

FREE TELEVISION IN COTTAGE GROVE FOR OVER SIXTY YEARS

South Lane Television, Inc.

In the early days of television, most TV stations serving Oregon were located in Portland. And reception from Portland was poor in Cottage Grove. With the hopes of devising a plan for better reception, a group of local television enthusiasts met over coffee to discuss how members of the community could engineer a system that would provide better TV pictures in Cottage Grove. What emerged was a community non-profit organized in 1957 as South Lane Television, Inc.

The new SLTV Board set out to raise money for an engineering study that determined Hansen Butte, located a mile southeast of Cottage Grove, was the ideal point to receive TV signals and translate those signals to new channels that could be easily picked up in and around Cottage Grove. A successful fund drive followed and the fledgling board was able to purchase the necessary equipment to put the first three channels on the air in 1957.

Over the years, SLTV has steadily improved and expanded its service. Today, the Cottage Grove system has grown to 36 channels and the London Springs system now has 14 channels. All that is necessary to receive these free television signals from South Lane Television, is a good quality UHF antenna aimed toward the SLTV towers atop Hansen Butte, a mile southeast of Cottage Grove, or in the London area, the tower is located north of London and just west of London Road. The system in the Dorena/Culp Creek area is a bit different in that it operates on a low power VHF system. In order for the viewer to receive these SLTV signals, a good quality VHF antenna is necessary. The site for Dorena/Culp Creek is on Hawley Butte (east of the Dorena Post Office and northwest of Culp Creek). Because there is no commercial power available, South Lane Television produces its own power from collecting energy from solar panels and a wind turbine. The surplus energy is stored in a bank of batteries for nighttime operation. Then the system is backed up by a diesel generator. Even though this is a very elaborate and complex system, it is pretty reliable. It has been an expensive venture for SLTV, but the system offers a very isolated community eight of the most basic and important television channels.

After many years of study and planning, South Lane Television converted from the old analog television standard to the new digital standard in 2009 – at the same time as the television broadcasters were required to convert. The new digital standard has been the most significant improvement in television performance and viewing pleasure since the arrival of color television. With the new digital standard and brand new state of the art equipment, the upgrade resulted in sparking clear digital pictures for our viewers, and SLTV's Hansen Butte operation has become one of the largest and most technically advanced translator sites in the Country. And when you combine the rural areas of London and Dorena, our system is in a class of its own.

The best part about our message is that this valuable service is yours absolutely free! All viewers need is a good quality antenna aimed toward the SLTV tower in your vicinity. The more rural you

live, the more challenging reception is. SLTV operates on much lower power than the full service stations in Eugene, Medford, Salem, or Portland -- and a hill or other obstructions such as trees can make reception difficult for the signals to penetrate your antenna. So look for the clearest path you can find for your antenna location, and if the signals are not producing a stable picture, an amplifier may improve the final signal to the TV. Within the city of Cottage Grove, many homes utilize indoor antennas, but these can be problematic. Indoor antennas are challenged by the walls in your house and any obstructions beyond your house, such as trees in the pathway to the towers. So the first step in purchasing an indoor antenna, is to NOT buy the cheapest antenna you can find. Occasionally, indoor antennas will often work if the antenna is set in a window with the towers clearly visible on Hansen Butte, otherwise these seldom work. You may get a few channels, but if you aren't getting them all, you need a better antenna. A better decision is to buy the best antenna you can find. Generally speaking, a cheap antenna might be about \$19, but one that has a better chance of working may cost closer to \$40. And you usually get a built-in amplifier to help improve the signal with a better antenna. When people ask us about antennas, we always recommend folks skip indoor antennas altogether and buy a good quality outdoor antenna. With an outdoor antenna, even if you have a few trees in your or your neighbor's yard that obscures your view of the towers, you should still get great reception with a good outdoor antenna. The cost for an outdoor antenna, with wiring, etc., will be about \$100. For fringe areas, a bigger antenna may run around \$150. These days, most people buy antennas and related equipment via the Internet. SLTV recommends Channel Master.com for superior equipment. When ordering, remember you need UHF for the Cottage Grove and London systems and a VHF for Dorena/Culp Creek. BiMart also has an expanding line of antennas. Mike in the Electronics section is knowledgeable and can be a valuable resource in helping you select the proper antenna and wiring, etc.

The cost savings compared to cable or satellite services often amounts to \$1,000 per year, or more! And, a typical family only watches eight to 12 satellite/cable/premium channels regularly beyond the remaining 80% of what typical households routinely watch. We all watch the local news, network programming, and public broadcasting. SLTV carries all the networks and their affiliate's sub-channels on all of our systems. Beyond the Eugene network affiliates, we add programming options from stations in Salem, Portland, and Medford on our main Cottage Grove system. SLTV also has an on-air program guide for all 36 channels and has agreements from various program suppliers from various regions of America to bring in additional varied programming to Cottage Grove via satellite. Altogether this results in South Lane Television being able to provide 36 channels of free crystal clear digital television of varied interests. You may be interested in knowing that a half dozen radio stations are also rebroadcast over the SLTV system for better reception in Cottage Grove.

Due to an FCC mandate, SLTV is presently replacing seven of our 10 licenses as a part of an overhaul of the TV spectrum. It

is a very complicated process, but SLTV is ahead of the curve and will emerge with all of our lost channels being replaced, we believe. This will be expensive, but SLTV is ready to rebuild the system as needed. We are a non-profit community benefit organization who's income comes from space leases and agreements with users of the site. We do not receive any tax money and SLTV does not solicit money from the public. In many areas of the country, translator systems are supported by a taxing district. While SLTV will come through our challenges OK, there are, unfortunately some translator organizations across the country that won't make it as a result of the expense and complication of the process. Translators are considered a secondary service, so that makes it even harder for us as an industry to survive. But we have the best engineer on the West Coast and he has managed to receive approvals from the FCC to move to all seven of the affected channels to new replacement channels that he has identified. We then, once our new equipment is installed, will have to test for and meet certain engineering standards. We are optimistic of a positive outcome. Quite honestly, it is frustrating for us to try to serve the public and see the attitude of the FCC to be that nobody watches over-the-air television anymore and the spectrum could better serve the cellphone industry. While it is often true that viewers in more affluent areas don't mind paying \$100 per month for satellite or cable services, it is not necessarily true in Cottage Grove -- or much of the inter-mountain West where free over-the-air television is critical in people's daily lives. Did you know that our studies have consistently shown that approximately 1/3 of the television households in the Cottage Grove area choose South Lane Television's free TV service rather than pay for satellite or cable service. That's thousands of people. Certainly free over-the-air TV is important to many folks in Cottage Grove.

South Lane Television's Board President, Lloyd Williams, is also a member of the National Translator Association Board of Directors so we are always well aware of changes in the industry – and how to respond. The NTA's only interest is in keeping free television and radio available to rural America. South Lane Television has the same goal, along with a desire to continue to add as many programming choices beyond the standard broadcast TV model as we can. It is our desire to be an active voice in broadcasting, advocating for free television and radio services for everyone in America, whether urban or rural.

South Lane Television and its volunteer board has been with you for six decades and is always watching for new ways to bring new and better ways to deliver the best television, radio, and general communications services to our community.

May you enjoy the holiday season to its fullest!

Signed:

Lloyd Williams, President, Ron Irvine;
Executive Vice President, Gary Williams;
Vice President, Joe Brown; Board Member, Don Lonsbury;
Board Member, Naomi Motta; Board Member, Connie Ourada



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

These messages are brought to you as a public service by South Lane Television. Our goal is to continue serving the community with the highest quality free over-the-air television service possible.

Stay tuned!

South Lane Television, Inc.
A non profit organization serving South Lane County since 1957.