

Spotsylvania County Government

Cable Television and Telecommunications Commission (CTTC)

2004 ANNUAL REPORT

The last annual report was given to the Board of Supervisors in April of 2004.

Cable Commission

The By-Laws were approved in January by the Board of Supervisors, which addressed the issue of enough attendees by the Commission for a quorum and will be advertised in May.

In April, Matthew Hartwig became the newest member of the Commission, representing the Lee Hill District.

The need of a central point for complaints was agreed upon, and the Board of Supervisors will report their complaints to the CTTC so that they can be recorded on the Complaint Log.

The Board of Supervisors asked to hire someone to audit Adelphia and Cox to make sure that they are both meeting their Franchise Agreement.

Cox Communications

Cox has approximately 500 Cox customers in Spotsylvania County. Cox is utilizing a system where customers report into northern Virginia. They will continue to service customers locally on a daily basis, which seems to be working out better.

As of May 3, 2004, Cox is no longer offering the pay channels: HBO, Cinemax, or Pay Per View, on the analog part of the system, and they have moved over to digital. The customers will be getting a better service and more channels, but will now be paying more per month. They will still be paying \$12/month for HBO, but will get 9 different HBO channels for the same price.

During the year, Cox added a few channels, along with dropping some of the adult channels. In addition, they raised their Internet speed to 4 MB download. In October, Cox began offering Cox Premier high speed Internet Services. In November, Cox added Weatherscan Local, offering customized local weather on a 24-hour basis to their Discovery Tier. Effective January 2005, Cox increased their Playboy Pay-Per-View programs.

Cox has made HDTV in the County a top priority and are looking at the plans for that to be added. Cox does have plans for high definition service in Spotsylvania, Stafford and Fredericksburg in the first quarter of 2005. They are working hard to have it available for the Super Bowl. (As a note, Cox did add HDTV prior to the Super Bowl and additional HDTV channels in March 2005).

Adelphia Communications

Adelphia has about 27,000 customers on video, about 50,000 digital converters in the field, and there are more digital customers than analog in the County. Out of the Fredericksburg office, Adelphia has about 30 service, maintenance and head-end technicians, and they contract out most of their installations to approximately 20-22 contractors at any one time. Each technician takes care of about 10-25 service calls a day, where there could be up to 180 calls total a day.

Adelphia announced that workers are now out more on Saturdays and Sundays. Saturday will be a normal business day and they will work Sundays as required. They are making more of an initiative to accommodate working families in those time frames. In addition, Adelphia made more quality control calls to customer service representatives and customers during the months of March through June.

Adelphia switched to the Cleveland call center from Blairsville, Pennsylvania, which is one of five Adelphia national call centers. The Cleveland branch has advanced networking, more customer call representatives than in Blairsville, and they have added staff to help with the additional volume.

Adelphia arranged for the C-Span Bus to be at Courtland High School and was well received. The Bus is geared toward high school seniors who will become voters, and is funded by cable operators. Also, the Bus covered election news this year, and Adelphia will be setting up another site soon.

Adelphia has improved the lower band channels. They have brought other channels down from the Washington area and have put in more transmitters and receivers. Their goal is to find the best fix for each channel.

In June, Adelphia met with County Administration, the County Attorney, the area Vice President, Kurt Borg, Lisa Cash, and Rob Marriage from Public Affairs. They reviewed the complaints directly received by the Board of Supervisors, the call times, hold times, and lack of public relations in the County. They also discussed the County's perception of Adelphia.

In September, Adelphia added additional billing cycles to allow more efficiency in handling calls at the call centers. In November, Adelphia began providing to the County for free Channel 19, "MTV of Classic Arts". It is 24-hour programming, with 7-to-8 hour blocks at a time, to include classical movies, music, opera, symphony, etc.

Adelphia did an upgrade to prepare for Video on Demand (VOD). They had done testing on the VOD the last 2 weeks in October and they will be sending out announcements in November as to when it will be available. (DVR was made available in June.)

In December, Adelphia announced that the following channels carry HDTV: CBS, NBC, ShowTime, HBO, Fox and ABC. They also unveiled the new Adelphia Valuepaks and Advantagepak, causing channel and price changes.

Also in December, Adelphia launched "Easy Access", an Interactive Voice Response (IVR), in the customer call centers to help with the call volume. The IVR tool is monitored almost hourly for outages, problems in high speed Internet, previous callers, etc. Many calls can be directed to something specific that is going on at the time, before they talk to a person. A dispatcher at the local

office almost instantaneously receives the same information as the call centers because they are online with the same program.

The Commission advised Adelphia throughout the year that two of their main problems are their call centers and their customer service from the technicians in the field. In addition, Adelphia has not met the "Speed of Answer" criteria since June of 2003.

Regional Wireless Information

The Regional Jail recently hired a consultant firm to design a region-wide wireless system. The Regional Jail is developing this wireless network for public safety and will hopefully expand to other areas. This system will allow for jurisdictions to have a private, secure network and help reduce telecomm costs.

The consultant's report was presented to the regional board of supervisors, and city council in Caroline, Stafford, King George, Spotsylvania and the City of Fredericksburg. There was a meeting on October 28th at the Regional Jail for all interested parties. This plan will enable connection of these areas through a 45MB ring in the counties and will provide coverage for the Sheriff's Department, not to exclude the schools, library or building department employees in their vehicles using their laptops, etc. To date the Rappahannock Regional Jail has received a grant for this regional wireless network in the amount of \$300,000 to do a pilot test.

CRRL Information Technology

Information about the Cable Commission is now put on the library site for the citizens.

The Regional library currently receives all of their data service through Network Virginia. They are upgrading their network because the 7 branches have reached the network's capacity.

During September, the Libraries obtained cable service at the Salem Church and headquarters branch. They have hooked up projectors in the meeting rooms to be able to watch important national programs when necessary, and the public access channels are now available at the branches.

Germanna Community College

Jacque Hirsch advised that the Locust Grove layout is the same as the Fredericksburg campus of GCC, which is through Network Virginia. They have included firewalls, control access servers, etc., which eventually would give access to the students. They use all Cisco equipment in-house because it is easier to manage.

Adelphia/VACO Bankruptcy Update

In April 2005, the County received word from Adelphia that it has accepted a buy-out offer from Time Warner and ComCast. As part of the arrangement, ComCast would get the Virginia properties.

Regional Cable Commission

The County Administrator suggested the possibility of starting a Regional Cable Commission, to work with whoever buys cable service for their County, to form one big "block". However, it was discovered that there is no legal authority as a "block".

Telecommunications

The County generates approximately \$197,000 annually on tower space in the County. It was suggested that the Telecommunications Commission develop a plan for the County, which can be presented to the Board of Supervisor's.

A new Telecommunications Ordinance was developed with input from the CTTC with new setback rules, where they are to be regulated by the ANSI and BOCA standards.

There are presently 43 towers in the County. The current tower projects being worked on are:

- The Mine Road Convenience Site with Sprint
- The Courtland Water Tank with nTelos or T-Mobile
- Putting up a monopole at 5-mile fork, which is already approved
- Putting up a 300-400 foot tower either at Lake Wilderness Community Church or Fire Company 7. Currently, we have a very weak public safety signal in the Lake Wilderness/Fawn Lake area.
- Putting a monopole behind the Marshall Center, to provide better coverage in the Courthouse area and be the backbone for our 800 MHz radio system.
- The County is in the preliminary stages of reviewing a tower on Red Hill Road.

The Utilities Department currently uses the SCADA data reading system and has contracted with a firm to use the County right-of-ways on the County towers to put up their system. They will then convert the SCADA system over to the wireless plan when it comes into effect.

The Utilities Department no longer wants the water tower on Courthouse Road. It is too much maintenance to keep the tank up. There are 2 microwaves for the public radio system on that tank and we are looking at moving them to a monopole tower behind the Marshall Center. Money is scheduled in the CIP for 2007.

The State Police is creating a network throughout the State of Virginia, where we will be provided a link to tie together our radio systems.

A vendor is looking at putting a monopole cell tower next to the water tank by Courthouse Elementary School, but it was the recommendation of the Commission to have the contractor put everything on the tank and NOT put up another tower.

Sprint would like to put a monopole near the Mine Road Convenience Site by Lansdowne Road and Company 4. There is a possibility of putting a tower at Cosner Corner to service the preliminary new stores that will be opening there on the Silver Property in the Massaponax area (i.e., Super Target, Ross, T-J Max, Rite-Aid, Wawa, etc).