

# Spotsylvania County Government

## Cable Television and Telecommunications Commission

### 2001 ANNUAL REPORT

#### January 2001

- Herbert Pritchett assumed the role of Chairperson and Don Shelby assumed the role of Vice Chairperson.

#### March 2001

- Donald Craig stepped down as the cable representative for Cox Communications.
- Adelphia had the first of many Internet outages for the year. This problem resulted with Adelphia's provider UUNet losing connection.
- Ms. Cash informed the Commission that the increase effective for April 1<sup>st</sup> would now take effect May 1<sup>st</sup>. The rate notification came in February in a memo directed to Doug Walker copying the Cable Commission.
- The Cable Commission had a web page created on the County's website. This website will help consumers find information they need in working with their cable company.
- Adelphia moved the former Prestige cable customer database over to Adelphia's database. This will help customers receive better service from the call centers as the database can now be accessed from multiple locations instead of just former Prestige locations. Adelphia discussed its redundant service with Sprint and UUNet to provide better Internet access for its customers.

#### April 2001

- Adelphia raised their rates for services. The most common service, Expanded Basic, was raised from \$36.45 to \$39.45, a more than 8.2% increase.
- Adelphia began to offer bundled services, bundling Expanded Basic, Digital and Cable Modem service for one flat fee.
- The following channels were added to Expanded Basic: government channel, community network channel, Value Vision, Univision, Bravo, Oxygen, Food TV and the Catholic channel. The Disney channel was moved from the premium channel package to the Expanded Basic Service.

**May 2001**

- Adelphia informed us of the increase in its broadcast service from \$13.00 to \$14.25, which is an 8% increase. (Broadcast service is the very basic service that the cable company provides, which consists primarily of local programming services and major network affiliates available in the Spotsylvania area.)

**June 2001**

- Cox Communications informed the County and Cable Commission of a rate increase effective August 1<sup>st</sup>. Their limited basic, which is similar to Adelphia's broadcast basic, will go from \$10.91 to \$11.55. Adelphia's expanded basic will go from \$15.17 to \$20.95. The rate increases are approximately 6% and 28%, respectively. In the July meeting, Gary Partridge, of the Economic Development Department, came to discuss technology zones with the Commission. Mr. Partridge also discussed the IDA and its purchase of the Economic Development building in the Massaponax area. Mr. Partridge also discussed a number of areas that are strong candidates for becoming a technology zone.

**July 2001**

- The Commission discussed the long wait time for customers with Adelphia.
- Cox Communications announced that they had completed the rebuild of their cable network in the Fredericksburg area.
- The Commission voted to meet monthly instead of every other month. The Commission felt that this would enable them to keep a better handle on the rising cable complaints and have a better understanding of the cable firm changes.
- At the request of a Board of Supervisors' member, the County Attorney, Mark Taylor, wrote an analysis of what he felt the County could do in terms of regulating rates charged by cable service providers.
- The Cable Commission recommended, and the Board of Supervisors approved, a change to the Adelphia franchise agreement. This change allowed the School system to tap into two fibers for Parkside Elementary School. This change helped keep the overall cost of telecommunications with the Schools to a minimum.
- Adelphia decided to cut its Adelphia Community Network because the company that provided the service was closing its operations.
- Adelphia informed the County and the Cable Commission of new rates for converter boxes, remote controls, installation, etc. The increases range from an 8% to 67% increase.

**August 2001**

- The Cable Commission received notice that Ed Riley would become the new Director of Operations for Cox Communications in the Fredericksburg area, replacing Donald Craig.

**November 2001**

- Cox Communications gave a presentation on behalf of Cox Business Services. Cox presented planned fiber routes. Adelphia did not provide a fiber map.
- Adelphia informed the Commission that all the customer service calls for the cable system are going to their Great Lakes Call Center in Buffalo, New York, as of October 24, 2001. Lisa Cash, General Manager of Adelphia's local office, stated that, due to this transfer, the answer time has dramatically improved.
- Lisa Cash talked about Adelphia Business Solutions, the business side of Adelphia, and reiterated the point that they do not have immediate plans to come into the Spotsylvania market.
- Commission agreed to discuss subscriber broadband service option with Rappahannock Electric Cooperative due to the failure of cable providers to extend service to rural areas.
- Adelphia informed the Commission that PowerLink increases have been postponed until January 2002, due to the problems that customers have been experiencing. (Increase was postponed again, indefinitely, at the January 2002 meeting.)

**December 2001**

- Due to the consistent problems with Adelphia's service, Mr. Dell Hanley, Adelphia's Northern Virginia Area Manager, attended the meeting to address the concerns of the Commission, the Board of Supervisors and the public. After a lengthy discussion, the Commission requested that Adelphia refund to the customer a portion of the service that they were denied, instead of making each customer call requesting a credit.
- Adelphia agreed to stop advertising for its PowerLink service until it can better handle the current traffic.
- The Commission started to develop a Public Use Policy for the County's channels.