



An Industry-Wide Effort COMMUNITY LOSSES UNDER STATEWIDE/STATE-ISSUED FRANCHISING PEG CHANNELS

There are approximately 5,000 Public, Educational and Government (PEG) access channels across the country. These channels deliver local government meetings, important safety information from first responder personnel, educational programming and distance learning, individual and non-profit programming. Since “Statewide/State-Issued Video Franchise” laws have passed, local communities have lost PEG channels and funding.

- **CALIFORNIA:** At least 51 PEG access centers have been shut down in California. In Los Angeles alone, Time Warner shut down 14 Public access centers and with the federal law that limits PEG support to capital expenses alone, Los Angeles could not afford to fund any Public access centers.
- **FLORIDA:** Bright House has slammed the PEG channels out of the Basic Tier into the more expensive non-Basic Digital Tier (600’s), where many customers cannot receive the channels without renting additional equipment. 40% of Bright House subscribers do not have digital cable, therefore the communities of Tampa, St. Petersburg, Hillsborough County and Manatee alone, almost 170,000 subscribers will not be able to view the PEG channels. Additionally, the state law allows operators such as Bright House to conduct “Push-Polling” of all of the subscribers and only if a majority of all of the subscribers respond that they want the PEG channels, will cable operators provide them to the community. Further, that law states that the operator must warn subscribers that Public access channels carry adult content.

Communities such as Palm Beach, West Palm Beach, Miami, Tampa and Pinellas County are and have lost PEG support funding causing layoffs and channel shut down. Mediacom has recently threatened the access channel in Port St. Joe that they will take away the channel if it has “underwriting.”

All PEG support funding ends January 1, 2012

- **ILLINOIS:** Comcast informed the villages of Mundelein and Graystake, Ill., as well as the Community High School District 128 and the Cook Memorial Library District, that it will no longer cablecast village, school or library board meetings.

- **INDIANA:** In what appears to be a direct violation the statewide franchising law, Comcast notified producers in South Bend, Hammond, Merrillville, Mishawaka, Plymouth, Goshen, and Portage that it would be closing production studios and playback facilities for public access TV.

- **KANSAS:** Loss of PEG funding. Salina Community Access Television, in a Cox service area, has lost \$150,000 per year or 1/3 of their budget. Additionally, Cox would not continue to provide the cable drops to the PEG center, the City or Kansas State University, so there could be live programming unless they were paid \$450 per month for each drop. Four years since the passage of statewide franchising there is limited competition, AT&T is only providing service to Overland Park and a portion of Leavenworth County, two of the wealthiest areas in the state.

- **Missouri:** PEG channels in Missouri have been slammed to the 900's by Charter Communications. The most recent channel slamming took place in St. Louis County wanted to sue but declined in fear of what the lawsuit would cost them (estimates ranged from \$300,000 to over \$1 million). Charter told the town of Farmington that it would lose its channel in January and if they wanted local programming, such as the city council meetings it would have to pay to lease a channel. Missouri loses all PEG support funding January 1, 2012.

- **Nevada:** SNCAT (Sierra Nevada Community Access Television) had to shut down in July 2010 because statewide franchising legislation in Nevada eliminated all PEG support and the city could not afford to fund it. SNCAT had been in operation for over 20 years.

- **NORTH CAROLINA:** Statewide franchising created a PEG capital fund to be distributed to PEG channels. It was promised that each PEG channel would receive \$25,000 in capital support. But instead, each channel is receiving about \$6,000 because the legislature underestimated the number of PEG channels. Time Warner has refused to provide channels in Nash County and Henderson and terminated PEG support and studios in Durham. The state legislature recently corrected this problem by doubling the amount of PEG support the operators have to pay.

- **OHIO:** The statewide law in Ohio allows the cable operators and telephone companies to charge the community for transmission of the channel. These transmission charges can run as high as \$100,000 per year, much more than most communities can afford. Wadsworth Ohio has lost \$125,000 in PEG funding from Time Warner. On January 1, 2012, all PEG funding will cease.
- **WISCONSIN:** Charter attempted to slam all the PEG channels into the 900's until Madison threatened a lawsuit. Charter conceded and provided PEG channels an analog channel at their same position, but has PEG on the 900's and when the digital transition occurs, that is where PEG will be permanently located. Wisconsin loses all PEG support funding ends May 1, 2011.

It would seem the cable and video service industry is attempting to rid itself of these important community channels. Smaller communities in particular are the most vulnerable because they can't fight these large corporations. And for many small communities, PEG television channels are the only local media available.