

Spotsylvania County
Cable Television and Telecommunications
Commission
2019 ANNUAL REPORT



August 2019

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Spotsylvania County Television and Telecommunications Commission

Mission of the Commission

The Spotsylvania County Cable Television and Telecommunications Commission (CTTC) was created by ordinance as an advisory group to the Board of Supervisors. The CTTC promotes and encourages compliance with franchise agreements among the cable companies operating within Spotsylvania County, reviews and advises the Board on cable, telecommunications and local infrastructure issues, and promotes the use of PEG Public Access channels to keep citizens informed.

Accomplishments

The Spotsylvania County Cable Television and Telecommunications Commission (CTTC) was created by ordinance as an advisory group to the Board of Supervisors. The CTTC promotes and encourages compliance with franchise agreements among the cable companies operating within Spotsylvania County, reviews and advises the Board on cable, telecommunications and local infrastructure issues, and promotes the use of PEG Public Access channels to keep citizens informed.

- In January 2019, motions were passed to maintain the current Chair and Vice Chair positions. Herbert Pritchett will remain the Chairman and Joseph McBride will remain the Vice Chairman of the Commission.
- Comcast continues to work with the County and the Commission on buildout of infrastructure. If service expansion requests do not meet density requirements of the Cable Television Franchise Agreement, a cost sharing provision is calculated for the lower density areas. In 2018, there were 18 Aid in Construction Projects that Property Owners help pay for and these projects resulted in 20 homes passed.
- Comcast built out to many new subdivisions and individual homes; a new section of Fawn Lake, Augustine in Sawhill, a section of Barley Woods, sections in Breckenridge Farms, extensions in Hudgins Farm, Courtland Park, Fortunes Landing, Mallard Landing Wheatland Station, are just examples of the expansion. Expansion into new build areas of the County in 2018, pass approximately 1300 homes. Comcast's infrastructure passes approximately 79% of Spotsylvania County.
- Multiple requests for Verizon service have been recorded throughout the year to the Commission. Several of the larger requests include:

Lake Wilderness II

After securing approval from the National Park Service for extension of Fios TV service into Lake Wilderness II, the build is complete. Serving a total of 565 homes.

Six Lakes West

Verizon completed build and has a bulk agreement to provide Fios TV service to the Six Lakes West community. Serving a total of 57 homes.

- Central Virginia Public Access Television Corporation (CVTV) is a 501(c)3 corporation made up of a group of active members of our communities with the goal to make a positive impact with the creation of CVTV. CVTV mission is to provide the communities of Central Virginia programs with purpose, meaning and excellence through the voice of Public Access Television. 2018 continues to focus on local events and introducing unknown areas and things to do in the region, adding an increased emphasis of the history of the area and high school activities, sports and the arts. New in 2018 was the beginning and launch of CVTV NEWS sponsored by Germanna Community College.
- Spotsylvania County and Comcast participated and was awarded the 2018 VATI grant. The County was awarded \$167,260 to provide services to residents on Towles Mill Road. A total of 161 homes were served with this grant.
- A broadband capability document has been published on the County's website.

- We have finalized two locations in partnership with the Rappahannock Regional Library that provides wifi access to citizens at least one night a week and it is also available in the parking lot after hours as well. The two locations are Belmont Community Center and Partlow Ruritan Club.

Objectives for 2019

The Spotsylvania County Cable and Telecommunications Commission continues to serve a vital role for County citizens, as a liaison between county service providers and customers who experience connectivity and service issues, unresolved customer service complaints, and the extension of cable services throughout the county. The Commission works to explore creative and innovative ways to expand broadband services, both wired and wireless, throughout the community to ensure the needs of County citizens are addressed.

- Continue to monitor levels of service of the three cable companies franchised to do business in Spotsylvania County, and regularly report findings to the Board of Supervisors
- Continue to explore options for remaining pockets of the County that are unserved or underserved with cable internet services.
- Advance Commission initiatives for carrier of last resort concerns.
- Expand information available on the County's website related to cable and telecommunications initiatives.
- Continued efforts to participate in collaborative agreements with other entities for the expansion of broadband
- Continued efforts to participate in federal and state grant opportunities
- Ensure legislative priorities include the continuing of the funding for the VATI grant (the current governor has a ten-year plan, with substantial financial investment planned). Actual grant fund budget was significantly less than promoted by the governor.
- Ensure there are adequate staff resources to pursue these grant opportunities. It is Staff's recommendation that we hire temporary full-time staff to actively pursue these endeavors on a full-time basis, for the next 2-3 years.
- To get local representation on the state's broadband committee; they appear to have left off a number of critical locality resources that would greatly benefit the expansion of broadband throughout the state.
- Redefine and enhance the role of the cable and telecommunications commission to strengthen their role in development of a broadband plan, to aid in the support of further grant opportunities.
- Define unserved and underserved areas (how big is the problem?)
- Identify programs to help low-income families gain affordable access to broadband services (an interesting endeavor to follow in Alexandria/Arlington, where they are subsidizing broadband services to low-income families.
- Re-engage and actively pursue collaborative efforts with Rappahannock and Dominion Electric, as they continue expansion of their fiber connectivity into the rural areas of the county.
- Develop alliances with adjoining counties that create joint broadband groups, to better position localities for grants.
- Evaluate the need to fund the County's wireless authority, through creative funding methods (grants, proffers, if possible, philanthropy, donations) to have the county oversee the expansion of broadband in unserved and underserved areas.

CTTC Members

Current voting CTTC members are as follows:

Battlefield	Kahlil DeBerry Email: kahlil.deberry@comcast.net Representing Board Member - Chris Yakabouski	Exp. 12/31/21
Berkeley	Kenneth Crist Email: kipcrist@mac.com Representing Board Member - Kevin Marshall	Exp. 12/31/21
Chancellor	Herbert W. Pritchett, Sr. (Chairperson) Email: hwpritchettsr@yahoo.com Representing Board Member - Timothy J. McLaughlin	Exp. 12/31/19
Courtland	Robert Northrop Email: rdnorthrop@aol.com Representing Board Member - David Ross	Exp. 12/31/19
Lee Hill	Wendy A. Latella Email: wendylatella@yahoo.com Representing Board Member - Gary Skinner	Exp. 12/31/21
Livingston	Toby Layman Email: tlayman6@gmail.com Representing Board Member - Greg Benton	Exp. 12/31/19
Salem	Joseph McBride (Vice Chairperson) E-mail: jgmcbride@verizon.net Representing Board Member - Paul Trampe	Exp. 12/31/19

Chairman and Vice-Chairman

In January 2019, motions were passed to maintain the current Chair and Vice Chair positions. Herbert Pritchett will remain the Chairman and Joseph McBride will remain the Vice Chairman of the Commission.

Reappointments

There were two (2) reappointments in 2018, Kahlil DeBerry and Wendy Latella.

Appointments

There was one (1) new appointment in 2018, Kenneth Crist.

Meeting Frequency

The CTTC meets on the second Thursday of each month. Information regarding meetings, minutes, and agendas can be found at <http://www.spotsylvania.va.us/CableCommission> under Monthly Meetings.

Staff Contacts

Jane Reeve – Director, Information Services
Email: jreeve@spotsylvania.va.us Phone: (540) 507-7552

Pete Zicari – School Board Information Technology Representative
Email: pzicari@spotsylvania.k12.va.us Phone: (540) 898-6033

Chris Glover – CRRL Information Technology Representative
Email: cgllover@crrl.org Phone: (540) 372-1160

Vacant– GCC Information Technology Representative
Email: Phone: (540) 834-1920

Cable Service Complaints/Comments

For any cable services you may need, you may reach the service providers as follows:

- Comcast at 800-266-2278
- Cox Cable at 540-373-6343
- Verizon Fios at 1-800-VERIZON, or via their website at www.verizon.com

All efforts to resolve cable related issues should be conducted directly with the service provider. Each Cable Commission member represents a district in Spotsylvania County and has been appointed by your Board of Supervisors to help citizens with questions they may have regarding the Franchise Agreements and the enforcement of terms and conditions between the providers and the County.

The County also offers a Citizen Cable Complaint telephone line for citizens if there are issues with cable service that citizens are unable to resolve directly with a provider. Citizens may either call the Citizen Cable Complaint Line at 540-507-7560 and leave your name, address, phone number and a brief message for a return call, or email the County at cabletv@spotsylvania.va.us with your complaint. The County office will contact the local cable company about citizen complaints, notify the district's cable commission member, and follow up as needed to resolution. The cable providers are responsible for following up with the citizen and the County to help bring reported issues to a positive resolution.

Number of Complaints

Cox – 0
Comcast – 19
Verizon – 10

Number of Requests for Service

Cox - 0
Comcast - 31
Verizon - 4



Overview

Cox Communications opted not to provide information this year for the County's annual report. Kevin McNulty is the Franchise Manager for Spotsylvania County. Their company annual report can be accessed at <http://www.coxenterprises.com/media/144852/winter%202017%20issue.pdf>

Cox provides services primarily in the Lafayette Blvd/Rt. 1/Tidewater Trail corridor, in close proximity to the City of Fredericksburg. County staff estimates that Cox serves approximately 500 customers in Spotsylvania County.

Cox rarely has citizen complaints regarding their delivery of services, and is highly responsive to any issues brought to their attention.

PEG Channels

The County's Government channel airs on channel 87.

The Schools channel airs on channel 86.

CVTV airs on channel 88.

Franchise Agreement

The Cox franchise agreement is a ten year agreement and expires in March 2024. Cox's Franchise Agreement was approved by the Board March 11, 2014. A copy of the franchise agreement can be found at <http://www.spotsylvania.va.us/CoxCable>.



Overview

Comcast's infrastructure passes approximately 79% of Spotsylvania County. Marie Schuler remains the Director of Government and Community Affairs of Northern Virginia, serving as the franchise manager for Spotsylvania County.

Program Offerings and Service Fees

Beginning January 1, 2018 there were new prices for select XFINITY TV.

During 2018, Comcast made the following changes to their service:

WDCW This TV agreed to give up their spectrum in the FCC Spectrum Auction; they now share space with WFDC.

Xfinity Mobile potential customers can now "bring your own device" when signing up for the service.

Mobile customers with an iPhone 6 and newer with iOS 11.02 or later can make and receive phone calls, send and receive text messages over a WiFi connections, at no additional cost.

Sling TV joined Netflix, You Tube and Pandora as apps on the X1 platform.

Xfinity launched 27 ethnic options on their international channels and packages.

Xfinity Instant TV was launched. The TV services targets customers who do not want a cable box or watch TV through a Roku device.

DTA's (Digital Terminal Adapters) a low cost adapter that unscrambles channels has now expanded to the digital preferred tier.

Xfinity Home continues to grow partnerships with other manufacturers giving customers remote access to lighting, door locks, thermostats, garage door openers, cameras, etc. In 2018 high quality image cameras and smoke/CO detectors were added,

Xfinity began deploying Pod and xFi Gateways to improve the wireless experience in customers' homes.

See a list of Comcast's current service offerings and fee schedules at:
<http://www.comcast.com/default.csp>

Customer Service

Comcast continues to add tools and technology to improve the customer experience.

- Video programming was repackaged to simplify options
- Launched International language support in conjunction with our ethnic programming launches. There are now translators available to discuss services in Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

- Comcast remains dedicated to our customers who are reflected in the improved NPS score we receive from them.
- Western Union is now an option for the customers to pay their bills. WU is located in FasMart's, Weis, Walgreens, Giant, Food Lion stores,

Build-Outs/Service Expansions

Comcast continues to work with the County and the Commission on buildout of infrastructure. If service expansion requests do not meet density requirements of the Cable Television Franchise Agreement, a cost sharing provision is calculated for the lower density areas.

Comcast built out to many new subdivisions and individual homes; a new section of Fawn Lake, Augustine in Saw Hill, a section of Barley Woods, sections in Breckenridge Farms, extensions in Hudgins Farm, Courtland Park, Fortunes Landing, Mallard Landing, are just examples of the expansion.

Lake Anna

A final report was sent to the County on January 10, 2019. Comcast built an additional 497 homes beyond the scope of the Franchise Agreement.

VATI Grant

In partnership, Comcast and the County applied for and was awarded a grant from the Department of Housing and Community Services to build infrastructure on the remainder of Towles Mill Rd, and portions of Dickerson and Duerson.

PEG Channels

The County Government channel airs on channel 23.

The Schools channel airs on channel 18.

The Classic Arts Networks airs on channel 68.

CVTV airs on channel 2.

Franchise Agreement

The Comcast franchise agreement is a ten year agreement executed in June 2013, and expires in June 2023. A copy of the franchise agreement can be found at <http://www.spotsylvania.va.us/ComcastCable>.



Overview

Verizon currently provides service to over 15,000 customers in Spotsylvania County. Ms. Louise Anderson remains as Verizon's Franchise Manager for Spotsylvania County.

Program Offerings and Service Fees

See a list of Verizon's current service offerings and fee schedules at:

<http://www.verizon.com/home/fiostv/>

Fios

As required by the Franchise Agreement, Verizon has continued to deploy Fiber to the Premises (FTTP) in new developments, to meet obligations to provide Fios TV.

Customer Service

Verizon has no local office presence for Verizon Fios in the county, and provides all customer service on their website at www.verizon.com.

Build Outs

Multiple requests for Verizon service have been recorded throughout the year to the Commission. Several of the larger requests include:

Lake Wilderness II

After securing approval from the National Park Service for extension of Fios V service into Lake Wilderness II, the build is complete.

Six Lakes West

Verizon completed build and has a bulk agreement to provide Fios TV service to the Six Lakes West community.

PEG Channels

The County's Government channel airs on channel 35.

The Schools channel airs on channel 36.

CVTV airs on channel 34.

Franchise Agreement

The Verizon franchise agreement is a 15 year agreement executed in October 2006 and expires in October 2021. A copy of the franchise agreement can be found at <http://www.spotsylvania.va.us/VerizonCable>.

Service Expansion Plan

Verizon has met its overall obligation in the County under the Franchise Agreement, and continues to expand services into new developments throughout the county.



Overview

Central Virginia Public Access Television Corporation (CVTV) is a 501(c)3 corporation made up of a group of active members of our communities with the goal to make a positive impact with the creation of CVTV. CVTV mission is to provide the communities of Central Virginia programs with purpose, meaning and excellence through the voice of Public Access Television.

Central Virginia Public Access Television Board of Directors:

Charles Thomas – Chairman/CEO
Teresa Thomas – Director
Sharon Danielson – Secretary

CVTV serves the City of Fredericksburg, Stafford County and Spotsylvania County.

Headquartered in Central Virginia, CVTV is the area's leading noncommercial provider of regional, national and international media and educational services with a focus on programming,

Program Offerings

2018 continues to focus on local events and introducing unknown areas and things to do in the region, adding an increased emphasis of the history of the area and high school activities, sports and the arts. New in 2018 was the beginning and launch of CVTV NEWS sponsored by Germanna Community College.

The goal in the future is to produce and incorporate STEM education and the area's rich historical areas into the program offering either produced by CVTV or one of their partners.

Children's programming is a top priority CVTV and they were able to have several programs for children this past calendar year. They partnered with a new children's director and are looking forward to several series produced by them. They continued to broadcast the series Children's Corner and Donkey Ollie which are produced by two of their broadcast partners on Pegmedia, a consortium of other public channels around the country. They also offer programming focused on history, sports, news, science, arts and the Central Virginia life. The content reflects the diversity of the communities they serve.

In 2018, CVTV has a solid partner with 30+ years of experience in the broadcasting business and are assisting as a consultant to advance CVTV into a strong local broadcaster.

PEG Channels

CVTV airs on:

Channel 88 on Cox.

Channel 2 on Comcast.

Channel 34 on Verizon.

Public Access Management Agreement

The CVTV agreement is a five year agreement executed in November 2013, and an extension was approved for a five year period which will expire November 2023.

Telecommunications

There were no monopoles or towers presented during 2018.

VATI Grant

Spotsylvania County and Comcast participated and was awarded the 2018 VATI grant. The County was awarded \$167,260 to provide services to residents on Towles Mill Road. A total of 161 homes were served with this grant.

Regional Broadband

The commission is working in connection with the area schools and other locations within the County to provide internet services to our residents and students who currently have no internet services at this time. The first goal is to research potential locations, such as schools, community buildings and churches to provide these services.

A broadband capability document has been published on the County's website.

We have finalized two locations in partnership with the Rappahannock Regional Library that provides wifi access to citizens at least one night a week and it is also available in the parking lot after hours as well. The two locations are Belmont Community Center and Partlow Ruritan Club.

E911 Services and Wireless Boxes

There have questions regarding wireless box location pinpointing. There are regulations being put in place by the FCC, but some companies are not obligated to meet the rules for structure reasons. Customers should always confirm E911 services with their service provider.

LTE Technology Wireless vs Broadband

Broadband includes Fios, Comcast, or Cox which comes at a flat fee and unlimited internet access. Wireless, however, allocates 500 megabytes to 60 gigabyte limits which can be expensive on the higher end. The main concern about this is the large consumption of data through video game streaming.

There has been a widespread complaint of children not being able to complete their homework due to lack on internet. A report was requested to address this problem. This report can be found on the County's Website with information for citizens. Older devices may not be able to access new networks due to limits of that technology whereas some area may not have coverage of newer networks and will therefore revert back to older networks resulting in lower speeds.

Numerous requests have been made whether or not there is an available package or discount for children doing their homework since data is expensive. Some cities in the United States have public Wi-Fi, but the County cannot find any provider willing to offer such service. The Wireless Broadband Memo can be found at <http://www.spotsylvania.va.us/cableCommission> under the General Information tab.

Regional Web TV

Citizens are able to stream Board of Supervisor and Planning Commission meetings through the website: www.regionalwebtv.com. Archived copies can be accessed through the website and DVD copies can still be checked out at the two Spotsylvania County libraries, at Salem Church Road and at the Snow Branch locations.

GCC Information Technology

The college had a representative present beginning in 2018. Unfortunately, there will be a need for a new representative in 2019.

School Board Information Technology

The schools resumed representation at the Cable Commission in 2018.

Bylaws

The CTTC follows the bylaws as established in Spotsylvania County Code, Chapter 2, Article 2, Division 5, Cable Television and Telecommunications Commission, as follows:

Sec. 2-101. Definition.

- (a) As used in this division, the term "commission" shall mean the cable television and telecommunications commission created by section 2-102.
- (b) "PEG", as used in this division, is an acronym for "public, educational and governmental" access facilities relating to:
 - (1) Channel capacity designated for public, educational, or governmental use; and
 - (2) Facilities and equipment for the use of such channel equipment.

(Ord. No. 2-13, 6-27-00)

Sec. 2-102. Created.

There is hereby created, in and for the county, a commission to be known as the cable television and telecommunications commission. (Code 1980, § 20.1-1; Ord. of 7-28-87(3); Ord. No. 2-13, 6-27-00)

Sec. 2-103. Composition; qualification of members.

The cable television and telecommunications commission shall consist of seven (7) voting members and five (5) non-voting members as follows:

- 1) The seven (7) voting members shall be appointed by the board of supervisors and shall consist of one (1) resident of the county from each election district.
- 2) The five (5) non-voting members shall be the county administrator or his designated representative, the school superintendent or his designated representative, the director of information services or his designated representative, the director of the Central Rappahannock Regional Library or his designated representative, and the director of information services for Germanna Community College or his designated representative. The commission shall have the ability to increase the number of non-voting members from time to time as may be warranted.

(Code 1980, § 20.1-3(A); Ords. of 7-28-87(3); 5-9-89(1); Ord. No. 2-1, 3-27-90; Ord. No. 2-13, 6-27-00)

Sec. 2-104. Terms of members.

- a) Each of the seven (7) voting members appointed by the board of supervisors shall be appointed to four-year terms.
- b) The five (5) non-voting members shall be permanent commission members.

(Code 1980, § 20.1-3(C), (D); Ords. of 7-28-87(3); 5-9-89(1); Ord. No. 2-1, 3-27-90; Ord. No. 2-13, 6-27-00)

Sec. 2-105. Chairperson.

The chairperson of the commission shall be selected from the seven (7) voting members.

(Code 1980, § 20.1-3(B); Ords. of 7-28-87(3); 5-9-89(1); Ord. No. 2-1, 3-27-90)

Sec. 2-106. Purposes and duties.

The purposes and duties for which the commission has been established are as follows:

- (1) Review and consider subscriber complaints regarding grantee services and operations; assist in resolving disputes regarding the conduct and performance of the grantee in accordance with the cable television ordinance and franchise;
- (2) Make an annual report on the status of local cable television and telecommunications operations in the county and the activities of the commission. This report shall also include the status and activities of any regional operations group in which the commission may participate as a result of the cable service provider's interconnected PEG channel network;
- (3) Advise and assist the board of supervisors by reviewing, recommending and coordinating the deployment and use of advancing cable television and telecommunications technologies; informing the board of potential opportunities to improve the technical capabilities of local and regional cable television and telecommunications systems; assist the board of supervisors by providing the oversight function for the operation of the local PEG channel network and providing such representatives as may be required to serve on a regional operations group for the larger community network;
- (4) Develop ways and means for promoting and utilizing the cable television system to further the objective of increased public participation and awareness of local government activities and events of regional significance; identify and recommend public and private funding sources to create, provide, expand and improve cable television and telecommunications content and services in the public interest;
- (5) Advise and assist the board of supervisors in the consideration of the purchase of cable and related telecommunications equipment to achieve the stated objectives;
- (6) Formulate recommendations to increase in-house governmental communications via the cable system;
- (7) Advise the board of supervisors with regards to proposed rate changes for cable services;
- (8) Monitor the activities and operation of the grantee to ascertain compliance with the requirements of the franchise; meet with representatives of the grantee as necessary to resolve problems and facilitate cable operations consistent with the franchise requirements;
- (9) Keep the board of supervisors apprised of changes in FCC regulations and other statutes affecting the cable ordinance and system;
- (10) Encourage the use of public access channels among a broad range of individuals, groups and institutions within the county; make recommendations of general policy to grantee relating to the use of public access channels;
- (11) Assist the board of supervisors in the overall process of cable franchisement, as required by the board of supervisors;
- (12) Conduct periodic informal hearings to solicit and evaluate subscriber views of cable service.

(Code 1980, § 20.1-2; Ord. of 7-28-87(3); Ord. No. 2-13, 6-27-00)

Sec. 2-107. Meetings.

- (a) The commission shall meet at least six (6) times per year. Additional meetings may be held, as required, and shall be called by the chairperson upon a minimum of ten (10) days notice to all members. Such notice may be waived upon the presence and consent of all members at any meeting called by the chairperson.
- (b) All meetings shall be open to the public in accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (Code of Virginia, § 2.1-390 et seq.).
- (c) Quorum and method of voting.
 - (1) Current members of the commission are referred to as "active" members. A "quorum" is defined as the minimum number of officers and members of a constituted body who must be present for the valid transaction of business. The number necessary to represent a quorum for the commission is the majority of active members.
 - (2) If a member misses three consecutive meetings during a year, the board of supervisors has the option to declare the member an "inactive" member. An "inactive" member is then sent a letter from the director of information services requesting their intention in serving as a member of the commission. If it is the desire of the member to step down, the commission will request the board of supervisors to appoint a successor. However, if the member wishes to continue to serve on the commission, he is to contact the director of information services stating his intentions to continue his service on the commission.

(Code 1980, § 20.1-3; Ords. of 7-28-87(3); 5-9-89(1); Ord. No. 2-1, 3-27-90; Ord. No. 2-13, 6-27-00; Ord. No. 2-15, 6-14-05)