

## CABLE

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"I'm getting experience in managing and how TV and video work. I want to produce my own documentaries, but with the sketchy budget, I don't know how long this job is going to last," she said.

To use the community cable TV equipment and facilities, all people need to do is attend a monthly orientation, Child said, and take classes on equipment use and editing. People with some television background can challenge the courses.

After someone takes the classes, she said, they are certified to use the equipment and can do so free of charge.

The classes include camcorder operation and basic editing as well as a hands-on studio production class. Special editing or computer classes are taught according to interest.

The classes are small, with usually no more than 10 people in them, which allows for more hands-on experience, Child said.

While many of the classes are taken by adults, there are classes for children in the sixth through 12th grades, she said.

"I've gotten some excellent shows out of the kids," Child said. "They like to produce talk shows, news shows or creative music videos. Some of them are so sharp it's incredible."

The final agreement between the station and a producer is that the station receives a finished copy of the program to air. "We're desperate for programming," Child said.

In addition to the people who take classes and then use

the equipment, Child said University and Lane Community College students use the facilities, especially when editing suites at the schools are full.

Programs produced without the use of community cable equipment can also be aired through agreement with the station.

"You can take completed tapes to the downtown office, sign a cablecast request and get it aired," she said.

The cable facilities are used by Sheldon High School during the day to teach classes and by the community channel in the evenings and on occasional weekends.

Community cable television has a long history in Eugene, and Chuck Aylworth said it may have been better in the "good old days."

In 1980, two years after a committee was formed to begin a public access channel, it was decided that a public access center would be built on 12th Avenue, between Lincoln and Lawrence streets.

"We got together and with volunteer work and volunteer effort, we got most of the work done," Aylworth said.

The center opened in October 1983, two weeks before the Hult Center opened, Aylworth said.

Aylworth said the Eugene City Council tried to cut cable access funding in 1988 but did not succeed.

Instead, the community station was told too much money was being spent at the 12th Avenue location and had to move from the facility built by volunteer labor five years earlier to another studio next to Sheldon High School.

"When we went on the air 10 years ago," Aylworth said, "we had two-channel capability; we had our own channel six hours a night, five days a week, and we could broadcast live."

"Now, we have less than three hours a night, three days a week, and our time is often preempted by government cablecasting," he said.

On-air time is not the only thing limiting the community access cable program, Aylworth said. He said TCI Cablevision of Eugene Inc., had given \$75,000 to be used for equipment, but of that money, community access cable had only received \$8,000, the rest going to government access.

While remote cameras were installed in government conference rooms, cables were laid in public buildings and three editing suites were built, Aylworth said community access cable could only afford two cameras.

"I think it's appalling. We should have had a third of that money. Our cameras are 10 years old, and the \$8,000 we used last month was to purchase two bottom-of-the-line cameras. The portable camcorders the government bought went for \$15,000 each," he said.

"So, here we are," Aylworth said, "hard to find, with poor access to the rest of the community and without our live capability. They've tried to starve the place. The city of Eugene does not understand modern technology and where the future is going."

And if Eugene recognized the importance of community access cable, Aylworth said, things would be different.

"We'd have a channel of our own, we'd have a sequencer for switching tapes, and we'd be cablecasting at least 18 hours a day," he said.

"We would be working with community organizations and we would have diversity with Spanish language programming and more programs from the African-American community," Aylworth said.

## TAX

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effect, real estate values were reassessed. While the tax rates are going down, the assessed values of homes are rising in the state, leaving many to pay the same or even more in property taxes.

Most of the tax savings in Measure 5 went to commercial property owners. While homeowners' rates declined, business' rates declined further, so although your parents might pay the same amount in taxes as before, businesses by and large are paying less, creating a hidden revenue shortfall.

Some people refer to articles claiming that Oregon is a high tax state already. Oregon does have a slightly above average per-capita tax rate, but it's hardly practical to compare the value of taxes based solely on a comparison of the rates themselves. A useful comparison would take into account the differences in state economies, and would compare the costs with the benefits. Unfortunately, no one has come up with a comprehensive way to do all of that yet.

Oregon does charge minimal levels for fees. For example there are no toll roads, nor is there a large vehicle registration fee. Citizens for Tax Justice, a national

watchdog group, consistently ranks Oregon as having one of the top-10 progressive state tax systems. Nevertheless, according to the polls, most Oregonians are resistant to paying more taxes.

Measure 5 received the most votes from the Portland-metro area, where skyrocketing property value assessments were mailed out just days before the election. It was not the result of a bunch of angry rednecks. Because of this it has been called the "revolt of the haves" - as opposed to one of the "have-nots."

Arguments over the message of Measure 5 are rehearsed with every new poll. To some it was a resounding blow against big government. Others heard it as a cry for a fairer tax system.

The political battle surrounding it, however, has been in plain view. It has been a game of hardball.

Why hasn't this been resolved yet? The Republican leadership has consistently refused to refer a replacement revenue package to the voters. This lack of a resolution results in part from honest political differences, but in part, it has resulted from a high-power game of political chicken.

Oregon, with 9 percent more registered Democrats than Republicans, has had a Democratically controlled legislature since 1971. During the 1990 election, the

state Democratic Party and its Speaker of the House David Dix were plagued by an ethics controversy.

Although the Senate remained Democratic territory, Dix lost his seat and the Democrats lost their majority in the House of Representatives. It was a major defeat to the Democrats.

The 1990 election, in part, expressed a dissatisfaction with the policies or practices of the state's leading Democrats. With that leadership in decline, the Republicans found themselves with a tremendous opportunity. They had little need to cooperate with the Democrats and had a great deal to gain by holding replacement revenue hostage and demanding the further "downsizing" and deregulation of state government.

Neither Republican nor Democratic legislators were really prepared to compromise or cooperate with each other at the 1991 Legislature. They were not interested enough in the business at hand.

The other key development from the 1990 election was the three-way governors' race. It gave us Gov. Barbara Roberts, elected with roughly 45 percent of the vote, and the remaining 55 percent was split among the two Republican candidates.

Because of her slim victory, she has been

seen as beatable since her first day in office. Because the Republicans are not afraid to say "no" to her, and because her "outsider" political approach has reportedly left her with reduced leverage among legislators, the Senate Democrats do not have the momentum to steamroll over the Republican opposition in the House.

Roberts called a special legislative session to refer her tax reform plan to the voters following her Conversations With Oregon. The conversations were widely seen as more of an orchestrated pitch for a sales tax than a serious dialogue. They still were, however, remarkably informative and a groundbreaking experiment with the town hall style that Bill Clinton and Ross Perot have popularized.

At the special session, Roberts played tough and lost big. The session failed to pass a compromise out to the voters. The battle was between Roberts and powerful House Speaker Larry Campbell. Campbell essentially demanded that the governor back away from the split-roll tax, but she refused to. For that, Campbell killed her plan.

Most political observers expect that the 1993 Legislature will refer a tax reform proposal to the voters in the fall. But the dramatic changes in state government are far from over.



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