

## **Sudbury Cable Advisor Annual Report, 2008**

[This will appear in the Sudbury 2008 Annual Report, to be distributed in April 2009]

This was the second of two years of transition for cable TV in Sudbury. In 2007, Verizon was awarded the 2<sup>nd</sup> cable license in Sudbury, providing true competition for COMCAST. This competition required a new approach to the operation of Sudbury's Access channel (Sudbury Channel 8), which had previously been operated by COMCAST under the direction of the Cable Committee. In the fall of 2007, with the approval of the Selectmen, the Cable Committee began the process of creating an independent non-profit Access Corporation to operate the channel. This new entity, dubbed SudburyTV, would receive funding from both COMCAST and Verizon, and is the most common method of organizing an Access channel in multiple-provider towns.

Through to the first half of this year, the committee members (in their role as future board members of SudburyTV) negotiated a contract with the Town. The Committee also negotiated modifications to the Town's COMCAST license to ease the transition to the non-profit corporation, and a license amendment was signed in January of this year.

In June of this year, the Selectmen signed a contract with SudburyTV, and started a 2 month process with COMCAST concluding with their handing over of the studio "keys" to SudburyTV. The COMCAST Access Coordinator (Lynn Puorro) was hired as SudburyTV's Executive Director. Payroll, benefits, and insurance were arranged, by-laws were finalized, and various filings were prepared for the state and the IRS.

On September 2<sup>nd</sup> of this year, SudburyTV went "live". An additional part-time person (Cliff McGann) was hired, and work was begun to improve the organization of programming, and to make all programming available on the web. The latter will allow anyone, including non-cable subscribers, Town employees, and ex-residents, to keep up on Town events via a YouTube-like website. This site should be up and running by the time you read this. Check <http://sudburytv.org>.

Also in September of this year, the Selectmen disbanded the Sudbury Cable Committee, which had been meeting continuously for over 20 years, because nearly all of their responsibilities had been transferred to SudburyTV. A single resident was appointed Town Cable Advisor to deal with the few remaining committee responsibilities. These include

- Providing information to the Town and its residents about cable-related matters
- Assisting the Town and its residents with communications with the cable companies (including resident complaints).
- Monitoring cable company license compliance.
- Advising the Town on cable license renewals and amendments.

The Cable Advisor maintains a page on the Town website (on the "Committees" page) containing information and news relevant to Sudbury cable TV and high-speed internet.

The Cable Advisor is currently working with COMCAST and the Town on a renewal license with COMCAST, which may have been signed by the time you read this. The new license will safeguard all the town's existing benefits (Access funding, I-net operation, etc.) through to November, 2020.

This year, SudburyTV programming included a variety of programs produced by volunteers, about topics including history, sports, culture, and politics. Volunteers also assisted in producing community events such as the League of Women Voters Candidates Nights, LSRHS Graduation Ceremony and the HOPEsudbury Telethon, which raised over \$57,000.

Viewers were treated to a variety of monthly programs including a Selectmen's roundtable, the Sudbury Senior Center's "Soup's On", and Friends of Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge programs. The Sudbury Historical Society gave us programs on Ralph Adams Cram, Antique Appraisal Event, The

Maynard Farm, and Babe Ruth. We also cablecast a variety of High School Concerts, Boys Wrestling, and Volleyball, as well as the Longfellow Big Read series, all made possible by Sudbury volunteers.

The channel also continued to cablecast various committee meetings (Finance Committee, School Committee, etc), as well as all Selectmen's meetings and Town Meetings. The latter two are broadcast live.

Sudbury residents have two cablecasting facilities in Sudbury available for their use. At the SudburyTV studio at LSRHS there is a full complement of broadcast and editing equipment, including a Mac G5 (with Final Cut Pro), and digital cameras and recording decks. After training, residents can use this equipment to create and edit quality programming at no charge. Cameras and audio equipment may be used either in the on-site studio, or on location anywhere in town. At the Town Hall, the main meeting room is wired for video and sound, so that a single volunteer can produce a high-quality recording (or live broadcast) of any meetings or presentations.

Although the SudburyTV staff has limited responsibility for cablecasting a small number of town events, the essence of Access is programming produced for residents, by residents. All interested residents are encouraged to contact SudburyTV Executive Director, Lynn Puorro, to discuss programming and arrange free training. She can be reached at 978 443 9507, or at [lynn@sudburytv.org](mailto:lynn@sudburytv.org). More information is available at <http://sudburytv.org>.

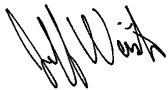
This year saw the retirement of long-time Vice-Chairperson Margaret (Peggy) Fredrickson. With her rich experience in local programming (including a stint as Sudbury's Access Coordinator), Peggy brought a uniquely well-informed viewpoint to the Cable Committee, and made countless invaluable contributions to policy, licenses, and local programming.

If watching TV on the web isn't for you, consider signing up for COMCAST's, or Verizon's, most "basic" service (costing roughly \$13/month) as your method of receiving local broadcast channels with high quality. This gives you access to both SudburyTV (COMCAST 8/FiOS 31), and the L/S High School channel (COMCAST 9/FiOS 32), which are included in the cable companies' basic packages.

The SudburyTV Board of Directors generally meets once a quarter, usually on a Tuesday evening at 7:30 PM. All residents are invited to attend. Meetings are posted on the SudburyTV website at least a week in advance.

Cable-related questions or problems should be sent to [cableadvisor@sudbury.ma.us](mailto:cableadvisor@sudbury.ma.us). Residents are encouraged to use this process to get help with cable-provider-related problems they cannot resolve through normal channels.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jeff Winston, Cable Advisor