

What public service benefits can Chicago reasonably hope to bargain for in its forthcoming dealings with cable television companies? What should the official request for company proposals (RFP) say the City wants in return for granting companies exclusive rights to sell movies, sports, alarm systems, and other cable services to Chicagoans?

THIS ISSUE HAS OUR CHICAGO CITIZENS CABLE COALITION'S POSITIONS ON COMMUNITY CHANNELS, EQUAL SERVICES, EMPLOYMENT, AND THE MUNICIPAL PROCESS.

407 S. Dearborn, Room 1000, Chicago, IL 60605  
telephone (312) 427-4064

**CCOM**

**CITIZENS COMMITTEE  
ON THE MEDIA**

**newsletter**

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## COMMUNITY CHANNELS

### Channels

Applicants for a franchise or a contract to provide cable communications in territories in Chicago should offer to provide at least the following Community Channels without commercials and without charge to users--

- 1 for the Chicago City Colleges
- 1 for other colleges and universities to share
- 1 for the Chicago Public Library
- 1 for city and state governments' use
- 6 or more for 'public access'
- 2 for foreign-language groups to share
- 5 for public and private elementary and secondary schools to share
- 1 for continuous metropolitan news and public affairs
- 2 reserved for other community channels

A separate cable of at least 50 channels should connect all schools, libraries, and hospitals to each other without charge. Equipment and training might be offered to these institutions, too.

### Equipment

For each 200,000 population in a territory, applicants should offer full color studios and equipment, to be kept state-of-the-

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## EQUAL SERVICES

Preparations to introduce Cable TV into the City of Chicago have now started in earnest. It must be one of the most important considerations for everyone concerned that all citizens of Chicago are guaranteed equal access to this new technology. Nobody must be at a disadvantage or discriminated against for any reason such as location, financial considerations, type of neighborhood, etc.

Once the City has been divided into territories, and contracts or franchises have been awarded, the construction of the cable system within a given territory must be completed within two years. The cable companies would not, for example, be allowed first to wire the high-rise buildings, especially in so-called "rich neighborhoods" where they can expect more subscribers for a variety of services, and where it costs them less to install the wires, while less affluent areas, or areas with single-family homes that require more installation costs, would be neglected or have to wait for long periods of time.

Once the cable operator has begun to solicit subscribers, delays in completion of the system should be subject to fines and possible loss of the contract/franchise. In the contract/franchise, arrangements can

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## OTHER MEDIA NEWS

• "Deregulation" of radio licensees is scheduled to begin this month. FCC rules requiring broadcasters to limit commercials, to 'ascertain' the community's program needs, and to carry public affairs programming will be dropped!

CCOM is joining legal action by the United Church of Christ's Office of Communications to 'stay' the FCC action. A basic argument is that the agency is neglecting its obligation to see that the airwaves are used to serve the public interest.

• The National Federation of Local Cable Programmers will have a conference, open to all, at Northwestern U. April 25-6. CCOM has details.

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(Community Channels, cont.)

art, as follows, without charge to public access users--

Two large studios with everything necessary for a wide variety of quality three-camera productions. And one mobile facility capable of taping or transmitting live three-camera coverage from community sites.

Portable equipment for a loan without charge to community groups, and for training persons from these groups. And several editing facilities for use without charge.

### System Design

The preferred design will be a fully-switched two-way cable system with data, audio, and audio-visual capability. Applicants should emphasize privacy safeguards in their design.

### Personnel:

Applicants should offer full-time well-qualified personnel for these positions at least:

Eleven production staff for each studio and mobile production facility. Their hours should be mostly evenings and weekends.

Four news and public affairs editors for each 200,000 population. And three staff at each studio to promote, coordinate, and train for public access programming.

### Budget:

All successful applicants agree to share proportionately in costs and the responsibil-

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(Equal Services, cont.)

be made to have the cable companies establish a rather substantial escrow account from which any fines can be drawn. The money would be deposited in an interest-bearing account so that companies who follow the "rules of the game" satisfactorily will get their money back with interest. This might be an extra incentive for fast and efficient work.

We must insist that, without exception, cable service must be equal and non-discriminatory within each territory. It must also be equal from one territory to the other, providing the same quality and quantity of equipment to each and every subscriber within Chicago who desires it. Efficient transfer of programs must be made possible so that a subscriber from one part of town can follow general interest programs "on the other side of town."

True 'Universal Service' must be offered by all companies whose proposals are accepted. That is, for a low one-time charge all households passed by the cable must be able to get connections for the Community Channels and for all broadcast radio and television stations normally received. ■

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ity to provide:

The linkages necessary to make all Community Channels available throughout the City. An office with three full-time professional staff to coordinate and promote public access programs originating downtown. Extensive publicity in print media, on commercial broadcasting, and on all cable channels for forthcoming 'access' programs. ■

# EMPLOYMENT

The Chicago Citizens Cable Coalition affirms that it is the City of Chicago's moral and legal responsibility to insure that the development of Cable TV in Chicago be used to advance the employment interests of minorities and women. The broadcast media in the City have consistently violated the relatively lenient FCC Equal Employment Opportunity regulations. Cable TV offers huge potential to correct this and truly impact the problems of minority and women employment and skill training as well as the need for relevant neighborhood-based communication which broadcast media have failed to provide. The large number of jobs which will be created as a result of Cable TV development and the new communication capacities offered by it represent an opportunity too important to be missed. The impact of the City's neglect at this point would be a serious setback to the interests of minorities and women both now and for the future. The programming needs of minorities and women cannot be met unless they hold a proportion of jobs at all levels of the cable system equal to their representation in the population of the City. At present there is no effective mechanism to guarantee the rights of the above groups. On the contrary, indications are that, as elsewhere, they will be cut out of the "cable pie."

Therefore, the Chicago Citizens Cable Coalition demands that the City of Chicago include provisions in its Enabling Ordinance, Request for Proposals, and Franchise Agreement to require all companies contracting with the City for the development and operation of the cable system, and all companies that they may in turn contract with to fulfill that obligation, to guarantee:

(1) Minority and female employment at parity with their representation in the population of Chicago in all phases of Cable TV system construction, operation, maintenance, and administration; and at all levels of responsibility from labor to top level management;

(2) Minority and female participation at parity with their representation in the population of the City in all job training programs related to or created as a result of the workforce required to build, operate, maintain, and administrate the system;

(3) All trainees and as many employees

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# MUNICIPAL PROCESS

to establish and regulate cable communications

## The Community Subcommittee

The city's subcommittee for community groups' and private citizens' interests in cable should be provided a reasonable budget for office space, staff, and publicity.

Official reports of this subcommittee should be incorporated into the Enabling Ordinance, the Request for Proposals, the final Cable Ordinance, and any other official documents.

## Ethics

All members of the Mayor's Committee on Cable Television, its subcommittees, consultants, members of future regulatory bodies, and voting City Council Members should be required to sign a pledge disavowing all conflicts of interest. Rules should prohibit companies' lobbying.

A Cable Pledge, by Ald. Larry Bloom

1. Neither I nor any member of my family nor any business associates nor any staff persons affiliated with me who are paid by the City have any financial interest in any business entity which

- A. owns or operates any aspect of a cable television enterprise, or
- B. manufactures any of the major components of a cable television system.

2. Neither I nor any members of my family nor any business associates nor any staff person affiliated with me who is paid by the City has received anything of value from any company engaged in the business of owning or operating a cable television enterprise.

3. I have not given any information or advice which is not a matter of public record to any person or business entity regarding which companies, if any, are likely to be awarded franchises or contracts for operation of a cable television system in the City.

4. I know of nothing which would cause a conflict of interest in my serving as a

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(Employment, cont.)

as possible must be selected from the population of the City;

(4) The rights of all workers and trainees to organized representation must not be compromised; and cooperation with local unions should be sought;

(5) Hirings and promotions must be fair for all races, religions, ages, sexes, handicaps, sexual preferences, and national origins.

(6) The above should be implemented with the active participation of, and be monitored by, community groups such as our Cable Jobs Committee and its endorsers.

Further, if the businesses contracting with the City, or companies they may contract with for work related to the cable system, fail to abide by the community and EEO requirements of the Franchise, there must be provision for:

(1) Loss of contract by the company holding the contract with the City;

(2) Barring them from future City contracts;

(3) Release of the City from all obligations under the contract, including payment for services and materials.

We insist the above affirmative action requirements become general policy and be written into any contract the City may enter into. ■

(Municipal Process, cont.)

member of the Mayor's Committee on Cable Television and I will promptly resign from that committee if any conflict of interests should arise.

Ownership

City ownership must be investigated as possibly having more public benefits than private ownership. If franchises to private companies are to be awarded, territories must be defined to allow for (and special meetings called to encourage) cooperative ownership by local cable users.

Trafficking in cable franchises and contracts must be prohibited with strict rules.

Hearings

No Enabling Ordinance should be proposed to the Mayor and City Council nor RFP issued until a new series of community-based hearings is held to discuss the initial drafts of the Ordinance and RFP. A similar round of hearings must be held to address the paid consultant's evaluation of companies' applications.

Regulatory Body

A widely-representative regulatory commission should be established to enforce City agreements with companies. 2/5 of the members should be appointed by the Mayor, 3/5 by the Community Subcommittee. Replacements for the 3/5 are to be chosen by a non-profit Cable Consumers Group formed to represent subscribers. Voluntary contributions to the Cable Consumers Group should be possible within the cable companies' normal billing processes. ■