

# Public TV plan airs

## City looks at public access channels

**Cable is making TV accessible to more and more people. In Eugene, community access has become an issue, and soon may be a reality.**

By HARRY ESTEVE  
Of the Emerald

Cable television programming in Eugene may mean a big step forward for the city's non-profit organizations if an idea for four "public-access" channels wins city council's approval.

A report published by the public access subcommittee of the Metropolitan Cable Television Commission reveals plans for a "community television corporation" that would oversee local public programming. The report named several non-profit organizations — including the University — as potential members of the corporation.

At the heart of the corporation would be a fully-equipped television studio, capable of producing professional shows. According to the report, qualified non-profit agencies could use the studio for free to produce shows about their services.

Lane County Commissioner Jerry Rust, who chairs the subcommittee, says once a show has been produced, an agency would only need to pay the cost of putting its show on the air. The subcommittee currently is asking non-profit agencies how much they could afford to pay for air time.

A seven-member board of directors, made of representatives from non-profit groups, would be responsible for running the studio and keeping the channels on the air, while a 21-member advisory committee would make recommendations on programming.

Teleprompter of Oregon currently owns the sole cable television franchise in the city, but

according to the subcommittee's report, the profit-oriented company "has not encouraged public access."

"Teleprompter has generally not seen this as a financial plus for them," the report says.

So Rust says Teleprompter will be asked to foot the initial bill for the proposed studio. He estimates it will cost more than \$200,000.

"We're not out of line on this," Rust says. "The way we see it, we're letting (Teleprompter) in this town. What they have is essentially a monopoly."

Rust says the Teleprompter corporation spent \$750,000 in Dubuque, Iowa on a similar project. "It's good for their public image," he says.

Continued funding for public programming would come from fees charged for air time and from "leased access" programs.

Under the "leased access" clause, independent or commercial film and video makers "who are recognized as legitimate artists" could buy air time.

Kent Gorham, technical advisor to the Metropolitan Commission, says filling all four channels with public programs will not be a problem "as the public becomes more aware of the abilities of the system."

He says public air time will be in big demand. "I don't see it devoured, but I do see a rush on it."

Gorham estimates the project will require at least 3,000 hours of volunteer work to build and staff the studio, train users and inform the community of the new service.

Plans call for the studio to operate 18 hours per day, seven days a week.

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prompter's "superbasic" package is ESPN, a network that shows nothing but sports, 24 hours a day.

In the same package is Ted Turner's "superstation" from Atlanta that boasts television's largest library of movies, from Bogart to Travolta.

Available in another package is the "USA network" that airs all the events in Madison Square Gardens, including animal shows, rock concerts and professional sports.

Teleprompter sells its subscriptions in various blocks of channels for various prices. After the initial hook-up fee — \$20 for houses that never had cable services and \$10 for the ones that had discontinued service — the cost for "basic service" is \$6.95 per month.

Basic service includes the two locally broadcast stations but guarantees better reception. It then adds nine other channels, including OEPBS — the Oregon Educational Public Broadcasting Service — and an independent Portland station that carries Trailblazer basketball games and Oregon State University basketball and football games.

For another \$2 per month, Teleprompter adds on "super-

basic" service and another eight channels. Among these are a station from Canada that Sullivan says "shows a different perspective on things," an educational channel that features "telecourses" from Lane Community College and a 24-hour religious channel.

Three other channels — including the "USA network," a cable news network, and "Nickelodeon," a commercial-free arts and instructional channel — are available for \$1.65 per month for any one channel and 65 cents per month extra for either of the next two.

Perhaps the most popular cable services offered by Teleprompter are "Showtime" and "Home Box Office" two commercial-free channels that specialize in unedited and uninterrupted movies. Each month a new series of movies is featured, usually including at least one recent box-office hit.

These channels are priced at \$9.95 per month for one or \$16.80 for both.

Teleprompter representatives will be stationed outside the University Bookstore during class registration Thursday and Friday handing out \$5 hook-up discounts to students who sign up for cable subscriptions.

## 'Tonight Show' musician performs at 'superpops'

Trumpeter and late-night jester Doc Severinsen — of Tonight Show fame — will take the stage with the Eugene Symphony Orchestra Oct. 3 at 8 p.m.

Severinsen will be the first guest performer in the orchestra's 1981-82 "superpops" series.

Tickets for the cabaret-style performance currently are available at the Eugene Symphony box office, 1231 Olive St. Prices are \$24, \$12 and \$8.

Student and senior citizen prices are \$20.50, \$10.25 and \$7.

Severinsen, whose music is described by symphony representatives as a "unique blend of jazz and pop" will play at the Lane County Fairgrounds in the exhibition hall. His hits include arrangements of "McArthur Park" and "Malaguena." He will also play original tunes including "Stop and Smell the Roses."



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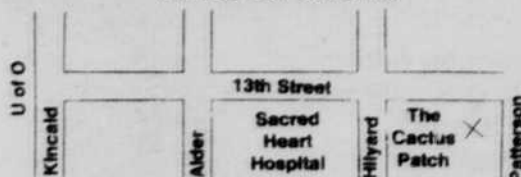
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