

WAPC



Wisconsin Association of PEG Channels

Serving the needs of public, education, and government cable access television stations since 1998.

2009 - 2010 Board of Directors

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PRESS RELEASE

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WAPC stunned by closure of the Wausau Area Access Channels

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The Wisconsin Association of PEG Channels learned this morning that the City of Wausau is shutting down its community television operations as of January 31, 2010. Mayor Tipple cited “tough economic times” and the failure of Charter Communications to pay PEG fees since passage of the Video Competition Act two years ago. That law requires PEG fees to be paid for a three-year period. The City of Wausau is pursuing legal remedies against Charter. PEG fee revenue had funded 60% of the station’s annual budget of \$100,000.

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“The City does not want the channels to go dark, but it can no longer fund them alone,” said John Jordan, Wausau Access Coordinator. The city council has made other tough decision this year, leaving several positions vacant, including the positions of assistant city attorney and electrical inspector. The City is actively pursuing its options, hoping that some solution will surface to keep the channels going.

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“We are stunned to hear about the closure of the Wausau community channels. It is hard to believe that residents of Wausau will no longer be able to see and participate in community television. We warned this could come with the passage of the Video Competition Act. We just didn’t expect it quite this soon,” said Mary Cardona, WAPC Executive Director. On January 1, 2011, more stations will be in Wausau’s position. On that date, all dedicated PEG fees end as a result of the passage of the Video Competition Act.

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The Cable Consumer Repair Bill (AB606) recently introduced by Representative Gary Hebl (D - Sun Prairie) will resolve serious problems with the Video Competition Act that took effect in January 2008. Since then, cable companies and AT&T have moved community channels to out of the way locations on the line-up, subjected the channels to interference problems, imposed transmission equipment costs, and withdrawn a commitment to provide dedicated revenue for public, education, and government access stations. The industry move against community television comes at a time when municipalities have been struck particularly hard by the nationwide economic downturn.

Conferences Chair

Pam Steitz
Sun Prairie – Kids 4

Executive Director

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For more information about community television in Wisconsin, go to
www.saveaccessTVwisconsin.org.

www.saveaccessTVwisconsin.org
www.wapconline.com

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