

# NORTH METRO TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION MEETING

March 17, 2021

6:00 p.m.

Meeting will be held via Zoom. A link to the video conference will be emailed to participants.

## AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Public Comments
3. Changes to the Agenda
4. Consent Agenda [pp. 1-11](#)
  - a. Minutes of regular meeting of February 25, 2021
  - b. Minutes of Operations Committee meeting of March 2, 2021
  - c. February 2021 financial reports and bill list
5. Executive Director Report
  - a. Monthly Report [pp. 12-18](#)
6. Legal Counsel Report [pp. 19-21](#)
  - a. Monthly Report
7. Old Business
8. New Business
9. Recommended Reading [pp. 22-30](#)
10. Community Calendar
  - A. Next Meeting Dates:
    - a. Operations Committee – April 6, 2021
    - b. Executive Committee – April 7, 2021
    - c. Cable Commission – April 21, 2021
11. Adjournment

# **NORTH METRO TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

## **UNAPPROVED MINUTES**

**Commission Meeting – February 25, 2021**

### **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:** Julie Jeppson; Blaine, D. Love; Centerville, Dale Stoesz; Lino Lakes, Bob Nelson; Spring Lake Park, Steve McChesney; Circle Pines, Jesse Wilken; Ham Lake

**Directors Absent:** Brandon Winge; Lexington

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

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

### **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

The February 25, 2021 North Metro Telecommunications Committee meeting agenda was approved as presented. **Motion for approval made by B. Nelson. Second, D. Love. J. Jeppson, aye. D. Love, aye. S. McChesney, aye. D. Stoesz, aye. B. Nelson, aye. J. Wilken, aye. Motion passed unanimously.**

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

- **Minutes, Bill Lists, Financial Reports**

The November 18, 2020 NMTC meeting minutes, February 2, 2021 Operations Committee meeting minutes, February 3, 2021 Executive Committee minutes and the December and January bill lists and financial reports were approved as presented. **Motion for approval made by S. McChesney. Second, B. Nelson. J. Jeppson, aye. D. Love, aye. S. McChesney, aye. D. Stoesz, aye. B. Nelson, aye. J. Wilken, aye. Motion passed unanimously.**

### **REPORT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

H. Arnson reported on the following items:

- North Metro TV staff has assumed responsibility for recording most city meetings. As meetings move away from the Zoom format they will manage those as well. This will save cities the time and money necessary to hire and pay their own staff to record meetings.
- With high school sports resuming in mid-January, the NMTV sports crew resumed live coverage of games and production of the weekly sports highlight show, Sports Den. Most games are carried live on the cable and streaming channels and all games are carried live on the website and YouTube channel.
- Studio Manager, Eric Houston, has created a new show that can be utilized by organizations as a team building tool. The show, titled the Untitled Socially Distanced Game Show can have two to ten contestants and is recorded entirely via Zoom. Eric is working with Lori Higgins at the Metro North Chamber of Commerce to interest groups. The Chamber Board is planning on participating.
- Fourth quarter franchise and PEG fee payments and reports have been received. Calculations were made regarding fees returned to cities in 2021. The \$400,000 that was budgeted for return was divided based on the percentage of each city's cable revenue compared to total system cable revenue.

**MOTION:** To approve disbursement of the 2020 fees, retained by the Member Cities, as presented in the disbursement materials. **Motion for approval made by J. Jeppson. Second, D. Love. J. Jeppson, aye. D. Love, aye. S. McChesney, aye. D. Stoesz, aye. B. Nelson, aye. J. Wilken, aye. Motion passed unanimously.**

### **REPORT OF LEGAL COUNSEL**

M. Bradley reported on the following items:

- The Commission is in franchise renewal discussions with Comcast. A draft document was submitted to Comcast in August, which they responded to in February. The franchise term expired on December 31, 2020, but the franchise continues to roll over, month to month. Comcast must have a franchise in order to provide cable television service. Discussions have been had regarding formally extending the franchise for a period of time. The length of any extension is currently being considered.

- An update regarding the appeal of the FCC's Franchising Order (621 Order) was given. As background it was stated that the decision was a very negative one for local governments, as it reinterprets part of the Cable Act and would lower fees to the Commission. The Appeal is currently being considered in the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. Oral arguments are scheduled for April 15, 2021. A decision is expected the third or fourth quarter of 2021.
- The Department of Justice was considering whether to eliminate consent decrees with ASCAP and BMI that offer protections for municipalities that play music in public spaces. The decrees offer protections for how much can be charged for music licenses. A number of municipalities, including the Cable Commission submitted public comments in the proceeding, arguing that termination of the consent decrees would be contrary to the public's interest. The DOJ opted not to eliminate that consent order.
- The FCC had proposed to adopt new regulations that would expand the scope of its current rules for over the air reception devices, or OTARD. The Commission participated in the proceeding, along with many other municipalities. The proposed rules would have pre-empted local governments related to placement of antennas, and would have allowed companies to put them up wherever they wanted. It was argued that the FCC did not have jurisdiction and consumer protections needed to be considered. The decision was a partial victory as it was much more limited than initially proposed and relates only to OTARD's providing broadband services.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- Recommendations were made for members of the 2021 Executive Committee. Dale Stoesz, Brandon Winge, Julie Jeppson and Bob Nelson have all indicated a willingness to serve on the Committee. No other candidates expressed interest in the Committee.

**MOTION:** To approve Bob Nelson as Chair, Dale Stoesz as Vice Chair, Brandon Winge as Treasurer, and Julie Jeppson as Secretary of the 2021 Cable Commission. **Motion for approval made by D. Love. Second, J. Jeppson. J. Jeppson, aye. D. Love, aye. S. McChesney, aye. D. Stoesz, aye. B. Nelson, aye. J. Wilken, aye. Motion passed unanimously.**

- Every year as an administrative matter, the Commission has to decide whether or not to waive the statutory tort liability limits for insurance purposes. This decision determines the amount an individual would be able to

recover on any claim to which the statutory tort limits apply. In the past, the Commission has opted to NOTWAIVE the monetary limits on municipal tort liability.

**MOTION:** To NOT WAIVE the monetary limits on municipal tort liability. **Motion for approval made by S. McChesney. Second, B. Nelson. J. Jeppson, aye. D. Love, aye. S. McChesney, aye. D. Stoesz, aye. B. Nelson, aye. J. Wilken, aye. Motion passed unanimously.**

#### **COMMUNITY CALENDAR**

Upcoming meetings include:

1. The Operations Committee on March 2, 2021
2. The Executive Committee Meeting on March 3, 2021
3. The Cable Commission Meeting on March 17, 2021

#### **ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:36 p.m. **Motion for approval made by B. Nelson. Second, J. Jeppson. J. Jeppson, aye. D. Love, aye. S. McChesney, aye. D. Stoesz, aye. B. Nelson, aye. J. Wilken, aye. Motion passed unanimously.**

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Julie Jeppson; Secretary, NMTC

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

Tuesday, March 2, 2021

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 11:07 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

M. Wolfe, P. Antonen, S. Cotton, M. Statz, D. Buchholtz, B. Petrcek

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

D. Webster

**OTHERS PRESENT**

H. Arnson

**APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES**

The meeting notes of February 2, 2021 were approved by consensus.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

- The Commission continues to work with Comcast to renew the cable franchise. Comcast has just responded to the draft document sent to them by the Commission last August. The cable franchise expired on December 31, 2020 but rolls over month to month until it is renewed. The franchise can be extended for a period of time during renewal negotiations. That possibility is now being discussed.
- Oral arguments have been scheduled for April 15, 2021 in the Appeal of the FCC's 621 Order. The cable commission is participating in this appeal. The Order would allow cable companies to deduct the value of previously in-kind services, negotiated for in franchises, from franchise fees. If the Appeal fails, it could reduce franchise fees. A decision is expected in the third or fourth quarter of 2021

**OLD BUSINESS**

- There was no old business.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- Introducing closed captioning to the NMTV system was discussed. A full proposal regarding the options will be presented in the next month or so.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

**NORTH METRO TELECOMMUNICATION  
BILL LIST**

FEBRUARY 2021

<b>Date</b>	<b>Check #</b>	<b>Payee</b>	<b>Amount</b>	
FEBRUARY	COMBINED	PAYROLL	44,038.20	<b>WAGES</b>
FEBRUARY	COMBINED	IRS/US PAYABLE	14,117.46	<b>WAGES</b>
FEBRUARY	COMBINED	MN REVENUE PAYABLE	2,347.11	<b>WAGES</b>
FEBRUARY	COMBINED	PERA PAYABLE	7,824.32	<b>WAGES</b>
FEBRUARY	COMBINED	PEACHTREE	44.40	<b>MONTHLY SERVICE</b>
FEBRUARY	COMBINED	DISCOVERY BENEFITS	2,677.88	<b>HEALTH SAVINGS EMPLOYEE</b>
13811	2/1/21	Nat. Assn Officers & Advisors	2,190.00	<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>
13812	2/5/21	Richard D. Larson	395.00	<b>JANITORIAL</b>
13813	2/4/21	Bradley Law, LLC	587.50	<b>LEGAL/GENERAL</b>
13814	2/5/21	Grass Valley USA, LLC	8,869.00	<b>K2 PRIME SERVICE CONTRACT</b>
13815	2/8/21	City of Blaine	221,812.04	<b>2020 FRANCHISE FEE DISBURSEMENTS</b>
13816	2/8/21	City of Centerville	13,620.40	<b>2020 FRANCHISE FEE DISBURSEMENTS</b>
13817	2/8/21	City of Circle Pines	17,363.20	<b>2020 FRANCHISE FEE DISBURSEMENTS</b>
13818	2/8/21	City of Ham Lake	54,647.52	<b>2020 FRANCHISE FEE DISBURSEMENTS</b>
13819	2/8/21	City of Lexington	6,876.84	<b>2020 FRANCHISE FEE DISBURSEMENTS</b>
13820	2/8/21	City of Lino Lakes	63,609.20	<b>2020 FRANCHISE FEE DISBURSEMENTS</b>
13821	2/8/21	City of Spring Lake Park	22,070.79	<b>2020 FRANCHISE FEE DISBURSEMENTS</b>
13822	2/8/21	Aid Electric Corporation	905.00	<b>TOUCHLESS ENTRY/LAV'S/EXITS</b>
13823	2/7/21	Coastal Wintergreen LLC	2,645.00	<b>MONTHLY SERVICE</b>
13824	2/19/21	Z Systems	299.00	<b>STUDIO UPGRADES</b>
13825	2/24/21	Z Systems	718.00	<b>STUDIO UPGRADES</b>
13826	2/25/21	Anoka County Union Herald	48.95	<b>SUBSCRIPTION</b>
13827	2/25/21	DVS RENEWAL	94.25	<b>REGISTRATION RENEWAL</b>
13828	2/25/21	Katherine Mitchell	500.00	<b>STIPEND</b>
13829	2/28/21	Corporate Mechanical	651.65	<b>QUARTERLY CONTRACT</b>
13830	2/28/21	Michael S. Johnson	28.18	<b>MILEAGE</b>
EFILE	2/1/21	Authorize.Net	34.59	<b>MONTHLY SERVICE</b>
EFILE	2/15/21	Chase Visa Card Services	5,845.26	<b>MACTA/OS/STUDIO/SFTWR/STAMPS</b>
EFILE	2/1/21	Virtual Merchant Credit Card	10.00	<b>MONTHLY SERVICE</b>
EPAY-01	2/1/21	Principal Financial Group	485.79	<b>STD/LTD/LIFE/ADD</b>
EPAY-02	2/2/21	POPP TELECOM	218.94	<b>MONTHLY SERVICE</b>
EPAY-03	2/3/21	Comcast	539.67	<b>MONTHLY SERVICE</b>
EPAY-04	2/3/21	T-Mobile	102.16	<b>MONTHLY SERVICE</b>
EPAY-05	2/4/21	Speedway	115.56	<b>MONTHLY SERVICE</b>
EPAY-06	2/12/21	AT&T Wireless	427.47	<b>MONTHLY SERVICE</b>
EPAY-07	2/14/21	Republic Services	249.50	<b>MONTHLY SERVICE</b>
EPAY-08	2/15/21	CenterPoint Energy	426.25	<b>MONTHLY SERVICE</b>
EPAY-09	2/15/21	Comcast Business 1000M/1000M	1,426.48	<b>MONTHLY SERVICE</b>
EPAY-10	2/16/21	U.S. Bank Card Service	1,024.60	<b>vMIX/TECH/ADV/OS</b>
EPAY-11	2/22/21	HealthPartners	12,136.76	<b>HEALTH/DENTAL</b>
EPAY-12	2/26/21	Connexus Energy	1,687.11	<b>MONTHLY SERVICE</b>
EPAY-13	2/15/21	Quill Corporation	39.97	<b>OFFICE SUPPLIES</b>
JAN SALES TAX	2/8/21	MN Dept. of Revenue	136.00	<b>SALES TAX</b>

**513,887.00**

# North Metro Telecommunications Commission

Balance Sheet  
February 28, 2021

## ASSETS

### Current Assets

Cash - Checking Account	\$	2,476,695.75
Petty Cash		150.00
A/R - NMTC		194,954.36
Prepaid Insurance - NMTC		11,182.00

Total Current Assets 2,682,982.11

### Property and Equipment

Office Equipment - NMTC	1,433,026.18
Accum Deprec - NMTC	(2,794,512.72)
Bond Equipment 2016	1,985,000.00
Building-Polk/125	1,572,799.17
Land-Polk/125	225,700.00

Total Property and Equipment 2,422,012.63

### Other Assets

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

Total Assets \$ 5,145,327.74

## 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 Wages		135,295.43
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 2,222,672.36

### Long-Term Liabilities

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

Total Liabilities 2,758,963.36

### Capital

Net Equity	294,672.53
Net Equity - Media Ctr	(206,243.34)
Net Equity - NMTC	2,517,656.37
Net Income	(219,721.18)

Total Capital 2,386,364.38

Total Liabilities & Capital \$ 5,145,327.74

# North Metro Telecommunications Comm

## Cash Receipts Journal

For the Period From Feb 1, 2021 to Feb 28, 2021

Date	Transaction Ref	Line Description	Debit Amnt	Credit Amnt
2/21/21	TAPE DUBS-CASH	TAPE DUBS-CASH Miscellaneous receipts	66.28	66.28
2/21/21	TAPE DUBS-CHECKS	TAPE DUBS-CHECKS Miscellaneous receipts	232.49	232.49
2/21/21	CITY RECORDING SERV	CITY RECORDING SERVICES-LINO LAKES Miscellaneous receipts	103.34	103.34
2/22/21	INTEREST	INTEREST COMMISSION CHECKING INTEREST - COMMISSION	45.69	45.69
2/26/21	FEB CC SALES-SQUARE	FEBRUARY CREDIT CARD SALES-SQUARE FEBRUARY CREDIT CARD SALES-SQUARE-FEES Credit Card Sales	16.49 618.77	635.26
2/27/21	FEB CC SALES-AUTH	FEBRUARY CREDIT CARD SALES-AUTH FEBRUARY CREDIT CARD SALES-FEES Credit Card Sales	0.58 19.42	20.00
			<u>1,103.06</u>	<u>1,103.06</u>

# North Metro Telecommunications Comm

## Check Register

For the Period From Feb 1, 2021 to Feb 28, 2021

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

Check #	Date	Payee	Amount
EFILE	2/1/21	Discovery Benefits	22.50
EFILE	2/1/21	Authorize.Net	34.59
EFILE	2/1/21	Virtual Merchant Credit Card	10.00
EPAY-01	2/1/21	Principal Financial Group	485.79
EFILE	2/1/21	Discovery Benefits	1,500.00
13811	2/1/21	Nat. Assn Officers & Advisors	2,190.00
EPAY-02	2/2/21	POPP TELECOM	218.94
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EPAY-03	2/3/21	Comcast	539.67
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13815	2/8/21	City of Blaine	221,812.04
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13820	2/8/21	City of Lino Lakes	63,609.20
13821	2/8/21	City of Spring Lake Park	22,070.79
13822	2/8/21	Aid Electric Corporation	905.00
JAN SALES TAX	2/8/21	MN Dept. of Revenue	136.00
EFILE	2/10/21	Discovery Benefits	577.69
EFILE	2/12/21	MN Dept. of Revenue	1,127.18
EFILE	2/12/21	Public Employees Retirement	3,679.42
EFILE	2/12/21	IRS/US BANK	6,339.14
EPAY-06	2/12/21	AT&T Wireless	427.47
PEACH	2/12/21	Peachtree/Sage Software	22.20

# North Metro Telecommunications Comm

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EPAY-13	2/15/21	Quill Corporation	39.97
EPAY-10	2/16/21	U.S. Bank Card Service	1,024.60
13824	2/19/21	Z Systems	299.00
EPAY-11	2/22/21	HealthPartners	12,136.76
EFILE	2/24/21	Discovery Benefits	577.69
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13827	2/25/21	DVS RENEWAL	94.25
13828	2/25/21	Katherine Mitchell	500.00
EPAY-12	2/26/21	Connexus Energy	1,687.11
EFILE	2/26/21	MN Dept. of Revenue	1,124.18
EFILE	2/26/21	Public Employees Retirement	3,679.42
EFILE	2/26/21	IRS/US BANK	6,324.98
PEACH	2/26/21	Peachtree/Sage Software	22.20
EFILE	2/28/21	Public Employees Retirement	465.48
EFILE	2/28/21	MN Dept. of Revenue	95.75
EFILE	2/28/21	IRS/US BANK	1,453.34
13829	2/28/21	Corporate Mechanical	651.65
13830	2/28/21	Michael S. Johnson	28.18
<b>Total</b>			<b>469,848.80</b>

# North Metro Telecommunications Comm

## General Journal

For the Period From Feb 1, 2021 to Feb 28, 2021

Date	Reference	Trans Description	Debit Amt	Credit Amt
2/1/21	ACCRUED VAC/SIC/COMP	ACCRUED VAC/COMP/SICK ACCRUED VAC/COMP/SICK	112,429.97	112,429.97
2/1/21	ACCRUED WAGES	ACCRUED WAGES ACCRUED WAGES	13,460.80	13,460.80
2/28/21	ACCRUED DEPRECIATION	ACCRUED DEPRECIATION ACCRUED DEPRECIATION	12,900.00	12,900.00
2/28/21	ACCRUED VAC/SIC/COMP	ACCRUED VAC/SICK/COMP ACCRUED VAC/SICK/COMP	119,855.52	119,855.52
2/28/21	ACCRUED WAGES	ACCRUED WAGES ACCRUED WAGES	13,140.80	13,140.80
	<b>Total</b>		<b>271,787.09</b>	<b>271,787.09</b>

# North Metro TV

February 2021 Update

## Program Production

In February, a total of 70 **new programs** were produced utilizing the North Metro facilities, funds, and services. This constitutes **66:15:00 hours of new programming.**

- 18 programs were produced by the public
- 46 programs were produced by NMTV staff
- 6 programs were produced by City staff



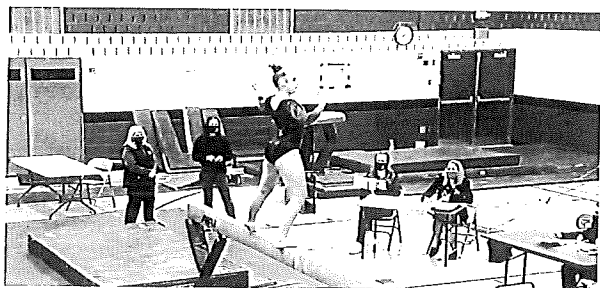
## Van Shoots

The HD production truck was not utilized in February, as a safety precaution. Truck shoots are scheduled to resume in March, with play-offs.

## vMix Live Single Cam Shoots

The vMix single camera production system was utilized to record/transmit live fourteen high school sporting events. The vMix system is safer to utilize as it requires significantly fewer staff members who are spread out over multiple locations, connected via the internet.

- Gymnastics: Champlin Park vs. Centennial
- Girls Basketball: Blaine vs. Centennial
- Boys Basketball: Centennial vs. Blaine
- Boys Swim & Dive: Andover vs. Centennial
- Boys Basketball: Totino Grace vs. Centennial
- Girls Hockey: Centennial vs. Blaine
- Boys Basketball: Park Center vs. Spring Lake Park
- Boys Basketball: Andover vs. Blaine
- Boys Hockey: Spring Lake Park vs. Blaine
- Girls Basketball: Totino Grace vs. Spring Lake Park
- Boys Basketball: Andover vs. Spring Lake Park
- Boys Swim & Dive: Anoka vs. Centennial
- Boys Hockey: Osseo vs. Spring Lake Park
- Boys Swim & Dive: Elk River vs. Centennial



## Most Viewed YouTube Sporting Event

Gymnastics:  
Champlin Park vs. Centennial  
636 Views

## Live Workshops

Workshop	Instructor	Organization	Students
<b>Live Lecture</b> - Star Trek: Behind the Scenes of the Final Frontier	Eric Houston	Robbinsdale Community Education via Zoom (Fee Paid)	12
Training for Zoom Game Show	Eric Houston	General Public via Zoom	3
<b>Live Lecture</b> - Yabba-Dabba-Do! The Fantastic World of Hanna-Barbera	Eric Houston	General Public via Youtube	22
<b>3 Live Workshops</b>			<b>37 Students</b>

## VOD Workshop Views

Workshop	Type	# of Views	Hours Viewed
Eurovision: A Celebration	Mini	37	3 hrs
Yabba-Dabba-Do! The Fantastic World of Hanna...	Full	198	30 hrs
Superman: The Man of Steel on the Silver Screen	Full	35	9.25 hrs
The Fantastic Four on the Silver Screen	Mini	11	.75 hrs
Christmas in Hollywood	Full	7	2.5 hrs
TV's Greatest Christmas Specials	Full	21	3 hrs
Chicago Christmas Classics	Mini	120	5.5hrs
Let's Go Ghostbusters: Filmaton's Haunted Heroes	Mini	12	.5 hrs
Monster Movies of the 40s and 50s	Full	28	4.75 hrs
Monster Movies of the 20s and 30s	Full	20	3 hrs
The Presidency on Film JQA to JFK	Full	14	1.75 hrs
Monstervision: The Legend of Joe Bob Briggs	Mini	31	3.25 hrs
The Cult of Caroline Munro	Mini	1435	59.75 hrs
The Marilyn Monroe Story	Full	113	12.25 hrs
Nick at Nite: A TV Viewer's Dream	Mini	53	2 hrs
The Birth of Animation: Mickey, Bugs, and Betty...	Full	9	.25 hrs
Hollywood Goes to War: World War II	Full	26	2.75 hrs
Come on Down: Game Shows of the 70s and 80s	Full	34	2 hrs
The Quiz Show Scandals and Other Game Shows...	Full	93	19.75 hrs
The Three Stooges: Comedy's Heavy Hitters	Full	7	.5 hrs
The Marx Brothers: Groucho, Harpo, Chico...	Full	328	39.5 hrs
Mary Pickford: The World's First Movie Star	Full	17	2.75 hrs
Hollywood Goes to the Dogs: Lassie, Benji...	Full	7	.5 hrs
<b>23 VOD Workshops</b>		<b>2,640 Total Views</b>	<b>214.00 Hours Viewed</b>



### Most Viewed YouTube Workshop

The Cult of Caroline Munro  
1,435 Views

## YouTube Stats

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Month	Viewers	Videos Viewed	Hours Watched	New Subscribers	Total Impressions
January	23,800	38,487	3,620.2	132	532,400
February	21,198	34,307	3,201	103	507,655
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>44,998</b>	<b>72,794</b>	<b>6,821.2</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>1,040,055</b>

## NMTV Website Stats

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Month	Number of Users	Number of Views	Live Stream Views
January	6,103	20,923	1,324
February	5,860	16,285	1,692
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>11,963</b>	<b>37,208</b>	<b>3,016</b>

## Home Movie Transfers

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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	387	74	136	3	516	\$1,927.20
February	358	77	101	15	1,097	\$688.06
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1,613</b>	<b>\$2,615.26</b>

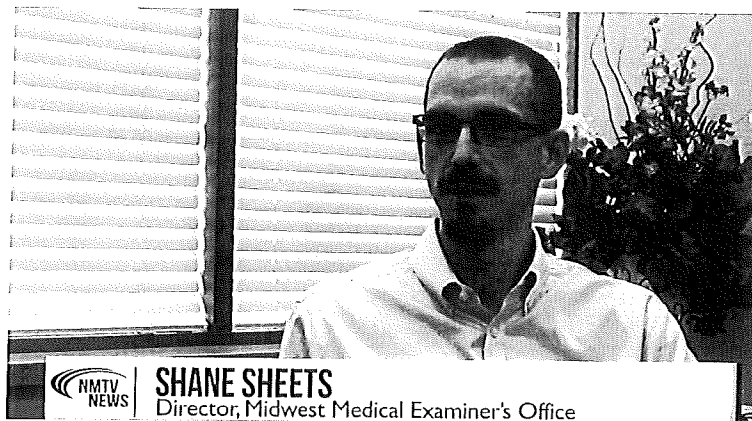
## Production Highlights

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### 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 February highlights include:

- Girl Scout Troops Trying to Boost Recruitment
- New Vets Center Opens in Downtown Anoka
- Blaine High School Music Teacher Wins Statewide Honor
- School Bus Driver Shortage Remains
- Midwest Medical Examiners Office Has Statewide Impact from Anoka County
- Anoka County Conservation District Helps to Manage North Metro Natural Resources
- Distance Learning Could Continue Next Year for Some Students
- Quad Area Chamber of Commerce Expands Digital Footprint
- Snowshoe Rentals Popular at Wargo Nature Center
- Statewide Speeding Crackdown
- Spring Lake Park Leaders Pass Median Safety Guidelines
- Bus Rapid Transit Coming to Blaine



- Lucy's Burgers Expands to Blaine
- Retired Fire Chief Comes Home After Three Months in Hospital

In addition to daily playbacks of North Metro TV News on the cable systems, there are 805 local stories archived for viewers on the NMTV YouTube channel. The channel can be accessed through the northmetrotv.com website.

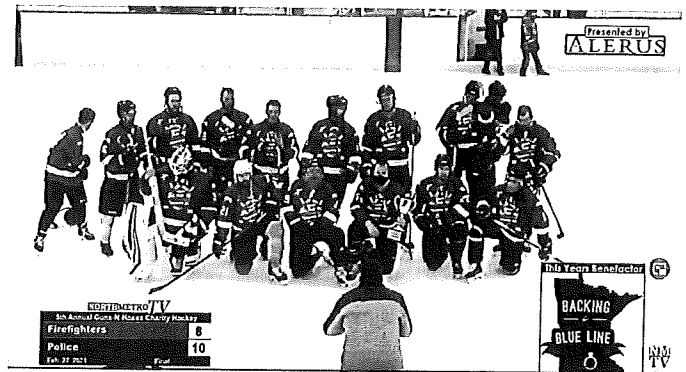


## Most Viewed YouTube News Story

School Bus Driver Shortage Remains  
237 Views

## Guns-N-Hoses Charity Hockey Event

Special Events Coordinator, T.J. Tronson, produced Lino Lakes' 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Guns-N-Hoses charity hockey event at the end of February. T.J. utilized NMTV's new vMix system to both record and transmit the event live. Three cameras, in-field encoders, an MC, pre-recorded interviews, live interviews and full page and lower thirds graphics were incorporated. Backing the Blue, a non-profit organization dedicated to the support of the law enforcement community, was the beneficiary of this year's event.



## Mayor's Minutes

Municipal Producer, Trevor Scholl, produced two episodes of Mayor's Minutes in February. The program gives Mayors an opportunity to update residents on all the important issues and events taking place in the city. All Member City mayors are invited to participate. This month, Mayor Sanders of Blaine and Mayor Murphy from Lexington were able to participate.



## New Workshops

Instructor, Eric Houston, continues to create new and interesting workshops. This month he completed work on Yabba-Dabba-Do! The Fantastic World of Hanna-Barbera. This lecture covers the career of TV animation pioneers William Hanna and Joseph Barbera. It explains how the duo started out making Tom and Jerry cartoons and how they revolutionized animation by bringing it to TV. The class includes tidbits such as how Frank Sinatra influenced the creation of Scoobie-Doo, which celebrity inspired Yogi Bear, and rare footage from the Flintstones pilot. Eric also posted a new mini-lecture entitled Eurovision: A Celebration. This short workshop covers the world famous Eurovision song contest. It's a giant contest that pits original songs, from all over Europe, against each other in a ceremony more spectacular than the Academy Awards.

## City Productions

In February, Municipal Producer, Trevor Scholl, completed four productions. The shows included two episodes of Mayor's Minutes, a Centerstage Centerville business profile, and the Blaine Police Department Awards. Programs completed include:

- Blaine Winter Mayor's Minutes
- Lexington Winter Mayor's Minutes



- Centerstage Centerville: JPs Liquors
- Blaine PD Awards

New and ongoing projects include:

- Property marker video for Blaine
- Blaine STEM Academy profile
- Blaine PD hearing impaired relations
- Lino Lakes fire recruitment updates
- Animal Humane Society
- More Centerstage Centerville business profiles
- 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.

## Public Access Programs

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Title	Producer	Runtime
Rice Creek Watershed District Meeting (2 episodes)	Theresa Stasica	02:26:10
Christ Lutheran Church (4 episodes)	Chance Amundson	03:54:12
Lovepower (4 episodes)	Rick Larson	04:00:00
The Power of Love (4 episodes)	Rick Larson	02:00:00
Oak Park Community Church (4 episodes)	David Turnidge	02:37:50
<b>18 New Programs</b>		<b>15:58:12 New Hours</b>

## NMTV Staff Programs

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Title	Producer	Runtime
Anoka County Board Meeting (2/9/21)	T.J. Tronson	00:33:48
Anoka County Board Meeting (2/23/21)	T.J. Tronson	01:38:49
Guns N Hoses Hockey Game	T.J. Tronson	01:38:49
NMTC Meeting (2/25/21)	Heidi Arnson	00:36:32
NMTV News (3 episodes)	Danika Peterson/Rusty Ray	01:12:55
Anoka County Sheriff's Office Joins Statewide Speeding Crackdown	Danika Peterson/Rusty Ray	00:02:57
Snowshoeing Grows in Popularity at Wargo Nature Center	Danika Peterson/Rusty Ray	00:02:00
Centerstage Centerville: JPs Liquors	Trevor Scholl	00:01:30
Lexington Mayor's Minutes Winter	Trevor Scholl	00:04:57
Blaine Mayor's Minutes Winter	Trevor Scholl	00:05:53
Blaine PD Awards	Trevor Scholl	00:14:43
Gymnastics: Champlin Park/Centennial	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	02:21:16
Girls Basketball: Blaine/Centennial	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:12:15
Boys Basketball: Centennial/Blaine	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:18:07
Boys Swim & Dive: Andover/Centennial	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:47:54
Boys Basketball: Totino Grace/Centennial	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:02:16
Girls Hockey: Centennial/Blaine	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:16:54
Boys Basketball: Park Center/Spring Lake Park	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:21:30
Boys Basketball: Andover/Blaine	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:09:39
Boys Hockey: Spring Lake Park/Blaine	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:16:30
Girls Basketball: Spring Lake Park/Totino Grace	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:21:41
Boys Basketball: Andover/Spring Lake Park	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:37:01
Boys Swim & Dive: Anoka/Centennial	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:47:45
Boys Hockey: Osseo/Spring Lake Park	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:33:53

Boys Swim & Dive: Elk River/Centennial	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:49:40
Sports Den (4 episodes)	Kenton Kipp/J. Millington	01:40:17
<b>31 New Programs</b>		<b>28:46:34 New Hours</b>

## City Meetings

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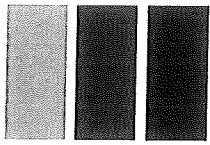
Title	Producer	Runtime
Blaine City Council Meeting (2/1/21)	T.J. Tronson	01:25:22
Blaine Planning Commission Meeting (2/2/21)	T.J. Tronson	00:57:33
Blaine City Council Meeting (2/17/21)	Trevor Scholl	02:06:32
Centerville Planning & Zoning Meeting (2/2/21)	Centerville Staff	02:14:01
Centerville Park & Rec Meeting (2/3/21)	Centerville Staff	02:02:06
Centerville City Council Meeting (3/10/21)	Centerville Staff	01:38:32
Centerville EDA Meeting (2/17/21)	Centerville Staff	02:04:33
Centerville City Council Meeting (2/24/21)	Centerville Staff	02:00:54
Circle Pines City Council Meeting (2/9/21)	Patrick Willson	00:56:03
Circle Pines Utility Commission Meeting (2/17/21)	Patrick Willson	00:21:26
Circle Pines City Council Meeting (2/23/21)	Patrick Willson	00:39:54
Ham Lake City Council Meeting (2/1/21)	Patrick Willson	00:03:00
Ham Lake City Council Meeting (2/16/21)	Patrick Willson	00:27:38
Ham Lake Planning Commission Meeting (2/22/21)	Patrick Willson	00:30:55
Lexington City Council Meeting (2/18/21)	Lexington Staff	00:58:18
Lino Lakes City Council Meeting (2/8/21)	Anne Serwe	00:21:24
Lino Lakes Planning & Zoning Meeting (2/10/21)	Anne Serwe	00:35:04
Lino Lakes City Council Meeting (2/22/21)	Anne Serwe	00:07:35
Spring Lake Park City Council Meeting (2/1/21)	Isaac Quick	01:31:25
Spring Lake Park City Council Meeting (2/16/21)	Isaac Quick	01:05:17
Spring Lake Park Planning Commission Meeting (2/22/21)	Isaac Quick	00:23:07
<b>21 New Programs</b>		<b>22:30:39 New Hours</b>

If you have any questions or comments regarding this monthly report please contact  
Heidi Arnson at 763.231.2801 or [harnson@northmetrotv.com](mailto:harnson@northmetrotv.com).

# NORTH METRO TV

## Production Statistics 2021

Programming Statistics	J	F	M	A	M	J	JU	A	S	O	N	D	21 Total	21 Average
<b>Cablecast Programs</b>	2478.00	2262.00											4740.00	396.00
Cablecast Hours	1985.50	1945.50											3931.00	327.58
Programs Produced - Public	18.00	12.00											30.00	2.50
Program Hours Produced - Public	14.00	10.00											24.00	2.00
Prog. Produced - Affiliated Public	6.00	6.00											12.00	1.00
Prog. Hours Produced - Affil. Public	6.00	5.00											11.00	0.92
Programs Produced - City Staff	10.00	6.00											16.00	1.33
Program Hours Produced - City Staff	14.50	12.00											26.50	2.21
Programs Produced - NIMTV Staff	49.00	46.00											95.00	7.92
Prog. Hours Produced - NIMTV Staff	39.50	39.25											78.75	6.56
Total Public Programs Produced	24.00	18.00											42.00	3.50
Total Staff Programs Produced	59.00	52.00											111.00	9.25
Total Internal Programs Produced	83.00	70.00											153.00	12.75
% Staff Produced Programs	71.08%	74.29%											72.55%	72.55%
% Public Produced Programs	28.92%	25.71%											27.45%	27.45%
External Programs Submitted	15.00	27.00											42.00	3.50
External Program Hours	11.50	19.50											31.00	2.58
Total New Programs	98.00	97.00											195.00	16.25
<b>Public Equipment Usage Statistics</b>														
Facility Hours Available	105.00	105.00											210.00	17.50
Camera Check Outs	5.00	4.00											9.00	0.75
Studio A	0.00	0.00											0.00	0.00
% of Available Time Studio A	0.00%	0.00%											0.00%	0.00%
Studio B	0.00	0.00											0.00	0.00
% of Available Time Studio B	0.00%	0.00%											0.00%	0.00%
Editing	16.00	17.00											33.00	2.75
% of Available Time Editing	15.24%	16.19%											15.71%	1.24%
Number of Public Facility Users	5.00	2.00											7.00	0.58
Total Hours of Public Use	49.00	26.00											75.00	6.25
<b>Production Van/Mix Statistics</b>														
Number of Van Shoots	0.00	0.00											0.00	0.00
Total Van Usage Hours	0.00	0.00											0.00	0.00
Number of vMix Shoots	13.00	14.00											#DIV/0!	0.00
Intern Hours	27.50	10.00											37.50	3.13
Volunteer Hours	0.00	0.00											0.00	0.00
<b>Workshop Statistics</b>														
Number of Live Workshops	2.00	3.00											5.00	0.42
Number of Students at Live Workshops	23.00	27.00											50.00	4.17
VOD Students All Workshops	3677.00	2640.00											6317.00	526.42
<b>Media Transfer Statistics</b>														
Total Transfer Equip. Usage Hours	387.00	358.00											745.00	62.08
Tapes Transferred	74.00	77.00											151.00	12.58
Film Reels Transferred	136.00	101.00											4.93	5.17
Slides/Photos Transferred	516.00	1097.00											1613.00	134.42
DVDs Copied	3.00	15.00											18.00	1.50
Transfer Hours By Public	10.50	32.00											42.50	3.54
Transfer Hours By Staff	376.50	326.00											702.50	58.54
<b>NIMTV YouTube Statistics</b>														
Number of Viewers	23800.00	21198.00											44998.00	3749.83
Total Videos Viewed	38487.00	34307.00											72794.00	6066.17
Total Hours Watched	3620.20	3201.00											6821.20	568.43
Number of New Subscribers	132.00	103.00											235.00	19.58
Total Impressions	532400.00	507655.00											1040055.00	86671.25
<b>NIMTV Website Statistics</b>														
Number of Users	6103.00	5860.00											11963.00	996.92
Number of Views	20923.00	16285.00											37208.00	3100.67
Live Stream Views	1324.00	1692.00											3016.00	251.33



# Bradley

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** North Metro Telecommunications Commission  
**From:** Mike Bradley and Vince Rotty  
**Re:** March 2021 Legal Update  
**Date:** March 4, 2021

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### **FCC Cable Franchising Appeal**

Oral argument for our appeal of the FCC's cable franchising order has been scheduled for Thursday, April 15, 2021. Thank you for your continued participation in this proceeding.

### **Open Meeting Law Updates**

Several bills have been introduced in the Minnesota legislature that seek to amend the Minnesota Open Meeting Law. The first would amend the OML to include more modern language that more accurately reflects the current technology being used to conduct remote meetings (HF1140, SF1544). This amendment does not appear to cause any significant statutory changes.

The second bill would amend the OML to remove the limit on the number of times an individual can remotely participate in a public meeting under Minn. Stat. § 13D.02 from January 1, 2021 through July 1, 2021. As a reminder, Minn. Stat. § 13D.02 allows certain individuals serving in the military and individuals who have been advised to remotely participate in a meeting for medical reasons to remotely participate up to three (3) times in a calendar year. This remote participation exception (and limitation) under Section 13D.02 is separate from the so-called "pandemic exception" for remote meeting participation that exists under Minn. Stat. § 13D.021.

### **OTARD Rule Effective Date**

Following up on a previously reported item, the FCC's new OTARD rule will go into effect on March 29, 2021. As a reminder, this new rule prohibits local laws and regulations that restrict the installation of broadband-only hub and relay antennas on private property.

### **Emergency Broadband Benefit Program**

The FCC has formally established the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program that will support broadband services to help low-income households. The FCC was required to establish the program under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 that provided a number of COVID-19 relief measures.

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Bradley Law, LLC

2145 Woodlane Drive | Suite 106 | Woodbury, MN 55125 | (651) 379-0900 | [BradleyLawMN.com](http://BradleyLawMN.com)

Under the program, the FCC will directly reimburse participating service providers who provide discounted broadband services to low-income households. This means that in many instances, low-income households will have no out-of-pocket expenses related to establishing service or paying monthly rates or fees.

A summary of the program can be found on the FCC's website here (<https://www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit>).

## **Federal Legislation**

- American Rescue Plan Act (HR 1319)

The American Rescue Plan Act is Congress' latest COVID-19 relief measure. The Act was passed by the House on 2/27, and the Senate is expected to pass the Act sometime in mid-March. The House version of the Act includes roughly \$7.6 billion for expanding the E-rate program to support off-campus remote learning and roughly \$350 billion for state, local, and tribal governments and territories.

- CABLE Leadership Act (HR 1148)

Rep. Billy Long (R-MO) has introduced a bill that would require franchising authorities to act on applications for new cable franchises in 120-days, and a deemed granted remedy would apply for any failure to act.

- CABLE Competition Act (HR 1103)

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-TX) has introduced a bill that would prohibit franchising authorities from precluding franchise transfers or requiring approval for transfers.

- Cable Transparency Act (HR 1064)

Rep. Markwayne Mullin (R-OK) has introduced a bill that would cause all cable franchises to have a perpetual term (without any requirement for renewal) until the franchise is revoked or terminated. Cable operators would also be allowed to terminate a franchise upon request and seek franchise modification "for good cause."

- CONNECT Act (HR 1149)

Rep. Billy Long (R-MO) has introduced a bill that would prohibit any state or local entity from providing or offering for sale any broadband Internet access services.

## **FCC Section 230 Rulemaking**

During the last presidential election cycle, the FCC initiated a rulemaking proceeding that sought to eliminate the immunities enjoyed by social media platforms under Section 230 of the Communications Act ("Section 230"). Section 230 currently allows social media platforms and

Internet service providers to restrict access to “obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, excessively violent, harassing, or otherwise objectionable” speech on a good faith basis.

In a recent press conference, Acting FCC Chairwoman Rosenworcel made clear that she has no plans to act on the proceeding, preserving Section 230 for the time being.

IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE SIXTH CIRCUIT

City of Eugene, Oregon, et al.	)	
Petitioners,	)	
	)	
v.	)	Case No. 19-4161
	)	and consolidated cases
Federal Communications Commission	)	
and United States of America,	)	
Respondents.	)	

**CORRECTED MOTION OF  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
FOR ABEYANCE**

The Federal Communications Commission respectfully requests that the Court postpone the argument scheduled for April 15, 2021, and place this case in abeyance for 120 days from the date of the scheduled argument in light of recent changes in the membership and leadership of the Commission.

Placing this case in abeyance will allow the newly constituted Commission an opportunity to determine how it plans to proceed with respect to this case. Undersigned counsel is authorized to represent that Petitioners in the consolidated cases and the Intervenor in support of Petitioners consent to the motion, Respondent the United States does not oppose the motion, and counsel for Intervenor National Cable and Telecommunications Association (“NCTA”) has stated that NCTA intends to oppose this motion.

1. In this case, Petitioners seek review of the FCC order, *Implementation of Section 621(a)(1) of the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984*, 34 FCC Rcd 6844 (2019) (*Order*). The *Order* addressed the authority of state and local governments under Title VI of the Communications Act, 47 U.S.C. §§ 552-573, to impose franchise fees and other requirements on cable operators in return for cable operators' access to the local rights-of-way. Specifically, the *Order* held that under the Act, (1) "franchise fees" paid by cable operators to franchising authorities include cable-related, "in-kind" contributions and (2) franchising authorities are prohibited from regulating the non-cable facilities and services of cable operators. The Commission also preempted state and local franchising regulations that are inconsistent with the Act, including regulations that impose additional fees, or require an additional franchise, for the non-cable services of cable operators.

The Commission released the *Order* on August 2, 2019. Petitions for review were timely filed in the U.S. Courts of Appeals for the Third, Ninth, and D.C. Circuits. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2112(a)(5), the petitions for review were transferred to the Ninth Circuit, and on November 29, 2019, that court granted the Commission's motion to transfer the petitions to this Court. The petitions were thereupon consolidated. After briefing was completed, the Court scheduled oral argument on April 15, 2021.

2. In the time since the briefs were filed, the composition and leadership of the Commission have changed. The former Chairman of the Commission, Ajit Pai, left the agency, and Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel was designated by the President as Acting Chair. In addition, with the expiration of his term, Commissioner Michael O’Rielly left the agency and, on December 8, 2020, was replaced by Commissioner Nathan Simington.

As a result, of the four current members of the agency, two (the Acting Chair and Commissioner Geoffrey Starks) dissented from the *Order* under review. There is accordingly no longer a majority of the members of the Commission who voted in favor of the *Order*. Placing the case in abeyance would permit the Commission as currently constituted – and any fifth Commissioner who might be appointed and confirmed to the agency in the interim – the opportunity to consider how to proceed in this case, including whether to revisit some or all of the actions taken in the *Order*. It would also serve to avoid the need for this Court to hold argument at this time on challenges to an order that might be re-evaluated by the agency.

For the foregoing reasons, the Court should grant this motion and place this case in abeyance for a period of 120 days, or until August 13, 2021.

March 10, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

P. Michele Ellison  
Acting General Counsel

Jacob M. Lewis  
Associate General Counsel

/s/ Maureen K. Flood

Maureen K. Flood  
Counsel

Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20554  
(202) 418-1740

# Tech's Legal Shield Appears Likely to Survive as Congress Focuses on Details

By David McCabe

- March 9, 2021

WASHINGTON — Former President Donald J. Trump called multiple times for repealing the law that shields tech companies from legal responsibility over what people post. President Biden, as a candidate, said the law should be “revoked.”

But the lawmakers aiming to weaken the law have started to agree on a different approach. They are increasingly focused on eliminating protections for specific kinds of content rather than making wholesale changes to the law or eliminating it entirely.

That has still left them a question with potentially wide-ranging outcomes: What, exactly, should lawmakers cut?

One bill introduced last month would strip the protections from content the companies are paid to distribute, like ads, among other categories. A different proposal, expected to be reintroduced from the last congressional session, would allow people to sue when a platform amplified content linked to terrorism. And another that is likely to return would exempt content from the law only when a platform failed to follow a court's order to take it down.

Even these more modest proposals to the legal shield, Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, could ripple across the internet. The adjustments could give companies like Facebook and YouTube an incentive to take down certain types of content while leaving up others. Critics of the ideas also say there is a huge potential for unintended consequences, citing a 2018 law that stripped the immunity from platforms that knowingly facilitated sex trafficking, making some sex work more unsafe.

“I think we are trying to say, ‘How can you narrowly draw some exceptions to 230 in a way that doesn't interfere with your free speech rights?’” said Senator Mark Warner of Virginia, who has introduced legislation to trim the law with a fellow Democrat, Senator Mazie Hirono of Hawaii.

The calls for change gained momentum after the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol, which was carried out in part by people linked to QAnon and other conspiracy theories that thrive on social media. Critics say the shield has let the tech giants ignore criminal activity, hate speech and extremist content posted on their services.

The law protects websites from many lawsuits over content posted by their users or the way sites choose to moderate that content. Passed in 1996, it enabled the rise of large online services

because they didn't need to assume new legal liability each time they added another one of their billions of users.

Major tech companies have said they are open to trimming the law, an effort to shape changes they see as increasingly likely to happen. Facebook and Google, the owner of YouTube, have signaled that they are willing to work with lawmakers changing the law, and some smaller companies recently formed a lobbying group to shape any changes.

Some small steps — like pushing for content to be taken down after a court order — could earn the support of tech companies. But others, like stripping immunity from all ads, would probably not.

Many lawmakers say creating carve-outs to the law would allow them to tackle the most pernicious instances of disinformation or hate speech online without disrupting the entire internet economy, steamrolling small websites or running afoul of free speech rights.

“There isn't any legislation that deals with everything,” said Representative Anna G. Eshoo, a California Democrat who has proposed carving out certain content from the law. Credit...Anna Moneymaker/The New York Times

“There isn't any legislation that deals with everything,” said Representative Anna G. Eshoo, a California Democrat who has proposed carving out certain content from the law. “When someone says eliminate Section 230, the first thing it says to me is that they don't really understand it.”

But there are many other unresolved issues. Lawmakers must decide how close they want to get to the core business models of the platforms versus just encouraging better moderation. One way to cut to the core would be to limit the shield when a post is amplified by the proprietary algorithms that rank, sort and recommend content to users, as Ms. Eshoo's bill would in some cases. Or, as Mr. Warner's bill does, lawmakers could simply say Section 230 shouldn't apply to any ads at all.

And they must grapple with the question of whether any changes should apply only to the biggest platforms, like Facebook and YouTube, or take effect across the entire internet. Smaller companies have argued that they should be exempt from many changes.

“I think we want to take as modest of a step as possible,” said Hany Farid, a professor at the University of California, Berkeley, who researches misinformation. “Give it a year or two, see how it unfolds and make adjustments.”

The lawmakers' focus on targeted changes to the law is a familiar one. In 2018, Congress passed a law that removed Section 230 protections when platforms knowingly facilitated sex trafficking.

But Mr. Trump was focused on repealing the law. In his final weeks in the White House, he pushed congressional Republicans to end the protections in an unrelated defense funding bill. His supporters and allies may not be satisfied by the targeted changes proposed by the Democrats who now control both the Senate and the House.

The White House did not immediately offer a comment on the issue on Monday. But a December op-ed that was co-written by Bruce Reed, Mr. Biden's deputy chief of staff, said that "platforms should be held accountable for any content that generates revenue." The op-ed also said that while carving out specific types of content was a start, lawmakers would do well to consider giving platforms the entire liability shield only on the condition that they properly moderate content.

Supporters of Section 230 say even small changes could hurt vulnerable people. They point to the 2018 anti-trafficking bill, which sex workers say made it harder to vet potential clients online after some of the services they used closed, fearing new legal liability. Instead, sex workers have said they must now risk meeting with clients in person without using the internet to ascertain their intentions at a safe distance.

Senator Ron Wyden, the Oregon Democrat who co-wrote Section 230 while in the House, said measures meant to address disinformation on the right could be used against other political groups in the future.

"If you remember 9/11, and you had all these knee-jerk reactions to those horrible tragedies," he said. "I think it would be a huge mistake to use the disgusting, nauseating attacks on the Capitol as a vehicle to suppress free speech."

Industry officials say carve-outs to the law could nonetheless be extremely difficult to carry out.

"I appreciate that some policymakers are trying to be more specific about what they don't like online," said Kate Tummarello, the executive director of Engine, an advocacy group for small companies. "But there's no universe in which platforms, especially small platforms, will automatically know when and where illegal speech is happening on their site."

The issue may take center stage when the chief executives of Google, Facebook and Twitter testify late this month before the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which has been examining the future of the law.

"I think it's going to be a huge issue," said Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers of Washington, the committee's top Republican. "Section 230 is really driving it."

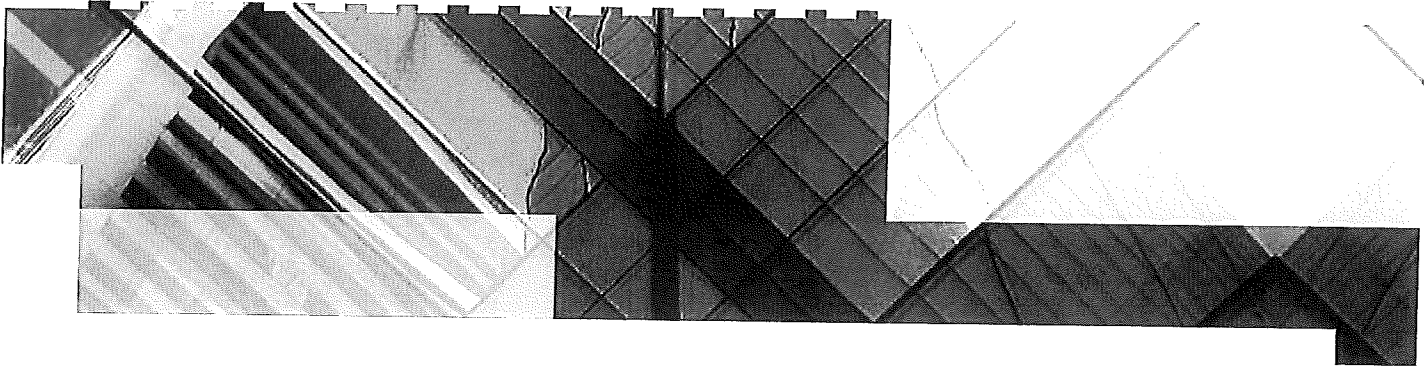
David McCabe covers tech policy. He joined The Times from Axios in 2019.

# POTs and PANs

Broadband for All

SE

Home About CCG Engineering Implementation Regulatory  
Sales and Marketing Strategy and Planning



December 23, 2020

## Is Cable TV Dying?

1 Comment

A recent article in *Axios* was titled 'Cable TV's Slow, Painful Death'. The article makes a few interesting predictions about the cable industry. The article predicts that 25 million homes will cut the cord by 2025. Since the traditional cable industry has recently been losing over a million homes per quarter it's not hard to imagine losing five million cable homes per year. The article's boldest prediction is that the industry will stabilize at 50 million homes – something I've not seen predicted elsewhere.

The article's prediction matches the belief of many, that cable is quickly dying. But there are a lot of moving parts in the industry trends that could lead to different long-term outcomes. Consider the following:

- In the recently completed third quarter of this year, the MVDPs alternatives of Hulu + Live TV, Sling TV, and AT&T TV Now added as many customers as were lost by traditional cable companies. By the time you add in fuboTV and YouTube TV, this industry segment added more customers than were lost by the traditional cable companies for the quarter. This indicates that a lot of homes are still willing to pay to watch the traditional networks that have been carried by the traditional cable providers. Is it possible that loyalty to traditional cable programming will be strong enough to keep most homes buying some version of cable programming?



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- Several online MVPDs have announced significant price increases in just the last month. Saving money is the major reason that households say they are cutting the cord. How many homes will hesitate to cut the cord or even return to cable companies if the price of the online alternatives is also perceived as expensive?
- The cable companies are already resigned to losing traditional cable customers, and most of them have publicly said so. While losing cable customers cost these companies a lot of top line revenue, the margins are so thin on cable that bottom line losses are relatively small. The margins on cable TV have been shrinking to the point that there is no margin for smaller companies providing cable TV, and the margins for the large cable companies can't be a lot better. This trend would indicate that cable companies might not even try to keep cable customers.
- As *Axios* points out, sports programming is the big unknown. It's what keeps a lot of homes buying traditional cable. A lot of pundits are predicting that sports networks will strike out on their own, but that's incredibly risky and might not happen. Consider the example of the Big Ten Network. The best I can tell the network is collecting monthly fees from around 60 million homes per month. If those fees are fifty cents per month (I'm just guessing), then the network would have to find two million customers willing to pay \$15 per month for the network to break even. These networks have to be seeing the same trends mentioned above where the Big Ten Network is picking up customers online at the same pace it's losing traditional cable customers. I can't see any current motivation for the Big Ten Network to strike out on its own.

The bottom line from these trends is that nobody can foresee where the industry is going. It's clear right now that homes are cutting the cord from the traditional cable companies. The big wild card in making any predictions is what the biggest traditional cable companies decide to do. If these companies decide to stop fighting for cable customers, then the traditional industry could collapse a lot faster than predicted by *Axios*.

But the big companies could also decide to remain relevant in the industry. The big cable companies could migrate programming online or could buy the biggest online providers. Perhaps the big cable companies can finally convince Congress to allow for some version of a la carte programming to let people buy only the channels they want. There is also nothing stopping traditional cable companies from streaming content so that viewers could binge watch a whole season.

There is one interesting wild card that must be influencing the big cable companies. The big four of Comcast, Charter, AT&T, and Verizon control 73% of the cable market today – but they also control 73% of the broadband market. None of these ISPs want to see the programming from the remaining 76 million cable customers flood online. That much of an increase in video would swamp the broadband networks of these providers.

I love making predictions because as a blogger I'm not hurt if my predictions are wrong. But my crystal ball is totally cloudy when it comes to predicting the trajectory of how people will choose to watch video.



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