



Northeast Courier

Northeast Region Newsletter of the Alliance for Community Media

www.acm-ne.org

SUMMER 2009

CONFERENCE TWEET?

By Terry Deunas, ACM-NE Massachusetts Rep
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It is certainly disheartening and discouraging to hear that you just missed out on something that was really great. You just missed the "best game ever played" or the "best concert I've ever seen" is something none of us ever like hearing. But.....you should have been at the Alliance for Community Media's Northeast Regional conference held on the beautiful campus of Champlain College in Burlington, Vermont.



Helen Soule, Executive Director of the Alliance for Community Media speaks to the gathering.

Many of the conferences in recent memory have been amazingly similar. Although they are certainly fun and help us recharge our batteries by reminding us why we continue to believe in the mission of PEG access and community media, we have been walking away being less than stimulated and many times questioning whether the payoff was worth the effort.

This regional conference left no doubt for me.

This particular meeting of the leaders of PEG access in the Northeast region seemed to have a different feel and purpose than any of its predecessors. The workshop tracks were all dealing with issues and concepts that were the bleeding edge of our industry.

The discussions were facilitated by the best and brightest that our region has to offer and the participants responded with thoughtful and thought provoking comments.

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TALKING WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS

By Karen Hayden, Newsletter Editor

PEG access is governed by laws at both the federal and state levels. Our continued existence depends on how well we can make our case with our communities, our local officials and our legislators. It is important to remember that they are YOUR legislators. They have been sent to the state house and Congress to represent the people from their area including YOU.

We need to communicate with our legislators in several ways: write, call and visit. It never hurts to have an open relationship with your legislators. It is their job to make the best decisions they can and they need information in order to do this. Don't let lobbyists for the other side have all the fun!

In Massachusetts, there will be a State House hearing on Wednesday, July 22 at 10am to re-structure how cable franchising is done. Dubbed the "Cable Choice" act, this bill would severely reduce the negotiation timetables that a community has. It would impose a 90 window to hold a public hearing after an application is filed and a five day "grant or deny" clause for the license after this hearing.

Attorney Bill August cited several concerns:

- Towns and cities simply cannot do a professional, reasonable, properly negotiated license process in 90 days.
- The bill would tie the hands of municipal officials behind their backs, and reduce municipal power during a time of fiscal weakness when municipal officials need more power to negotiate, not less power.

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FROM THE CHAIR

Nancy Richard, ACM-NE Chair

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The ACM-NE Region will host its 12th Annual Video Festival in West Hartford, CT on November 7, 2009. As part of the festival, we will be offering a selection of workshops during the day. The 12th Annual ACM-NE Region Video Awards ceremony will take place that evening at the West Hartford Meeting & Conference Center.



A Call for Entries for the video contest will be sent out in early July. This year, the entry form will be available on-line. Please go to our website at ACM-NE for the link to the on-line form. The link will be available in early July.

This year, contest entry fees can be paid either by check or on-line with a credit card. We are also hoping to have one completely on-line category, Overall Excellence, to test the feasibility of entering all video content via uploading.

We hope our new on-line entry form will make it easier than ever before to be part of the video contest. Contest entries are limited to producers who live or work in New England and New York. Please read contest entry instructions, also available on the ACM-NE website. Visit www.acm-ne.org.

TALKING CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

What does this mean? During the negotiation process, communities and cable companies address some key points. Is it reasonable to assume this could be done in 90 days?

+Protection of consumers' rights

+Plans for construction and management of public rights-of-way

+Compensation to citizens for use of public property

+Creation and management of assets for public safety and public information

+Funding for public, educational, and governmental channels

+Prevention of redlining (choosing one portion of a community over another)

Not just for Massachusetts, but for all states in the region, start and maintain a relationship with your legislators. Keep them in the loop on important telecommunications issues. Don't ever think that you are not important enough to do this. You absolutely are!

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CONFERENCE TWEET? (FROM PAGE 1)

Major issues of collaboration and technology were discussed and many felt that concepts were not only important to every access and media center but were critical to the core of our mission and longevity.

Discussion became not only how can we do better in what we are doing, but how **MUST** we change to continue and prosper. It was the first conference I know of that the discussion of social networking was not only discussed but implement.



Many attendees participated in the social media aspect of the conference.



Workshop presenters in the New Media tracks brought all types of ideas to the screen.



Vendor sessions as part of the workshop tracks were initiated at the conference.



Thanks to the folks at VCAM of Burlington, content was uploaded to the web and we were able to Flickr, Blip, You Tube and Twitter. This was truly a web centric and real time accessible experience. It opened our eyes to what a powerful tool new media and Web 2.0 can and should be for our industry.

While many of struggle with the idea of how to get beyond the mixed curse/ blessing of cable franchise funding, we see the absolute necessity of embracing these new tools of communication. Access needs to think out of the box and continually visualize the future. With conferences like we just held in Burlington, Vermont, they Northeast region will continue to lead the country in the revolution of community media. This region has always had the leaders in the field and that continues to be true.

It is certainly up to us continue to organize and promote these amazing gatherings and if you missed the event last May 21 and 22, it's up to you to make sure you attend, support and contribute. As they say, it's not a matter of life and death...it's much more important than that!



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**Wish ACM Northeast success in
all its endeavors**

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The firm's principals represent many non-profit public access centers in cable license, regulatory, corporate, governance, tax exemption and related matters. Peter Epstein and Bill August look forward to working closely with and advocating for the public access community.

NEW YORK NAMES NEW REPRESENTATIVE

As if working for a small rural municipality, running two government/community channels as a one-person band, shooting all the meetings and local events, editing, maintaining the playback equipment and servers, the website info, program scheduling, the TV scroll, uploading streaming video onto the town website, and teaching free video production classes wasn't enough, (WHEW!)



Maryann Arrien has stepped forward to represent the state of New York in the ACM Northeast region.

“Last year Cablevision went digital and with one month's notice dropped the PEG channels from their Broadcast Basic Package. It was at that point that I became heavily involved to protect the right of PEG channels on the basic tier of service, with no additional burdens for the consumer, such as extra digital box rentals,” Maryann explains. “Through my Town Supervisor I filed a formal complaint with the NYS Public Service Commission, the outcome of which is still pending. After trying to cold-call many municipalities with very spotty results last year, I realized that we had to build our network connections in all of New York via e-mail listserves, Skype conferences, and other internet tools.”

Many towns in NY are negotiation with Telcos all on their own with no guidance, because they are not in touch with the Alliance. Maryann's goal is clear. “I hope to accomplish these new connections to help in the fight against bad State franchising laws that could threaten Community Media within NY State and beyond.”

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UPDATE ON OPEN VIDEO FOR PEG ACCESS

By Jason Daniels, ACM-NE Webmaster



PEG Access television cannot thrive if it is tied to cable alone. Cable is just one service among many for delivering video services to the home. We can only expect this process to accelerate in the future, yet even with my own Board at home, folks are hesitant to invest our cable franchise fees in substantive IP based models for video delivery, and for arguably a good reason. Without development and investment our little cable oasis are vulnerable, and signing up for an account on Youtube or Twitter, while forward thinking, is not the systemic evolution our field demands.

Fortunately, there are events like the 'Open Video Conference' which took place in New York on June 19 & 20, providing some hope that the development work needed for the next step in community media is happening.

To quote the Open Video Website. "Open Video is the growing movement for transparency, interoperability, and further decentralization in online video. These qualities provide more fertile ground for independent producers, bottom-up innovation, and greater protection for free speech online."

Projects from Kaltura, Mozilla, Miro, Creative Commons, the Open Media Project from Denver and others are striving to each play a part in creating space on and through the web for protected non-commercial video. They are looking for us. There is an opportunity for PEG.

Check out a huge conference archive: <http://www.openvideoconference.org>



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

**JOIN US FOR THE ACM-NE FALL VIDEO FESTIVAL
NOVEMBER 7, 2009 IN WEST HARTFORD, CT.**