ever installed a TiVo box knows the challenge of getting the CableCard software to talk to a specific local cable system. Because of this, and because of ongoing resistance to cable companies to make it easy for CableCards to work, no major market for consumer-owned settop boxes ever emerged. However, even in recent years, there have been sales of roughly half a million CableCard devices per quarter.

The biggest user of CableCard technology is TiVo which has a CableCard in every DVR recorder it sells. The FCC order doesn't force cable companies to continue to support CableCard technology, but they likely will. Any cable company settop box built before 2015 uses CableCard technology – that was the easiest way for the cable companies to make CableCards work.

However, the FCC eliminated the last vestige of regulation on CableCards, so there is nothing to stop a cable company from cutting off CableCard devices, other than perhaps a desire to not push more households to cut the cord. Cable companies are also free to charge extra to consumers for connecting with a CableCard device.

It's more likely that CableCard devices will just become technically obsolete over time. Without the FCC's rules in place, the cable companies might not worry about the impact on CableCards as they update settop box software. This likely spells the end of the traditional TiVo box that could record many hours of video to watch later. Most cable companies offer an alternate to TiVo and allow customers to record and store programming in the cloud rather than on a device in the home. However, TiVo and other companies already started that transition, and TiVo introduced a cloud DVR service in 2018 for a cord-cutter that allows recording of video content that comes from any source such as over-the-air, or from an online service.

Consumers who have used CableCard devices face having to eventually pay the monthly fee for a settop box if they want to keep traditional cable TV service. Ironically, there might be a bigger need for a settop box alternative today than there was in 2000. Largely freed from regulation, the cable companies have raised fees on settop boxes, and I've seen monthly rental rates as high as \$15 per month.

In the end, the CableCard regulation was largely a bust. It provided an alternative to renting settop boxes, but the cable companies never stopped fighting the idea and never made it easy for consumers to connect and use a CableCard device.

Share this:



Media Contact:

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For Immediate Release

**FCC MODERNIZES CABLE OPERATOR SUBSCRIBER NOTICE
RULES**

***Action Will Provide Subscribers with More Meaningful and Accurate Information
Concerning Changes to Cable Service***

WASHINGTON, September 30, 2020—The Federal Communications Commission today issued a Report and Order adopting changes to the Commission’s rules concerning notices that cable operators must provide to subscribers and local franchise authorities (LFAs) about service and rate changes. These changes will make consumer notices more meaningful and accurate, reduce consumer confusion, better ensure that subscribers receive the information they need to make informed choices about their service options, and reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens.

This Report and Order amends the subscriber notice rules to clarify that when service changes, such as the removal of a channel, occur due to retransmission consent or program carriage negotiations that fail within the last 30 days of a contract, cable operators must provide notice to subscribers “as soon as possible,” rather than 30 days in advance. In today’s video marketplace, retransmission consent and program carriage negotiations are often concluded within days—if not hours—of the expiration of existing agreements. In these cases, it is frequently unclear, 30 days prior to the contract’s expiration, whether a new agreement will be reached, there will be a short-term extension, or programming will be dropped. This change will ensure that consumers do not receive inaccurate or premature notices about potential programming disruptions that never come to pass and that could cause them to change cable providers unnecessarily or start to ignore such notices.

The Report and Order also eliminates the requirement that cable operators subject to effective competition provide 30 days’ advance notice to LFAs of rate or service changes but retains a narrower notification requirement that applies only to rate-regulated cable operators. The Commission finds that in areas no longer subject to rate regulation, the costs to cable operators of complying with the LFA rate and service change notice requirements outweigh any potential benefits that could accrue to subscribers or LFAs as a result of these notices. Finally, the Report and Order eliminates the requirement that cable operators provide notice of changes to the information required in certain annual notices, finding that this information is available on the Internet or unlikely to be relevant to current subscribers.

Today’s Order is the 25th adopted as part the Commission’s Modernization of Media Regulation Initiative, launched in 2017, to eliminate or modify media regulations that are outdated, unnecessary or unduly burdensome.

Action by the Commission September 30, 2020 by Report and Order (FCC 20-135). Chairman Pai, Commissioners O'Rielly, Carr, Rosenworcel, and Starks approving. Chairman Pai, Commissioners O'Rielly, Rosenworcel, and Starks issuing separate statements.

MB Docket Nos. 19-347, 17-105, and 10-71.

###

Media Relations: (202) 418-0500 / ASL: (844) 432-2275 / Twitter: @FCC / www.fcc.gov

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

POTs and PANs

Broadband for All

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October 1, 2020

Are Cable Companies a Broadband Monopoly?

1 Comment

One of the products my consulting firm offers are statistically valid surveys, and conducting surveys has let us get a close look in many communities at the mix between cable broadband and telco DSL. In the last few years, the percentage of DSL subscribers in towns with a good cable company network has plummeted.

It's not unusual to see DSL market penetration in bigger towns of 10% or less, meaning in most cases that the cable company has essentially won the competitive battle. In most of these towns, we rarely see many DSL customers getting speeds faster than 15 Mbps on the DSL connection, and often a lot less.



We still occasionally see a town with a higher DSL penetration, often due to a telco like AT&T that upgraded the market to offer 50 Mbps DSL that uses two copper lines. But even in these markets, the cable companies have won most of the customers.

The primary reason we see people keeping DSL is price. We often find people paying \$35 to \$45 for a DSL connection who can't or won't upgrade to a more expensive cable modem connection. Many of these folks will hang on to the low-price connection until the day when the telco inevitably retires the telephone copper.

It's obvious to me that the cable companies are already monopolies in most markets. Any company in any other sector that captured 85% to 95% market share would be deemed a monopoly. I think the cable companies now meet the simple market share test.

Another way to identify monopolies is by noting examples of monopoly behavior. Economists have created a list of changes that are typical monopoly behavior. For example:

- Price Gouging. Monopolies raise prices over time when there are no competitors to keep them in check. Wall Street has been encouraging the big cable companies to aggressively raise broadband prices. All of the big ISPs have started the process of annually raising rates.
- Poor Service. Customer service tends to worsen from monopolies because they have no incentive to do better. The big ISPs were already rated as being the worst among all industries at customer service, and there is no reason to think it will ever get any better.
- Monopsony Power. This term refers to the tendency of monopolies to exploit their purchasing power by forcing low prices on their supply chain. Perhaps the best example of this is Comcast swallowing up the programmers that supply cable TV content.

The reason it's important to always refer to the big cable companies as monopolies is that we have laws that can kick-in to curb monopoly abuses. However, it likely takes widespread recognition that the cable companies are monopolies to have any hope of awakening monopoly remedies.

The government has a wide range of possible ways to regulate and/or curb monopoly abuses:

- Governments can fund or support competitors. In this country that likely means having grant programs to support those who would build networks to compete against the cable companies. There are no grants I know of that will fund a competitor to a cable HFC network.
- The remedy that monopolies hate the most is price regulation. We don't have to harken back very far into the past to a time when the FCC enforced price regulations over cable companies.
- One of the most natural ways to regulate monopolies is to enforce some kind of rate of return regulation. Capping monopoly profits will hold down rates.
- Both the FCC and the Federal Trade Commission have the authority to fine companies for monopoly abuses. These companies are so large that it's hard to hurt them through

The pandemic is speeding up the space internet race

How the technology behind airplane wifi could help connect everyone on Earth.

By Adam Clark Estes@adamclarkestesace@recode.net Sep 26, 2020, 4:00pm EDT

In vast swaths of the United States and the world, there are millions of people who don't have reliable internet access. These unconnected people aren't just in far-flung places like rural America or New Zealand or sub-Saharan Africa, either. There are plenty of people living in dense city centers with limited access to affordable broadband. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought new urgency to the challenge of getting everyone connected, and while companies like Google and Facebook have floated far-out ideas for solving the problem, the internet technology that's most promising is also one that's already proven: satellite broadband.

In early March, just days before cities across the US shut down due to the pandemic, Elon Musk shared the latest details about his plan to build a satellite broadband service called Starlink. Speaking at a satellite conference in Washington, DC, Musk described how a constellation of Starlink satellites will "blink" when they enter low-Earth orbit. As described, they almost sound like streaks of glitter in the night sky, or magic bands of flying gadgets that can beam internet down to anyone on the planet.

Combined with improvements to existing technology like DSL, cable, and fiber — not to mention 4G and 5G cellular networks — futuristic satellite broadband stands to bridge the digital divide in the US and elsewhere. And because the pandemic has prompted explosive demand for better, more widely available internet connectivity, fast progress seems more inevitable than ever.

Musk's new satellites went online in early September, giving beta testers download speeds that rival those of terrestrial broadband. SpaceX has now put 700 Starlink satellites into orbit in the past 16 months and has plans to deliver as many as 30,000 more in the next few years. More satellites mean more bandwidth and faster speeds, and eventually, SpaceX says, its low-Earth orbit satellite constellations could deliver high-speed internet to the entire US. Amazon, Facebook, and several startups have made similar promises in recent years.

The concept of satellite-based internet service is actually decades old. However, the innovative low-Earth orbit satellite technology being developed by SpaceX and others could be essential, if not transformative, for everything from telemedicine to remote learning in places that aren't already connected.

Satellite broadband could also be very profitable for whichever company figures it out first. One could imagine Amazon using satellite broadband to boost its Amazon Web Services (AWS) business, or Facebook using it to ensure that more people get on its platform. And if Musk gets

his way, his Starlink constellations will generate billions of dollars in profits to fund his mission to colonize Mars.

This all sounds futuristic, but satellite broadband is already a very real thing. In fact, if you've ever connected to wifi on a plane or cruise ship, you've probably used it. The basic idea is that ground stations connected to the internet, known as gateways, can send data up to a satellite which then relays that data to antennas somewhere else on the ground — or on a ship or an airplane.

The problem with this technological feat is that it's all very expensive. It can cost hundreds of millions of dollars to launch satellites into space, and that's not even taking into account what it takes to get over regulatory hurdles. Plenty of companies have tried and failed to crack the business model in the past 20 years. But rather suddenly, the space internet game has changed.

"The Covid-19 crisis has significantly accelerated attention to and investment in satellite technology," Babak Beheshti, dean of the College of Engineering and Computing Sciences at the New York Institute of Technology, told Recode. Beheshti added that the number of launches had gone up tenfold from last year to this year. "Why? Because schools, local governments, and others suddenly needed to have broadband internet access in areas where there was really no infrastructure in place."

This might sound like proof that satellite broadband is finally on its way to solving the digital divide, but the situation remains tenuous. As SpaceX started firing up its Starlink satellites, Amazon in July received approval from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to launch 3,236 low-Earth orbit satellites for a constellation of its own called Project Kuiper. Meanwhile, longtime satellite broadband industry leaders like Viasat can't seem to get new satellites into the sky fast enough to keep up with demand. And along the way, the federal government is pledging billions of dollars in subsidies to companies that bring broadband to rural America.

In some ways, the dream of connecting everyone on Earth has never been closer. In other ways, it's hard to tell whether the latest innovative ideas will suffer the same pitfalls as those of years past.

Satellite broadband, briefly explained

Satellite broadband is exactly what it sounds like: broadband internet access delivered via satellite. The basic idea hasn't changed much since the heyday of satellite TV in the late '90s when companies would beam internet connectivity to the same dish that received your HBO signal at speeds that were faster than dial-up but still slower than today's broadband.

In 2020, there are two main ways companies deliver satellite broadband. The key difference between them is how high the satellites orbit. Geosynchronous satellites, which orbit about 22,000 miles above a fixed place on Earth's surface, is an older technology that companies like Viasat use for broadband connections. You've probably used this tech for airplane wifi.

Then there are low-Earth orbit constellations, which are made up of hundreds, if not thousands, of smaller satellites that orbit between 300 and 1,200 miles above Earth. This is the approach that's getting all of the buzz lately, and the one SpaceX and Amazon are taking.

Geosynchronous satellites are the more mature, more proven technology. Viasat and a company called Hughes, which is the former parent company of DirecTV, have been around for decades. (DirecTV actually used its dishes and infrastructure to offer a satellite internet service called DirecPC back in the late '90s.)

Viasat and Hughes are also the two companies that most likely offer satellite broadband in remote parts of the US right now. If you're someone who lives in the New Hampshire wilderness, where there are no terrestrial broadband options, you can get a version of DSL, which operates on existing copper telephone lines, that's essentially as sluggish as dial-up. Or, you can sign up for geosynchronous satellite broadband through Viasat or Hughes and get speeds comparable to basic broadband: about 25 megabits per second. Plans start at \$40 to \$50 a month and get more expensive if you want more bandwidth.

Though they are dependable, these geosynchronous satellite systems have some issues. The main one is latency. The satellites are thousands of miles above Earth's surface, so it takes time for data to travel — and that might mean a slight delay between sending and receiving. This isn't a problem if you're just browsing the web. It's a significant problem if you're trying to stream video games or do video calls, something we're all doing more than ever before. Just think about remote TV news correspondents who have to wait half a beat between when the anchor in the studio asks the question and when they hear it in their earpiece, as the signal travels up to a communications satellite and then back down to the surface.

Low-Earth orbit constellations, like the ones SpaceX and Amazon are building, promise to solve the latency problem. Because the satellites are closer to the ground, the data doesn't have to travel as far. Musk says this means SpaceX's Starlink satellites, which will orbit at around 340 miles above the surface, will offer low latency, thus reducing the risk of lag. The latency question is a big deal to the FCC and its decision to hand out billions of dollars in subsidies, by the way. The agency says it will prioritize networks that offer low latency when giving out funding.

Still, there are other unanswered questions about just how fast and dependable newly designed low-Earth orbit constellations will be. Unlike geosynchronous satellites, which are fixed above one spot, low-Earth orbit satellites circle the planet every 90 to 120 minutes. They're designed to stay connected to the ground station and to the end user by staying connected to each other, but if this chain gets broken, it would disrupt the connection. These constellations are also made up of thousands of relatively small satellites — Starlink satellites weigh less than 600 pounds — which means they require multiple launches, which are expensive.

"As more satellites go up, they optimize the network architecture," explained Manny Shar, head of analytics at Bryce Space and Technology. "In the next couple of years, we should see decent improvements in rural areas where there's really limited capability, and there's limited

competition to improve that. So at the very least, there will be an alternative option that those rural users can take advantage of.”

Shar’s point about limited competition is an important one. Many parts of the United States, for instance, have access to slower DSL connections thanks to telephone lines, but because upgrading that infrastructure is so expensive, the telecom companies that serve those areas often have little incentive to do so. That leaves residents depending on a mix of poor wired connections and often spotty cellular networks.

New technology like 5G could ostensibly bring faster cellular speeds to remote areas, but again, building that infrastructure takes time and money. Satellite broadband, meanwhile, can beam fast, reliable, and potentially affordable internet access down to nearly anywhere on Earth. This also requires time and money, but what we’re seeing in 2020 is that the pandemic is attracting all kinds of investment in the technology, which means more satellites are launching.

Both geosynchronous and low-Earth orbit satellite broadband systems have pros and cons. The former is already viable, albeit not perfect. The latter holds promise, albeit unfulfilled. But to reach that goal of connecting more people, it will all come down to money.

The slow march of progress

The future of satellite-based broadband largely depends on who can get the most bandwidth into space for the least amount of money. Each individual satellite, by design, can offer a limited amount of bandwidth, so companies are either making lots of satellites to launch at once — as SpaceX is doing — or they’re investing in technological improvements and launching new satellites every few years. This is Viasat’s strategy, and the company plans to launch a new satellite called Viasat 3 next year that’s expected to vastly improve its network. This satellite and others like it weigh tens of thousands of pounds, so these launches are expensive.

One could see the appeal of launching lots of smaller satellites over time, especially if you’re a company like SpaceX and own your own rockets. Amazon and its Project Kuiper, similarly, have the benefit of being owned by Jeff Bezos, who also owns the rocket ship maker Blue Origin. It’s unclear how Blue Origin might factor into Project Kuiper, however. In fact, Amazon has revealed very little about the project other than it plans to offer affordable high-speed, low-latency internet service through low-Earth orbit satellites.

“There are still too many places where broadband access is unreliable or where it doesn’t exist at all,” Amazon senior vice president Dave Limp said in a statement following the FCC’s approval of the first Project Kuiper launch. “Our \$10 billion investment will create jobs and infrastructure around the United States that will help us close this gap.”

Selling affordable satellite broadband to individual customers in rural areas will not generate enough revenue to send the needed satellites to space. Again, each launch costs hundreds of millions of dollars, and selling service for \$40 a month to individual households can’t cover the startup costs. And even then, not everyone who needs internet access can afford that. This

economic challenge is part of why the dream of offering satellite-based internet to anybody on Earth — or any other kind of reliable, high-speed internet — has been so elusive.

This is also why companies that have been successful at building satellite broadband networks have approached the challenge from different angles. Viasat, for instance, spent years building out an enterprise business, selling bandwidth to the military and governments, not to mention helping you get wifi on airplanes. Now, the company says demand from the consumer market has been on the rise and has simply exploded since the pandemic hit. And that demand isn't necessarily coming from the most remote areas.

"It turns out that a lot of the demand tends to be around the major metro areas," said Viasat CEO Mark Dankberg. "In the highest demand markets — in the Midwest, in the Southeast — we've been out of bandwidth for two years. So we can't have that many more customers until we get our next satellite." Dankberg added Viasat is developing technology that would involve connecting its existing geosynchronous satellites with its own low-Earth orbit satellites, as well as cellular networks, for faster, lower latency connections.

As Recode's Emily Stewart recently explained, broadband access isn't just a problem in rural Montana. Even in city centers and suburbs, the infrastructure to offer high-speed internet access either doesn't exist or is too expensive for many people to afford. This means that new options, including space internet, could connect millions of Americans more quickly than it would take to expand existing terrestrial infrastructure.

That doesn't make providing access to those in far-flung regions any less of a priority, and government subsidy programs are helping to make this happen, albeit slowly. Coincidentally, just as the pandemic pushed the country into lockdown, the FCC launched its Rural Digital Opportunity Fund, which will provide up to \$16 billion to telecom companies that expand internet access in rural areas. SpaceX has applied for funding, although it must prove its service offers the low latency and high speeds required by the agency to get the money. Viasat received \$87.1 million in funding from a similar FCC program last year.

Again, in the absence of government funding, companies like SpaceX and Amazon are in a unique position to take the lead in the satellite broadband industry because building such an infrastructure will come in handy for other reasons. SpaceX is in a leading position to deliver its satellites into low-Earth orbit. The benefit of Amazon owning its own satellite broadband network also seems apparent. When it goes online, Project Kuiper could be an immediate boon to the company's AWS business.

"Amazon is essentially, effectively going to be its own biggest customer to really prime the pump for the revenue stream," said Beheshti, who is also a senior member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. "And then, obviously, the additional revenue streams would come from the residential individual consumers."

The benefits of satellite-based internet services have been obvious for years. However, for years, companies have struggled to make those ambitions meet reality. It's not for lack of trying — and trying creative approaches, too. Alphabet continues to pursue a project called Loon, which

started out as a Google experiment about 10 years ago. Loon involves using high-altitude balloons that beam internet access down to rural areas. After being deployed in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria, a fleet of Loon balloons started delivering service to millions of people in Kenya in July, marking the first commercial application of the technology.

Meanwhile, Facebook has had its own far-fetched plans. Its initiative called Internet.org that aims to connect the entire planet suffered a big setback in 2016 when a SpaceX rocket carrying a satellite designed to deliver internet access to sub-Saharan Africa exploded on the launch pad. There was also Project Aquila, which involved sending solar-powered drones 60,000 feet into the atmosphere to connect rural areas. The company abandoned the project in 2018.

Big internet companies like Facebook and Google have also faced backlash for their lofty connectivity projects. While projects like Loon and Internet.org are billed as charitable initiatives to serve the public good, critics say they stand to violate the principles of net neutrality and serve the companies' best interest rather than the public's. After all, a free or low-cost internet service from Facebook or Google could simply steer billions of people to Facebook's and Google's products and services, Balkanizing the internet as we know it.

With all of these efforts, there are bound to be more failures, and possibly more backlash, in the future. Elon Musk's goal of offering high-speed broadband to everyone on Earth is a lofty one. We do know that such a thing is technically possible. It's expensive, and plenty of smart people are figuring out how to pay for it, while other promising tech, like 5G, continues to roll out. But if anything would motivate such a tremendous disruption in the internet service business, the pandemic should do it. Never before have we depended so much on connectivity. We might just have to leave planet Earth to get it.

YouTube TV Is Losing Regional Sports Channels Because Cordcutting Is No Better Than Cable

Catie Keck
9/30/20 3:40PM

Here we go again.

Proving once again that cord-cutting can be just as volatile as cable, it appears YouTube TV will be losing support for Fox regional sports networks beginning next month—for real this time. YouTube TV announced on its Twitter support page Tuesday that while the company had negotiated a deal earlier this year with the distributor of those networks, Sinclair Broadcast Group, to continue carrying them through the end of the MLB, NBA, and NHL seasons, that agreement is now expiring.

Beginning next month, YouTube TV users will no longer have access to those channels or any of the DVR content that's linked to their programming, the company said.

"We've been working to reach a more permanent solution since then, but, unfortunately now the seasons are over and that extension is expiring," a spokesperson for YouTube TV told Gizmodo in a statement by email. "Starting October 1, 2020, users will no longer be able to watch live, on demand, or recorded content from these networks. We don't take this decision lightly, and will continue to do our best to make YouTube TV a best-in-class experience."

Because public games of chicken over licensing agreements aren't totally uncommon, it's entirely possible a final-hour deal could be reached that would reverse the decision and keep Fox RSNs on the platform. As of Wednesday, it appeared that discussions were ongoing.

"While we are disappointed that YouTube will discontinue carriage of the RSNs, we remain in discussions in an effort to find a mutually acceptable path to returning the RSNs to Youtube TV," Barry Faber, Sinclair's president of distribution and network relations, said in a statement. "We intend to keep the public informed as to the progress of these discussions so that YouTube TV subscribers can make informed decisions regarding how to view the extremely popular programming carried on these RSNs."

But the reality is streaming services lose content all the damn time. The problem is that when it's sports, and particularly for regional coverage, options are often limited to just a handful of services that may or may not carry support for all the other stuff you want to watch—or may charge for perks like DVR that come standard on some services while others charge premiums.

This was for many viewers the whole reason we started cutting the cord to begin with. Cable networks are notorious for gouging customers for features that *should* be included in their expected (and advertised) cable costs but generally cost extra as well as for making the process of exiting a cable agreement or asking for a refund a hellish experience.

But streaming shenanigans are no better as of late. For regional sports viewers especially. The entire point of signing up for a streaming service is to avoid the headaches of what is and isn't covered and what is and isn't hidden behind fees or weird marketing. Now YouTube TV is leaving consumers having to either hop from one service to another or run, head-spinning, back into the cruel clutches of Big Cable. That's to say nothing of the rising costs of subscriptions in general. YouTube TV cost \$35 per month when it launched just a few years ago. Today, it costs \$65 per month.

Cord-cutting has its benefits, to be sure. But more and more, the problems that arise in licensing agreements and considerable price hikes are looking too much like the problems that led viewers to hightail it from cable programming to begin with.

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