

UpNorth Media Center

Seventh Annual Report to Local Government Sponsors

City of Traverse City
East Bay Charter Township
Elmwood Charter Township
Garfield Charter Township

Presented by:



324 Munson Avenue, Traverse City, MI 49686
www.liaa.org

October 1, 2015

Introduction

LIAA began operating the public- and government-access cable television stations for Northwest Lower Michigan on July 1, 2008. This is our seventh major report concerning the development and operation of the public- and government-access TV systems in Northwest Lower Michigan. Below, we describe the work undertaken by LIAA's UpNorth Media Center staff members and hundreds of volunteers to build and protect this valuable community TV system. These efforts are being undertaken with the support and participation of the City of Traverse City and the Charter Townships of East Bay, Elmwood, and Garfield.

Summary of Community & Local Government Benefits

LIAA's *UpNorth Media Center* provides numerous important services to the participating local governments and the citizens of the Grand Traverse Region. These services include:

- **Government-Access Television** – The *UpNorth Media Center* provides video collection, scheduling, transcoding and cablecast services for the City of Traverse City and the Charter Townships of East Bay, Elmwood, and Garfield, as well as Grand Traverse County. We also contract with, schedule, and supply trained video operators to the participating local governments to help capture local government meetings and ensure they are available online and on-air to the community. This includes **at least 25 regularly scheduled local government meetings each month**, as well as a number of special meetings.
- **Video Streaming & Multi-function Website** – Citizens can use the *UpNorth Media Center's* website to watch *UpNorthTV* and *Government TV* streaming "live." Individual programs are also archived for playback online. The website also offers an up-to-the-minute *Community Calendar* and TV schedule.
- **Video Training & Education Classes** – Since offering our first video classes in August 2008, we have **provided a total of 173 different classes to over 900 students. In just the past year, we have conducted 21 classes involving 72 students.** Today, **there are 575 people who are formally qualified as producers** with the *UpNorth Media Center*. The UpNorth Media Center also works with area high schools and college programs to provide teaching for specific projects or classes, as well as internship opportunities.
- **High-Quality Television Studio** – The *UpNorth Media Center* offers a professionally equipped, automated TV studio. Local **residents, nonprofits, and public officials have used this facility more than three times per week on average in the past year.**
- **Easy Access to Audio & Video Editing Stations** – The *UpNorth Media Center* offers a hands-on computer lab for instructional use and for local producers to edit and improve their content. There are ten computers available offering all the necessary software, hardware, bandwidth, and personal assistance from our staff that might be needed to produce a show. Producers have also had access to a laptop that can be checked out for editing use at home. We even offer a library of music that is royalty-free for use on their programs.
- **On-Site Technical Assistance** – Producers are happy to find the highly qualified staff members available to answer questions and provide technical assistance 40 hours a week and as requested in evenings and on weekends.

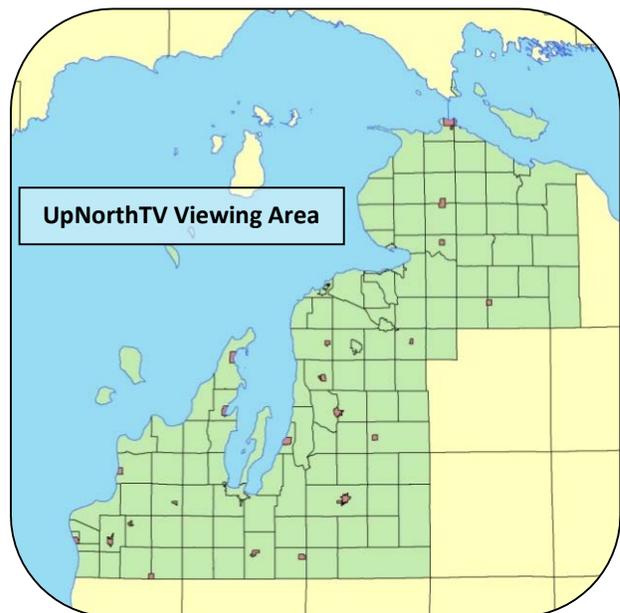
- **Rapid & Predictable Scheduling of Local Content** – Local producers are assured that the video presentations they submit will be cablecast quickly and predictably, with multiple air-dates. For program series, we strive to offer consistent scheduling as well as active promotion of the content.
- **Useful Viewer Services** – *UpNorthTV* carries an attractive, easy-to-read *Community Calendar*. Programming schedules are regularly posted and special video *feeds* between shows provide viewers with quick weather updates, short news reports, sports stories, and interesting facts. We also worked with Charter Cable to allow us to include content descriptions in the on-screen cable guide, so viewers can see what’s playing currently and in the future and allowing them to schedule DVR recordings.
- **Equipment Purchasing & Installation for Local Governments** – The *UpNorth Media Center* provides participating local governments with direct assistance to specify, bid, purchase and install audio and video equipment as needed to assure that public meetings are recorded and cablecast to local residents.

Background – PEG-Access Television

Under federal and state laws, municipal governments may demand access to the cable television delivery system as part of their franchise agreements with cable TV providers. Cable providers must supply public, educational and government (PEG) access TV stations for the delivery of content generated by and for the community. In Northwest Lower Michigan, the City of Traverse City and East Bay, Elmwood, and Garfield Charter Townships have joined together to exercise this option, protecting the delivery of four PEG-access TV channels.

In July 2008, LIAA took over the operation of both the public- and government-access television services for Northwest Lower Michigan. Prior to that time, the public-access TV station was known as *TCTV 2* (channel 2) and was operated by the Traverse Area District Library. The government-access TV station was operated by the City of Traverse City. Two educational-access TV stations were (and continue to be) operated by Traverse City Area Public Schools (TCAPS) and Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) respectively.

In accepting the responsibility of providing both the *public-* and *government-access TV* services, LIAA offered a new approach with improved public services, greater technical capacity, and better viewing experiences. We have worked to provide the best community TV services



available anywhere, continually enhancing citizen education experiences, developing higher quality video content and offering dependable technical support for citizens and participating governments.

In March 2014, Charter Cable moved to an all-digital format and relocated all PEG TV channels to the 180s and 190s. Viewers find UpNorthTV on channel 189 and GovernmentTV on channel 191. During discussions about the channel change with Charter, UpNorthTV was able to secure the ability to display programming in the on-screen schedule guide through the company Rovi. Costs for setting up the on-screen schedule were covered by Charter. UpNorthTV programming began appearing on the schedule on March 27, 2014.

LIAA's UpNorth Media Center has worked to build TV production training, services and support capacity for seven years. For example, LIAA built a state-of-the art automated TV studio. We have employed two digital media specialists, each with extensive experience in TV operations and training, to provide video production and training support. From March 2014 through June 2015, our employees logged 903 hours of direct assistance to the local volunteer producer community. LIAA's internet and information systems specialists have provided data management, equipment maintenance services, and web application development. Additionally, we have worked to develop a special community outreach program with the support of part-time staff members and a growing number of volunteers.

Over the past year, LIAA's UpNorth Media Center has reworked the training curriculum for public-access video production and offered 21 hands-on public education classes. We have also maintained and loaned video production equipment, cablecast over 1,100 unique productions, and provided extensive technical support to citizen producers (e.g., computers, software and technical advice).

LIAA's UpNorth Media Center has maintained municipal video equipment, scheduled and managed contract videographers, and transferred digital video for cablecast. During the past year, UpNorth Media Center has spent more than 110 staff hours on equipment repairs for participating jurisdictions. Additionally, we have scheduled and cablecast videos of meetings for all four participating governments (roughly 18 meetings each month), as well as nine different boards and commissions of Grand Traverse County.

The remainder of this report provides more specific detail for the period of service from March 2014 through June 2015.

Summary of Community & Government TV Services & Operations

LIAA is a nonprofit, community service organization with 22 years of experience in helping citizens, nonprofits, and local governments use technology more effectively for better communications, community development and resource management. As a nonprofit, LIAA's overall management and corporate policies are the responsibility of a volunteer Board of Directors composed of seven well-regarded community leaders, educators, and foundation representatives from across the state. The Executive Director is responsible for the management and operation of the UpNorth Media Center. LIAA's station manager is responsible for the day-to-day operations of public- and government-access TV services and most of the training programs.

UpNorthTV Citizens Advisory Committee

Rich Brauer, Brauer Productions
Beth Friend, Trustee, East Bay Charter Township
Mary Grover, League of Women Voters
Chuck Korn, Garfield Charter Township Supervisor
Ward Kuhn, Attorney; Kuhn, Darling, Boyd & Quandt
Christine Maxbauer, Grand Traverse County Commissioner
Grant Parsons, Parsons Law Firm
Thom Paulsen, City Opera House
David Poinsett, R&D Manager, R.M. Young Company
Doug Stanton, National Writers Series
Susan McQuaid, Citizen

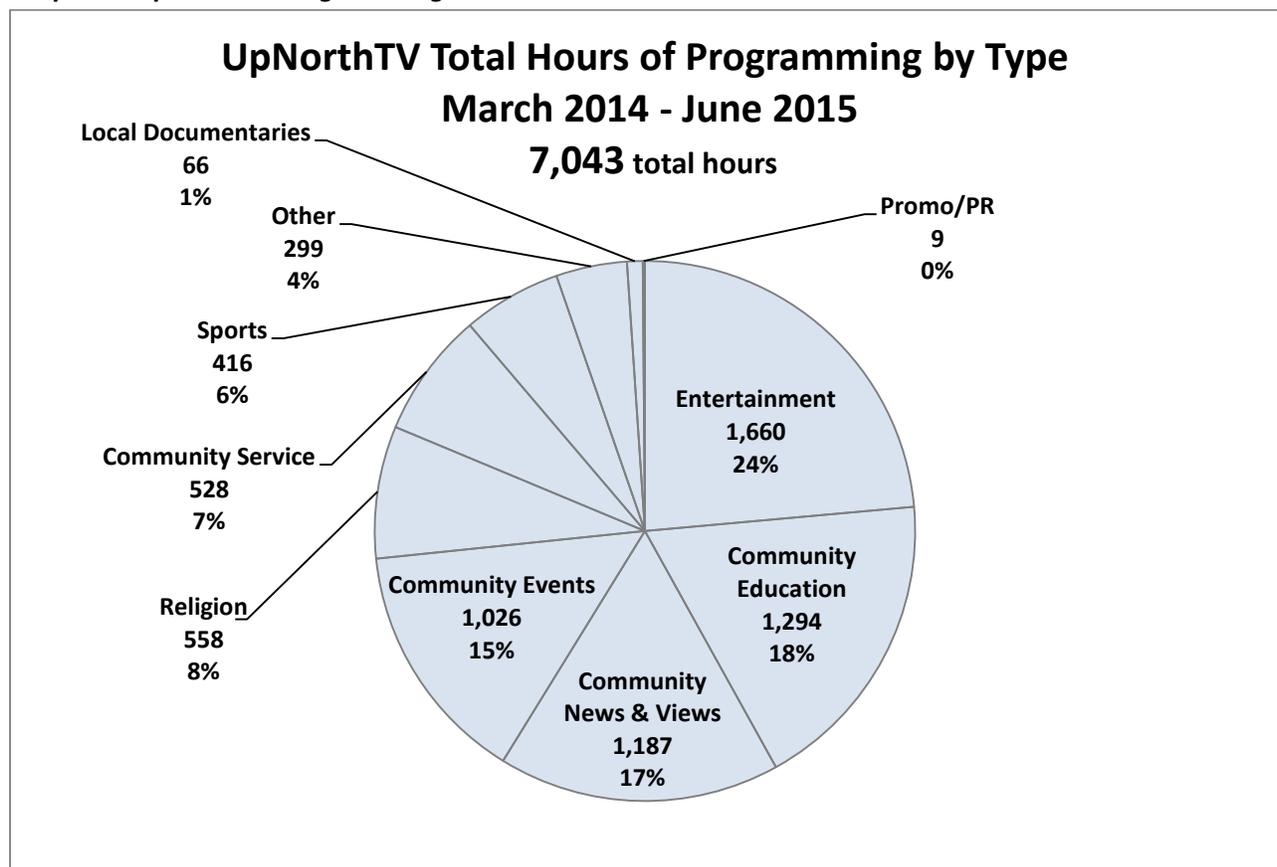
In our first year, we worked with a *Citizens Advisory Committee* to develop a management strategy and the necessary *Policies and Procedures* for the public-access TV service. Reviewed and adopted by LIAA's Board of Directors, these *Policies and Procedures* have served community-access TV well over the years, assuring fair and equitable access to all resources, training and support. The *Citizens Advisory Committee* established an *Executive Committee* which continues to provide ongoing support through regular meetings and special project work. This year we increased efforts to have more meetings with the *Citizens Advisory Committee* concerning policies and keeping them up to date regarding ongoing projects. The *Citizens Advisory Committee* and its *Executive Committee* are essential parts of public-access TV service, providing fair and impartial advice while working hard to support this extremely valuable public service.

Equipment & Facilities – One of the most important tasks of public-access television is the maintenance and loaning of video equipment for community use. The UpNorth Media Center has loaned professional-grade video cameras, audio and/or lighting equipment roughly 230 times in just the current reporting period (March 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015), providing regular maintenance of the equipment and keeping careful records through standardized tracking forms and procedures. We also provide certified producers access to ten video and audio editing workstations in LIAA's hands-on computer classroom, available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. as well as anytime upon request.

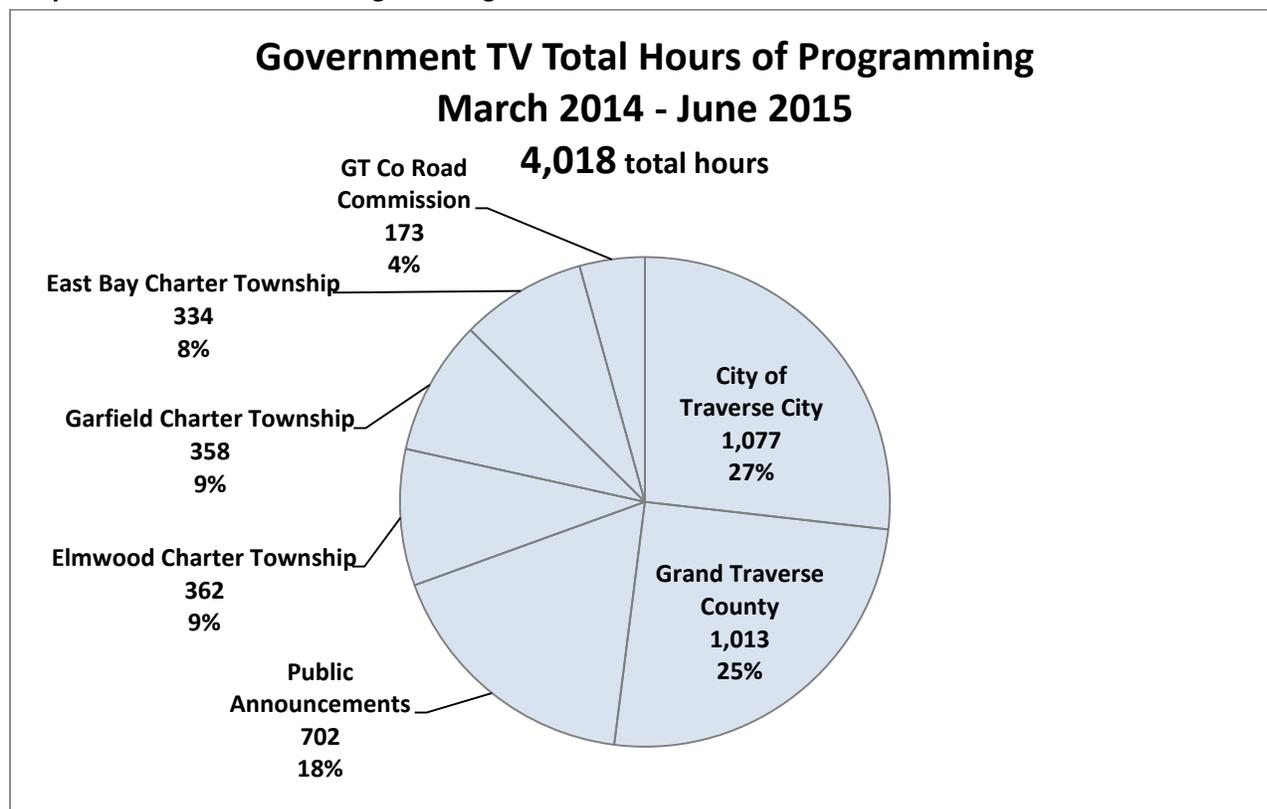
Additionally, we provide access to a modern, automated video and audio studio and control room facility within LIAA’s building. This facility has been used for video production more than 170 times in the reporting period. Among other things, the studio provides citizens, nonprofit organizations, and local governments access to three automated High Definition (HD) cameras, a green screen for graphic backgrounds, modern fluorescent lighting, a high-quality teleprompter, an array of microphones, audio mixers, and an HD camera switcher.

Programming – Another key role of the UpNorth Media Center is the transcoding, scheduling, and cablecasting of video content for both *UpNorthTV* and *Government TV*. The amount and variety of programming developed by local producers has increased dramatically since LIAA took over these operations. From March 2014 through June 2015, *UpNorthTV* scheduled and cablecast over 7,043 hours of programming (Graph 1.1). Over 4,018 hours of programming were also provided on *Government TV* (Graph 1.2).

Graph 1.1 UpNorthTV Programming Hours



Graph 1.2 Government TV Programming Hours



Video Production Training – An important goal of public-access television is education, training and support for the public in the use of video production equipment. We strive to offer frequent opportunities for people to attend training courses and often schedule additional classes on demand to meet the needs of specific inquiries. Our *Producer Orientation* is a one-hour class, which provides participants with the basic concepts and rules of public-access video production and permits them to request airtime for a video presentation. There is no fee for this introductory course.

The second course offered is for *Field Producers* and teaches people how to use cameras, lighting, microphones and video editing equipment. This eight-hour course gives people the ability to operate and care for the mobile equipment available through the UpNorth Media Center. There is a \$60 fee for this class to help offset costs. We promote this course to non-profit groups and offer flexibility for the timing of classes to meet their needs. Graduates of this course are qualified to borrow and use the video production equipment at no charge (if they are residents of the participating jurisdictions).

The third course is a four-hour *Studio Producers* course, giving people the ability to set up and operate the audio, video and lighting equipment in the UpNorth Media Center studio. They also learn how to use the green screen or other backdrops to record their shows. There is a \$40 fee

for the class. Individuals who complete it are qualified to use the studio to produce shows at no additional charge (if they are residents of the participating jurisdictions).

Currently we are working to establish an online system for class registration and payments. We plan to have the full system in place and built into the UpNorth Media Center website by the end of the year.

Government TV – One of LIAA’s contract responsibilities is to coordinate and manage government television services for the viewing region. This activity includes assistance in the video recording of local government meetings, transport and transcoding of the video products, coordination in scheduling cablecasts, and the cablecast of programs. Additionally, LIAA specifies, purchases and maintains the video equipment for local governments (e.g., cameras, digital data transfer systems), occasionally providing for improvements and repairs. The participating local governments have appointed a Government-Access TV advisory committee that has adopted *Policies for the Operation of Government-Access Cable Television* and provides guidance on the operation of *Government TV*. The UpNorth Media Center contracts with a half dozen videographers to handle the cameras at an average of 25 different government meetings each month, including Grand Traverse County boards and commissions. The media is either directly collected by our staff members or transferred through digital data compression systems for preparation and cablecast.

As in the past, LIAA’s staff members worked with the local government officials to assure that the video production equipment in each location is working properly, troubleshooting hardware and software problems. Over the reporting period, we provided special assistance to Garfield and Elmwood Townships by reorganizing and restructuring their rack systems. We also replaced audio equipment at the Traverse City/Grand Traverse County Governmental Center. We made substantial repairs and upgrades to several data compression and transmission systems, including power supplies, a hard drive and RAM.

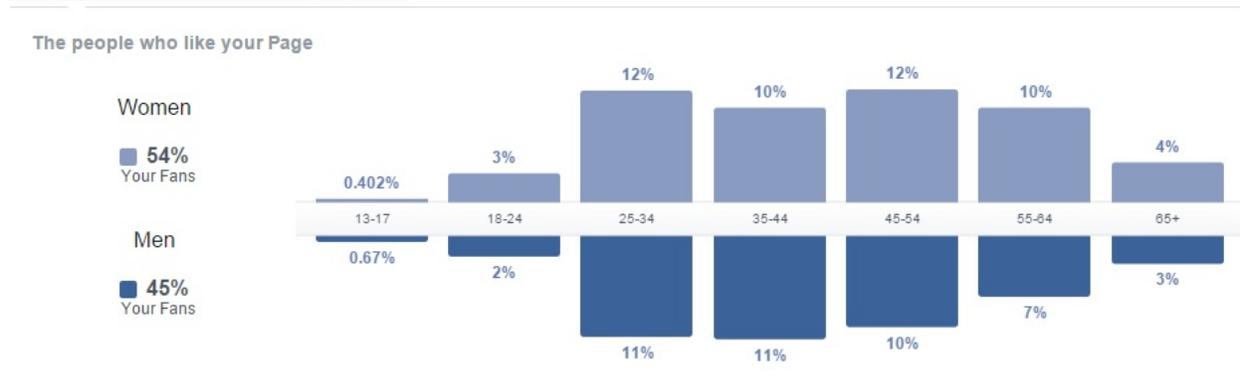
Website – LIAA has a long history of creating and hosting websites for nonprofit organizations, local governments, and special projects. Shortly after we took over management of the stations, we had created a special website for the community media center at www.upnorthmedia.org. The website quickly became a key communications tool for *UpNorthTV*, *Government TV*, and all aspects of the UpNorth Media Center. This website continues to be a key resource, providing ready access to documents (e.g., *Policies & Procedures*, *Equipment Check-Out Forms*), a regularly updated program schedule, news and notes, public comment area, course listing and registration forms, Community Calendar, and other information.

The website has been a critically important part of our program development and outreach effort. For example, www.upnorthmedia.org provides quick links to real-time viewing of *UpNorthTV* as well as *Government TV* online, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Visitors can also search the archives for past video presentations and watch them online through a video streaming service.

The website offers a number of tools to citizen producers that make it easier to share information and seek assistance. This past year, we have expanded our use of social media as a complement to the website to increase community outreach. The UpNorth Media Center website (www.upnorthmedia.org) provides links to the *Twitter*, *Facebook* and *YouTube* pages for *UpNorthTV* and *Government Access TV*. The UpNorth Media Center *Facebook* page helps to engage the community in discussion about events involving *UpNorthTV* and *GovernmentTV*. Data from *YouTube* and *Facebook* helps us to promote greater viewership while providing a snapshot of Internet viewer demographics.

Graph 2 is a description of *Facebook* users who *follow* UpNorthTV. This information has been helpful in developing outreach and promotional strategies for our stations.

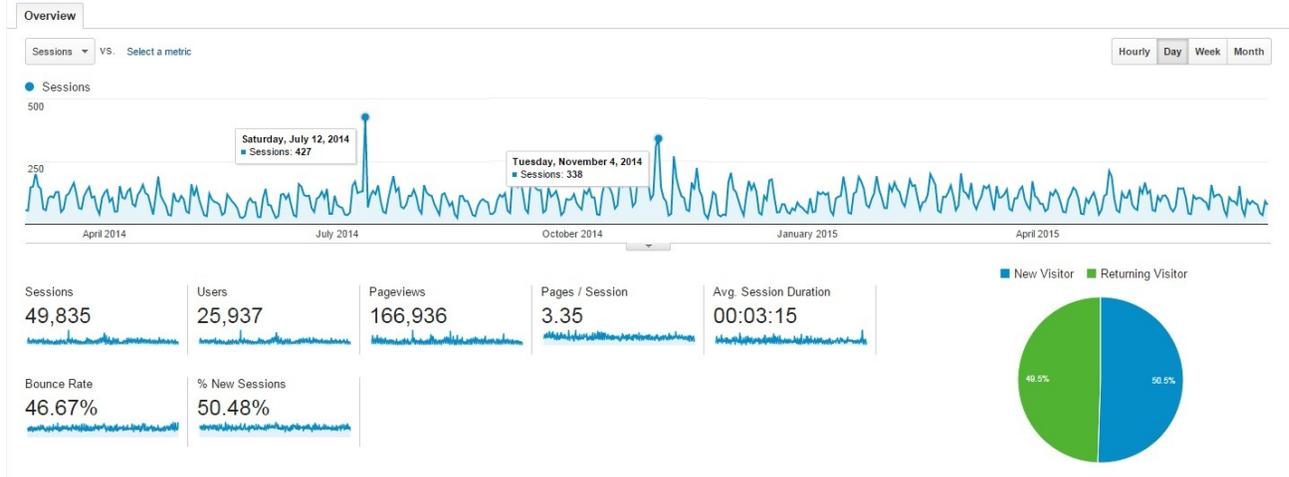
Graph 2. Facebook Demographics



Website hits for *upnorthmedia.org* average around 3,000 per month. This year the website has had an increase in the percentage of visitors who remain on the site for a relatively long period of time. We also see that many visitors are navigating through everything the site has to offer.

From March 2014 through June 2015, the *upnorthmedia.org* website received a total of 49,835 visits from 25,168 new visitors as seen on Graphs 3 and 4. Our highest traffic day in the period was July 12, 2014 (Graph 3), the day of the live broadcast of the Cherry Royale Parade. Visitors to the website view an average of 3.35 pages each, meaning once they get to the website, they engage with different elements and pages.

Graph 3. Website Hit Report



Graph 4. Visitor Data

User Type	Acquisition			Behavior			Conversions		
	Sessions	% New Sessions	New Users	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration	Goal Conversion Rate	Goal Completions	Goal Value
	49,835 % of Total: 100.00% (49,835)	50.50% Avg for View: 50.48% (0.04%)	25,168 % of Total: 100.04% (25,159)	46.67% Avg for View: 46.67% (0.00%)	3.35 Avg for View: 3.35 (0.00%)	00:03:15 Avg for View: 00:03:15 (0.00%)	0.00% Avg for View: 0.00% (0.00%)	0 % of Total: 0.00% (0)	\$0.00 % of Total: 0.00% (\$0.00)
1. New Visitor	25,168 (50.50%)	100.00%	25,168 (100.00%)	56.41%	2.84	00:02:09	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
2. Returning Visitor	24,667 (49.50%)	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	36.74%	3.87	00:04:22	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)

Show rows: 10 Go to: 1 1 - 2 of 2

This report was generated on 9/22/15 at 10:58:20 AM - Refresh Report

The Media Center website received 166,936 pageviews last year (Graph 5.1). Out of all the pages on UpNorthMedia.org, municipal pages received some of the highest percentages of views. Grand Traverse County's page had 5,816 views and the City of Traverse City's page received 5,295 views, putting them both in the top 10 for pageviews. The Government Meeting landing page also has a high percentage of views; the combination of *govtvm meetings.asp* and *govTVmeetings.asp* garnered 5,485 pageviews. This indicates substantial traffic to the government portions of the website.

Graph 5.1 Pageviews, 1-10

<input type="checkbox"/>	Page ?	Pageviews ? ↓	Unique Pageviews ?
		166,936 % of Total: 100.00% (166,936)	120,945 % of Total: 100.00% (120,945)
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. /	15,237 (9.13%)	12,657 (10.47%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. /upnorthtvshows.asp	7,874 (4.72%)	4,859 (4.02%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. /login	6,827 (4.09%)	4,840 (4.00%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. /default.asp	6,383 (3.82%)	3,671 (3.04%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. /govtnow.asp	6,090 (3.65%)	3,671 (3.04%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. /govtv_gtcounty.asp	5,816 (3.48%)	3,991 (3.30%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. /govtv_cityoftc.asp	5,295 (3.17%)	3,825 (3.16%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. /upnorthtvshed.asp	5,110 (3.06%)	3,402 (2.81%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	9. /govtvmeetings.asp	4,468 (2.68%)	3,000 (2.48%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	10. /addyourevent.asp	3,511 (2.10%)	650 (0.54%)

Graph 5.2 Pageviews, 11-20

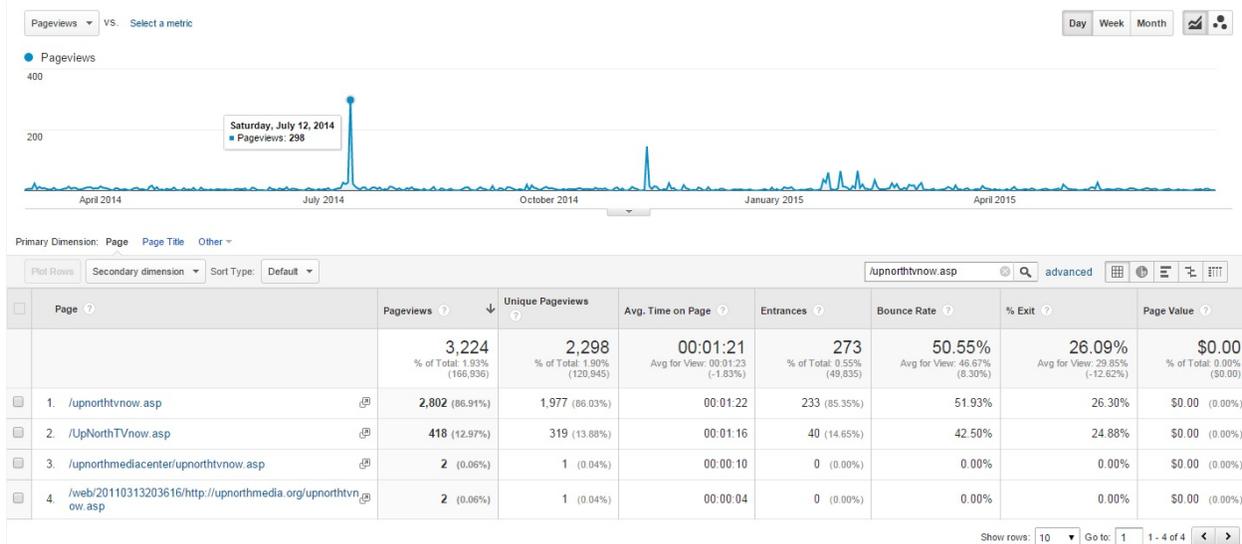
<input type="checkbox"/>	Page ?	Pageviews ? ↓	Unique Pageviews ?
		166,936 % of Total: 100.00% (166,936)	120,945 % of Total: 100.00% (120,945)
<input type="checkbox"/>	11. /upnorthtvnow.asp	2,802 (1.68%)	1,977 (1.63%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	12. /govtvschedule.asp	2,228 (1.33%)	1,830 (1.51%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	13. /UPNorthTVshed.asp	2,204 (1.32%)	1,326 (1.10%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	14. /upnorthtv.asp	2,020 (1.21%)	1,589 (1.31%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	15. /comcal.asp	1,822 (1.09%)	1,392 (1.15%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	16. /GovernmentTV.asp	1,745 (1.05%)	1,353 (1.12%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	17. /upnorthtvbyserie.asp	1,602 (0.96%)	1,166 (0.96%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	18. /upnorthtvall.asp	1,501 (0.90%)	965 (0.80%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	19. /govtv_elmwoodtp.asp	1,214 (0.73%)	926 (0.77%)
<input type="checkbox"/>	20. /UpNorthTVbyprod.asp	1,166 (0.70%)	784 (0.65%)

Graph 5.3 Pageviews, 21-30

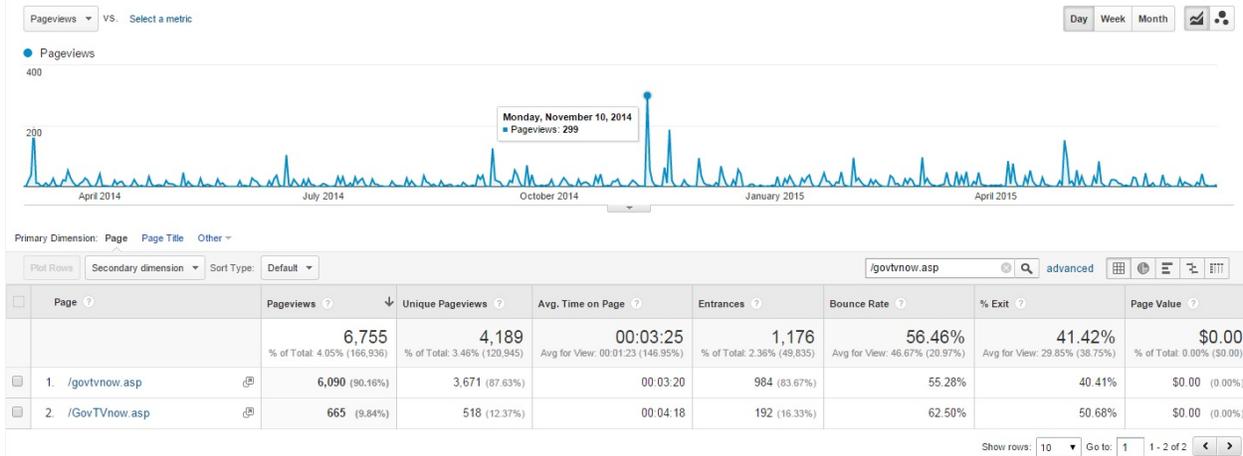
Page ?	Pageviews ?	Unique Pageviews ?
	166,936 % of Total: 100.00% (166,936)	120,945 % of Total: 100.00% (120,945)
21. /govTVmeetings.asp	1,017 (0.61%)	774 (0.64%)
22. /govtv_garfield.asp	998 (0.60%)	713 (0.59%)
23. /meetingmanager.asp	972 (0.58%)	587 (0.49%)
24. /tippage.asp?sdbfid=8	922 (0.55%)	765 (0.63%)
25. /watchupnorthtv.asp?SDBFid=7295	866 (0.52%)	747 (0.62%)
26. /gtco_board_com_c.asp?bid=board of commissioners	836 (0.50%)	531 (0.44%)
27. /staff.asp	824 (0.49%)	688 (0.57%)
28. /govTVschedule.asp	808 (0.48%)	722 (0.60%)
29. /upnorthtvbycat.asp	762 (0.46%)	465 (0.38%)
30. /searchmeetings.asp	759 (0.45%)	604 (0.50%)

The UpNorth Media Center also provides simultaneous web streaming of both public-access TV (UpNorthTV 189) and government-access TV (channel 191). Anyone can watch what is being shown on the cable channels at the same time online. This “live” TV streaming involves a special set of computers and requires a substantial amount of the Internet bandwidth purchased by the UpNorth Media Center. However, this Internet stream assures that people who do not have Charter Cable TV can still watch the public-access and government-access stations. The two graphs below show that Internet users viewed the UpNorthTV stream 3,224 times during just the last year (Graph 6.1). The Government TV stream was viewed 6,755 times during the last year, with the highest volume being 299 on November 10, 2014 (Graph 6.2).

Graph 6.1 UpNorthTV Live Steaming “Views” Report

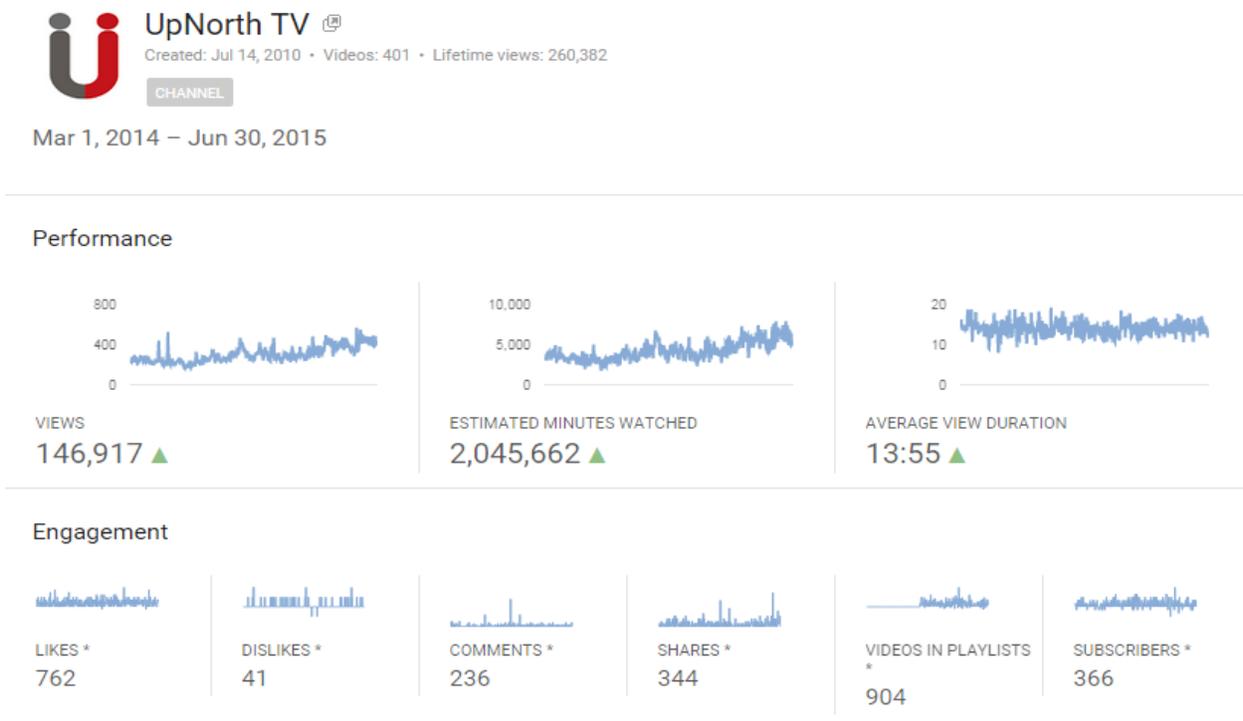


Graph 6.2 Government TV Live Steaming “Views” Report



YouTube Channel – In addition to the live-streaming and on-demand video services provided through the UpNorth Media Center website, we maintain a *YouTube Channel (UpNorthTV)* for video on demand. Owned and operated by Google, this on-demand internet video service gives nonprofit organizations free high-definition (HD) video streaming services, with some limitations. The UpNorth Media Center uploads only high-definition, high-quality content to this service, limiting its use to a degree. From March 2014 to June 2015 there have been 146,917 views of programs on the *UpNorthTV YouTube Channel*. A total of 2,045,662 minutes of programming has been viewed on our YouTube page in the last year, with an average viewing time of 13 minutes, 55 seconds (Graph 7) – a relatively long duration for YouTube channels.

Graph 7 YouTube Viewership





Summary Statistics Concerning Public-Access Station Use

Producers – Since July 2008, LIAA’s UpNorth Media Center has regularly updated our community’s list of people certified to produce content for UpNorthTV. This list includes a number of people who were producers before LIAA began managing the community-access TV station. Through regularly scheduled training classes (described below), we have trained and certified hundreds of additional people to produce content for Public Access TV. As of June 2015, **UpNorthTV had over 575 formally qualified producers** (i.e., certified as trained and able to submit content for cable-casting).

Public-Access TV Courses – LIAA’s UpNorth Media Center began teaching regularly scheduled video production classes in August 2008. These hands-on video production training classes are taught by degreed professionals with extensive TV experience. **Since our start up, we have offered a total of 173 separate classes to over 901 students. In just the last year, we provided 21 different classes to 72 students.** The vast majority of the students are from the four participating jurisdictions. In addition to three special topic classes, we taught the following regularly scheduled classes.

Total Number of Classes & Students: March 2014 – June 2015

- 10 one-hour *Producer Orientation* Courses for 36 students.
- 9 eight-hour *Field Producer* Courses for 30 students.
- 2 three-hour *Studio Producer* Courses for 6 students.

Public-Access Television Programming – Since the fall of 2008, we have strongly encouraged the development and delivery of locally produced shows for cablecast. Producers have delivered a wide variety of individual shows, including: community cultural events (e.g., music, poetry readings); sporting events (e.g., local football); documentaries (e.g., a day at the farm market); and discussions of community issues (e.g., biomass for energy). The ongoing training courses provided through the UpNorth Media Center assure that the number of trained citizen producers continues to grow in our region. While only a small percentage of producers complete shows on a regular basis, the amount of community-relevant content created for UpNorthTV continues to grow. **From March 2014 through June 2015, over 1,100 shows were**

cablecast on UpNorthTV. Almost all of these shows were created locally by Certified Producers. **These new TV shows generated 7,043 hours of programming for UpNorthTV.**

The UpNorth Media Center's professional TV production studio has been a particularly useful resource for citizens, nonprofits, and local officials. Studio producers have learned to record more than one show in a single session, increasing productivity and reducing studio use. The studio has been used by volunteer producers on average more than 3 times a week over the past year. The studio has served as a training center and a production center valued by a wide variety of nonprofit organizations and individuals, offering a number of studio productions for public viewing. A partial list of regular studio programs produced in the last year includes:

- an area events and information talk show, *In Focus*;
- a music performance and discussion program, *Radio Motion* in cooperation with WNMC Radio;
- a music performance and discussion program, *Northern Michigan's Musician's Journal*;
- a series with foreign policy experts hosted by former US diplomat Jack Segal, *International Affairs Forum*;
- a pet care and adoption program hosted by the Cherryland Humane Society, *Pet Perspectives*;
- several fee-for-service programs for Rotary District 6290 and Cherryland Electric Cooperative;
- a news review show hosted by WTCM Radio's Bill Froehlich, *The Briefing Room*; and
- a Northern Michigan Economy series, *A View of the Bay*.

Public-Access TV Equipment Loaned – Among other services, the UpNorth Media Center staff help *Certified Producers* identify, prepare and check out the video cameras, tripods, microphones and lighting equipment needed to capture content for a program. The equipment must be carefully maintained by our staff members to keep it in good working order. From March 2014 through June 2015, **field equipment has been checked out by *Certified Producers* on more than 230 separate occasions.**

Since our start up in August 2008, hundreds of producers have taken advantage of our computer lab resources through classes and in editing their productions. During the past year we have also installed a 7-*terabyte* shared drive that helps to streamline the workflow for staff and producers. Additionally, dozens of producers maintain digital storage space and edit complete programs with the help of staff members using these editing stations. While editing at the UpNorth Media Center, producers frequently receive on-the-spot technical assistance five days a week and upon request during the weekends. Recently local high school and college students have been using the stations to build and develop video production skills.

UpNorth Media Center Memberships – As part of our effort to engage people from throughout the *UpNorthTV* viewing region, we have extended the option of UpNorth Media Center Memberships to people who live outside of the participating jurisdictions (i.e., outside of Traverse City and East Bay, Elmwood and Garfield Charter Townships). Paying annual dues of \$50/year, members living elsewhere in our viewing area are given the same level of access to training, equipment and cablecast services as people living within the participating jurisdictions. A total of 47 people paid dues and were listed as additional members over the past year.

Nonprofit Member Organizations

- American Lung Association
- Big Brothers, Big Sisters
- Cherry Capital Cycling Club
- Cherryland Electric Cooperative
- Cherryland Humane Society
- City Opera House
- Community Resource Development
- National Cherry Festival
- Networks Northwest
- Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy
- Grand Traverse Conservation District
- Groundwork (Michigan Land Use Institute)
- GT Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians
- GT Bay Watershed Center
- Interlochen Public Radio
- League of Women Voters Grand Traverse League
- League of Women Voters Lake Michigan League
- Leelanau Conservancy
- Little Collaborative
- National Cherry Festival
- Neahtawanta Research & Education Center
- Networks Northwest
- Northwest Michigan Council of Governments
- Northwestern Michigan College
- Old Town Playhouse
- Oryana Natural Foods Market
- Rotary Charities
- SEEDS
- TC-TALUS
- The Botanic Garden at Historic Barns Park
- Traverse Area Association of Realtors
- Traverse Area District Library
- Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce
- Traverse City Film Festival
- Traverse City National Writers Series
- United Way of Northwest Michigan

Nonprofit organizations that wish to produce and cablecast their own shows are also asked to become members of the UpNorth Media Center. These member organizations pay annual dues of \$100/year and receive the same services and support as individual members. For example, member organizations are able to borrow equipment, use the studio, and receive training at discounted rates. Shows produced by nonprofit members are cablecast in the same manner and under the same policies as shows created by individual producers. Over the past year, 36 nonprofit organizations have been members of the UpNorth Media Center (see inset above).



The Special Projects of the *UpNorth Media Center*

To provide citizens and participating local governments of the Grand Traverse region the best public- and government-access TV services, the UpNorth Media Center undertakes a number of special projects each year. These projects help assure TV coverage of key community events, provide learning opportunities for volunteer producers, celebrate community culture and heritage, and help to assure easy access to video records of local government meetings.

Special TV Program Production Support – Over the past three years, the UpNorth Media Center has helped to launch a number of new *series* shows that are of general interest to the greater community. For example, we have assisted a small group of volunteers to develop and launch *Up Front Fridays*, a talk show highlighting current events and activities in the region. Another show called *The Briefing Room* is a discussion of the week’s news stories by people who work for the press in our region. These shows and other regularly recorded programs like the *National Writers Series* give volunteer producers an opportunity to learn camera techniques and directing skills under controlled conditions and with direct support while creating a product of true community value.

A View of the Bay: Making a Living – In August 2014, an AmeriCorps VISTA member worked with local non-profits to create this series focused on economic issues in Northern Michigan. Six long-format programs were created for the series. Show topics ranged from talking with local homeless people about the new *Zine* magazine to looking at local housing costs and employment.

Picnic at the Opera Season 3 – Michigan’s only live TV variety show enjoyed a successful third season, produced for six weeks in January and February in collaboration with City Opera House. The UpNorth Media Center worked alongside City Opera House, students and staff of the Audio Technology Department at Northwestern Michigan College, the Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay, dozens of other volunteers, and numerous talented guests (e.g., musicians, artists, poets, dancers) to accomplish six shows performed live on stage at the Opera House and broadcast live on UpNorthTV 189 and UpNorthMedia.org. More than 200 volunteer hours went into producing the six programs. City Opera House asked for donations from the live studio audience and collected several thousand dollars by the end of the six shows. Due to the success of the third season, the UpNorth Media Center and City Opera House have already scheduled the dates for the fourth season in 2016.

Next Steps for Community- & Government-Access Television

The staff members of LIAA are very proud of the progress made in advancing public-access and government-access TV in our region. Today, most government meetings involving the City of Traverse City, the Charter Townships of East Bay, Elmwood and Garfield, and Grand Traverse County are readily accessible through cable TV and over the Internet. LIAA’s UpNorth Media Center hopes to add at least one more township to the list of participating local governments during the coming year, increasing the strength of the group and adding value to this communications network. The UpNorth Media Center is also continuing outreach efforts supporting media education, civic engagement and increasing viewership. Some significant efforts have been made to increase recognition of UpNorthTV and GovernmentTV within the last few months and we hope to maintain these efforts.

Social Media Promotion – Recently we have developed a social media strategy for the UpNorth Media Center that includes increased use of *Facebook*, *YouTube* and *blogging*. Through these outlets we are able to help build a community for existing producers and help promote the UpNorthTV and GovernmentTV stations. One example is attaching links to social media news posts directing people to watch corresponding meetings on *upnorthmedia.org*. Since December 2013, the UpNorth Media Center Facebook page has grown from roughly 313 followers to 716 as of June 2015 (Graph 8). Making sure that government web pages have convenient direct links to view meeting playbacks will also help with the overall web presence.

Graph 8 Facebook Likes



Increasing Community Outreach – Based on survey results by *NorthSky Nonprofit Network*, nonprofits have a growing need for educational and technical assistance in video production. Nonprofit organizations are aware that video technology can help them improve their education and marketing programs. Recently we have started advocating for new non-profit members to have trainings done at their event. By having two volunteers from one non-profit take part in a field production class, we tailor the training to their video production needs. We are also working to build up a group of volunteers to act as freelance videographers to record important community events. Further, we are working to help local nonprofits plan for and develop video internships.

Ongoing Education Efforts – In providing public-access TV services, we strive to encourage participation at all levels. Whether simply watching the TV productions created by their neighbors or actually producing their own programs, all citizens are encouraged to play a part in public-access TV. We have been working with more students recently in an effort to be recognized as more of a training facility as well as helping them to develop content. Working with the Citizen Advisory Committee, we have also created new criteria for interns wanting to become Producers. Instead of paying cash for the field or studio training, they can intern for 40 hours over the course of 60 days to train and qualify as a Producer. We continue to work to connect incoming producers with those who have more experience to create a collaborative producer community.

On-Site Training & Production – We have continued to develop community partnerships. Working together with groups like *Big Brothers Big Sisters*, *Northwestern Michigan College*, the *Traverse City Film Festival*, the *Great Lakes Children’s Museum*, the *National Writers Series*, and the *National Cherry Festival* allows us to promote the stations and provide continued training for producers.

More High-Definition Video – The vast majority of video production across the country is now being done in high definition (HD). LIAA’s UpNorth Media Center is working to keep pace with

these technology changes and assure that our citizens and community organizations have the capacity to create HD video productions. To date, Charter Cable has refused to provide the community with an HD cable channel. We continue to work to convince Charter that community video productions deserve the best video quality and a full HD cable channel.

Advanced Video Delivery Equipment – To continue building our capacity to provide high quality video (including HD video over the Internet), LIAA has developed a partnership with Leightronix, a video appliance manufacturer and Internet streaming service provider. Under this partnership, we participate in testing new equipment and demonstrating new approaches in exchange for needed digital video computer equipment and Internet streaming services valued at well over \$15,000. Currently we are awaiting Leightronix’s newest device, the Ultra Nexus HD. This new device will allow us to receive HD video from our producers and provides both standard-definition and high-definition outputs. This will make the Media Center ready to cablecast in HD as soon as Charter agrees.

Funding & Expenses of the Community Media Center

LIAA is in the seventh year of operation under contracts with the City of Traverse City and East Bay, Elmwood and Garfield Charter Townships. Under these contracts, LIAA provides Public-Access and Government-Access TV services, including: education, technical assistance, equipment purchasing and management, scheduling and transcoding, video access on the Internet, and cablecasting. As stated in each contract, the primary purpose of this effort is:

... to provide a forum for resident citizens, community service groups, nonprofit organizations, and other non-commercial groups to present their views and to celebrate local achievement, provide community education, encourage civic engagement, present local culture and art appreciation, and support individual expression.

The most important source of funding for public-access and government-access TV is a franchise fee collected from Charter Communications by the local governments in exchange for the use of public property (right-of-ways). This fee is usually reflected on each cable subscriber’s monthly bill. Of the amount collected by local governments (5% of Charter’s gross receipts for video programming services), 30% is set aside for use in providing public-access and government-access TV services. Additionally, 30 cents (\$0.30) is collected from each cable subscriber each month to cover capital costs (e.g., equipment) associated with these TV services. The participating governments provide 80% of these capital funds to the UpNorth Media Center for new equipment and maintenance.

Our community's public-access and government-access TV systems operated by LIAA are financially viable under the current contracts with the City of Traverse City and the Charter Townships of East Bay, Elmwood, and Garfield. To provide greater flexibility, we have worked to enhance public-access TV funding through memberships, sponsorships and special fundraising efforts. These contributions have supported additional community outreach efforts and citizen training opportunities (e.g., the *Picnic at the Opera* production). In the coming year, we hope to continue building external funding by developing more underwriting and sponsorship opportunities.

Over the past seven years, LIAA has kept costs at or below the funding levels provided and added to the reserve fund for additional equipment purchases. However, the entire PEG TV communications system would be stronger and more valuable to the community as a whole with the participation of additional municipalities (e.g., Peninsula Charter Township and Acme Charter Township). We continue to work to recruit additional municipalities to take advantage of this powerful community resource.

