

UpNorth Media Center

Ninth 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

August, 2017

Introduction

The nonprofit Land Information Access Association (LIAA) began operating the public- and government-access cable television stations for Northwest Lower Michigan on July 1, 2008. This is our ninth 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 many active volunteers to record and show many aspects of our community both on cable TV and online. 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 many services to the participating local governments and citizens of the Grand Traverse Region. Some of these services are described below.

Government-Access Television – The UpNorth Media Center provides video acquisition, scheduling, transcoding (e.g., formatting different media) 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.

Video Streaming & Multi-function Website – Citizens use the UpNorth Media Center website (www.upnorthmedia.org) to watch *UpNorthTV* and *GovernmentTV* channels streaming 24/7. Programs are also available for playback on-demand through the website. The website also offers an up-to-the-minute *Community Calendar* and TV schedule. For video producers, the website provides an easy way to submit video for playback.

Video Training & Education Classes – The UpNorth Media Center provides Field Producer and Studio Producer training for organizations and individuals. The UpNorth Media Center also works with area high schools and college programs to provide instruction for specific projects or classes.

High-Quality Television Studio – The UpNorth Media Center provides citizens with access to a professionally equipped, automated TV studio.

Audio & Video Editing Stations – The UpNorth Media Center offers a hands-on computer laboratory used for instruction and for local producers to edit and complete their projects. We offer both professional and consumer-level editing software, along with services that can provide music, video clips, graphics and other enhancements for video projects.

On-Site Technical Assistance – The UpNorth Media Center's highly qualified staff members are available to answer questions and provide technical assistance 40 hours a week and as requested 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 more than one play.

Useful Viewer Services – Our channels carry an attractive, easy-to-read *Community Calendar*. Programming schedules are regularly posted, and informative video feeds between shows provide viewers with quick weather updates, short news reports, sports stories, and interesting facts. We have also negotiated the ability to post UpNorthTV channel programming in the on-screen cable guide, allowing viewers to see what's playing and 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 (see *Figure 1: PEG Station Television Viewing Area*). 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 and Northwestern Michigan College respectively.

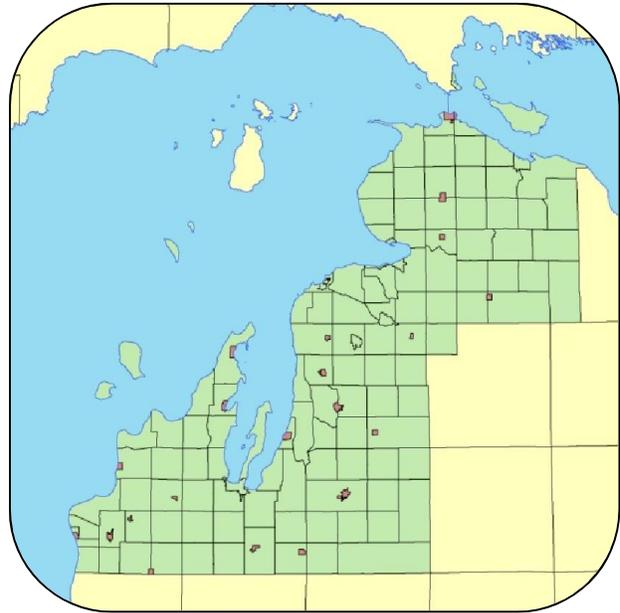


Figure 1: PEG Station Television Viewing Area

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 community TV services comparable to those 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 Communications moved to an all-digital format and relocated all PEG TV channels to the 180s and 190s. Viewers now find public-access TV as UpNorthTV on Channel 189, and government-access TV as 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. UpNorthTV programming began appearing on the schedule in March 2014. We are still working to obtain Charter’s approval to display GovernmentTV programming in the on-screen schedule.

Summary of Community & Government TV Services & Operations

LIAA Oversight – Founded in 1993, LIAA is a nonprofit community service organization with 24 years of experience in helping citizens, nonprofits, and local governments use technology more effectively for better communications, community development and resource management. LIAA’s overall management and corporate policies are the responsibility of a volunteer Board of Directors composed of five well-regarded community leaders, educators, and foundation representatives from across the state. LIAA’s Executive Director, Technology Director and Station Manager provide overall guidance and management of day-to-day operations for the UpNorth Media Center.

GovernmentTV Advisory Committee – As the primary financial supporters of the UpNorth Media Center, representatives of the participating governments gather quarterly to review Media Center operations and strategies, plan any services they may need from the Media Center, and discuss any government initiatives that may be of interest to or be informed by the Media Center. This committee has adopted the *Policies for the Operation of Government-Access Cable Television* that guide operation of GovernmentTV. This committee ensures that the Media Center meets its contractual obligations to each of the participating governments.

| GovernmentTV Advisory Committee |
|---|
| Susanne Courtade Township Clerk, East Bay Charter Township |
| Connie Preston Township Clerk, Elmwood Charter Township |
| Lanie McManus Township Clerk, Garfield Charter Township |
| Katelyn Zeits Deputy City Clerk, City of Traverse City |

Citizens Advisory Committee – The UpNorth Media Center is managed with the advice of a Citizens Advisory Committee, which works with us to develop management strategy and *Policies and Procedures* to guide the operation of UpNorthTV. Reviewed and adopted by LIAA’s Board of Directors, these *Policies and Procedures* assure fair and equitable access to all resources,

| UpNorthTV Citizens Advisory Committee |
|---|
| Rich Brauer, Brauer Productions |
| Beth Friend, East Bay Charter Township Supervisor |
| Mary Grover, League of Women Voters |
| Chuck Korn, Garfield Charter Township Supervisor |
| Ward Kuhn, Attorney, Kuhn, Darling, Boyd & Quandt |
| Christine Maxbauer, Citizen |
| Grant Parsons, Parsons Law Firm |
| Thom Paulsen, City Opera House |
| David Poinsett, Citizen |
| Doug Stanton, National Writers Series |
| Susan McQuaid, Citizen |

training and support. The Citizens Advisory Committee meets on an as-needed basis to address issues and provide guidance to staff, and has established an Executive Committee that provides ongoing support through special project work. An essential part of the UpNorth Media Center,

the Citizens Advisory Committee and its Executive Committee represent the community in the ongoing conversation about how the Media Center can best fill its role.

Media Center Staff – LIAA’s UpNorth Media

Center staff consists of a full-time Station Manager and two full-time Media Specialists, each with extensive experience in TV operations and training. In addition, LIAA’s Financial Administrator, Technology Director, and Information Technology Specialist provide support for the Media Center, including contractor management and scheduling, website development and support, and networking and hardware support.

2016-2017 UpNorth Media Center Staff

Courtney Jerome, Station Manager
Joe Torrence, Media Specialist
Matt Kern, Media Specialist
Kim McNeil, Financial Administrator
Jim Muratzki, Technology Director
Rob Astor, IT Specialist
Paul Riess, Information Specialist

Participation – Individuals who live in any of the participating jurisdictions can be an UpNorthTV Producer for free. In order to engage people from throughout the UpNorthTV viewing region, individuals who live outside of the participating jurisdictions may participate by paying a fee of \$50/year. All participants are given the same level of access to training, equipment and cablecast services. A total of 13 people paid participant fees over the past year. An additional 23 individuals submitted media from within the participating jurisdictions.

2016-2017 Nonprofit Member Organizations

- Cherryland Humane Society
- City Opera House
- Fife Lake Makerspace
- Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy
- Great Lakes Children’s Museum
- Groundwork (Michigan Land Use Institute)
- Interlochen Public Radio (IPR)
- League of Women Voters - Grand Traverse Area
- Mt. Holiday
- National Cherry Festival
- Networks Northwest
- Northwestern Michigan College
- Old Town Playhouse
- Oryana Natural Foods Market
- Relay for Life
- Right Tree
- Rotary of Traverse City
- Traverse Area Association of Realtors (TAAR)
- Traverse Area District Library
- Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce
- Traverse City Film Festival
- Traverse City National Writers Series
- Traverse Transportation Coordinating Initiative (TTCI)

Nonprofit organizations that wish to produce and cablecast their own shows can also participate in the UpNorth Media Center. These organizations pay a participation fee of \$100/year and receive the same services and support as individual Producers. For example, participating organizations are able to borrow equipment, use the studio, and receive training at discounted rates. Shows produced by participating organizations are cablecast in the same manner and under the same policies as shows created by individual Producers. Over the past year, 23 nonprofit organizations have participated in the UpNorth Media Center.

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 65 times in the past year (up 80% from last year), providing regular maintenance of the equipment and keeping careful records through standardized tracking forms and procedures. We also provide certified producers access to video and audio editing workstations in LIAA’s hands-on computer classroom, available Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. as well as anytime upon request.

Additionally, we provide access to an automated video and audio studio and control room facility within LIAA’s building. This facility has been used for video production over 50 times in the reporting period. Among other things, the studio offers 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. Some series shows record more than one show in a single studio session, increasing productivity and streamlining studio use. A partial list of regular studio programs produced in the last year includes:

- An area information talk show featuring unsung heroes, *Common Royalty*;
- A talk show featuring interesting local people, *Ideas Live*;
- A program highlighting Northern Michigan residents and nonprofits, *Fresh Perspectives*;
- A news review show hosted by Bill Froehlich, *The Briefing Room*; and
- A political talk show, *In Focus*.



Programming – Another key role of the UpNorth Media Center is the transcoding, scheduling, and cablecasting of video content for both UpNorthTV and GovernmentTV. In the past year, UpNorthTV scheduled and cablecast over 5,096 hours of programming (*Figure 2 - UpNorthTV Programming Hours July 2016 to June 2017***Error! Reference source not found.**). Over 2,673 hours of programming were also provided on *GovernmentTV* (*Figure 3 - GovernmentTV Programming Hours July 2016 to June 2017*).

Figure 2 - UpNorthTV Programming Hours July 2016 to June 2017

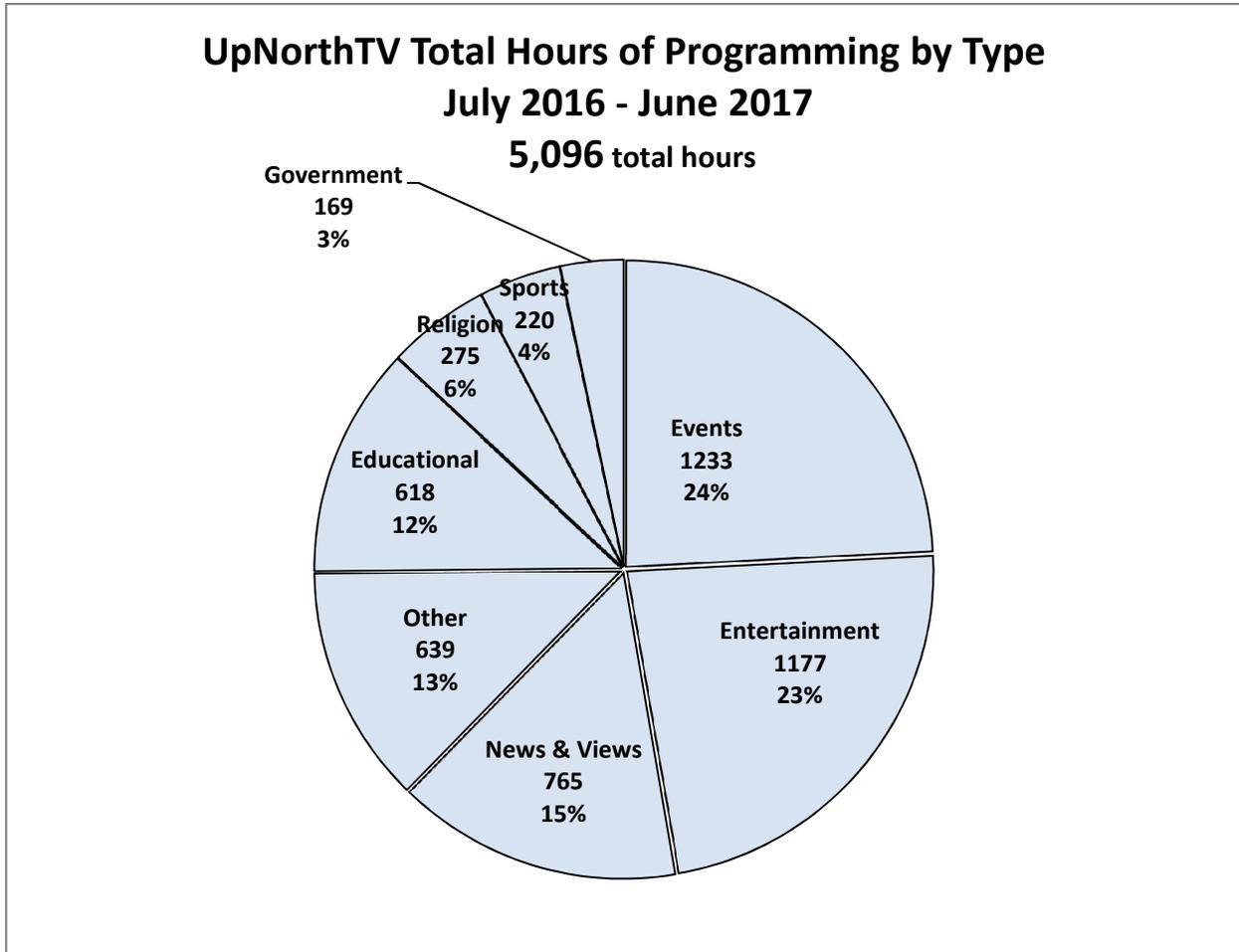
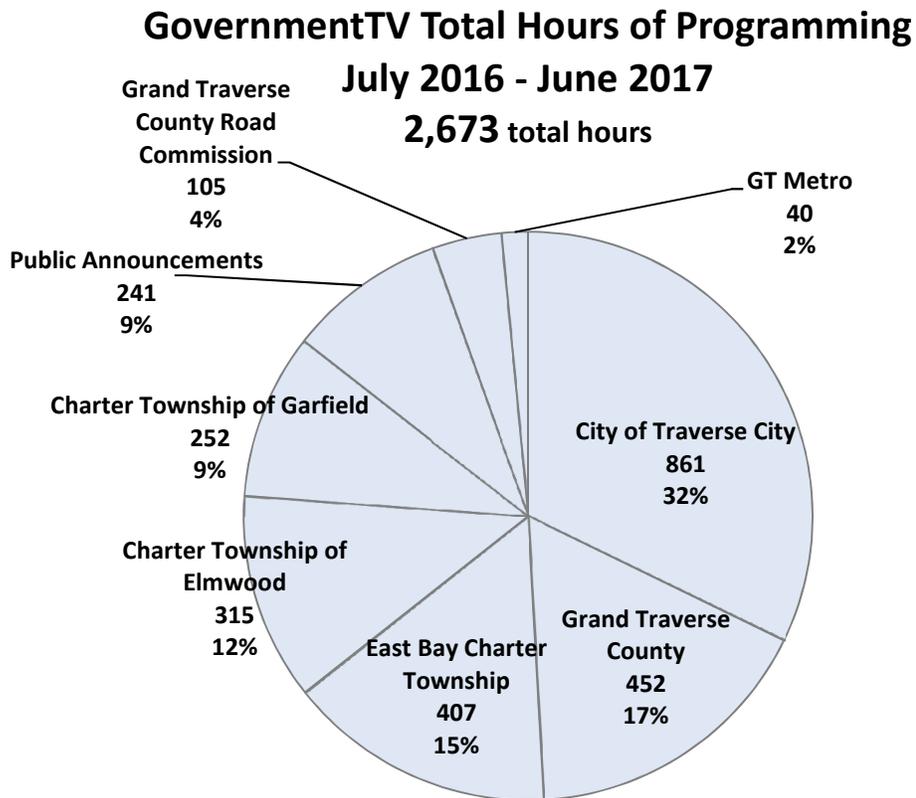


Figure 3 - GovernmentTV Programming Hours July 2016 to June 2017



Video Production Training and Support – Another important goal of public-access television is education, training and support in the use of video production equipment, and in the art of telling stories or showing events with digital media.

Our *Producer Orientation* is a one-hour class that provides participants with the basic concepts and rules of public-access video production and permits them to request airtime for a video presentation as a Certified Producer. There is no fee for this introductory course, and it is often combined with other classes. The UpNorth Media Center has certified over 600 Producers since 2008.

We also offer a course for *Field Producers* that 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 and editing workstations available through the UpNorth Media Center. There is a \$60 fee for this class to help offset costs. We promote this course to nonprofit groups with an offer to have their volunteers trained to record their events. Graduates of this course are qualified to borrow and use the video production equipment at no charge.

Our *Studio Producers* course gives 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 show. There is a \$40 fee for this class. Individuals who complete this course are qualified to use the studio to produce shows at no charge.

Once participants are trained, UpNorth Media Center staff provide ongoing assistance, such as equipment retraining, project planning help, and one-on-one editing advice.

In the last year, the UpNorth Media Center hosted 13 training courses, and logged an additional 300 hours of direct assistance to Producers.

GovernmentTV Management and Oversight – The UpNorth Media Center coordinates and manages 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 actual cablecast of most programs. Additionally, the Media Center specifies, purchases and maintains the video equipment for local governments (e.g., cameras, digital data transfer systems), occasionally providing for improvements and repairs.

The UpNorth Media Center contracts with videographers to run the cameras and video switcher systems at roughly 25 different government meetings each month. The media is automatically transferred to the UpNorth Media Center over the Internet through digital data compression systems for streaming and cablecast.

Media Center staff members work closely with local government officials to ensure that the video production equipment in each location is working properly, troubleshooting hardware and software problems. This year, Media Center staff spent more than 50 hours on equipment repairs for participating jurisdictions. In addition, we standardized the video recording systems at the three participating Townships, allowing video contractors to easily switch between venues if the need arises.

Website – LIAA has a long history of creating and hosting websites for nonprofit organizations, local governments, and special projects. The UpNorth Media Center website at UpNorthMedia.org is a key communications tool for UpNorthTV, GovernmentTV, and all aspects of the Media Center. This website provides a regularly updated program schedule, news and notes, public comment opportunities, access to documents (such as the *Policies & Procedures*), a Community Calendar, help for producers, and other information. The website also provides a place to submit content: Producers may request airtime and send video through the website; organizations submit Community Calendar events which are then automatically

shown on our TV channels and on the website; and our *Meeting reView* solution helps governments link agendas and meeting documents to meeting videos.

The website provides quick links to real-time viewing of UpNorthTV and GovernmentTV 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.

Website hits (i.e., unique sessions) average around 2,667 per month. Again this year we are seeing many return visits, showing that a large number of website users value the services offered. As can be seen in *Figure 4: Website Visitor Sources*, the majority of visitors come to the website directly (from, for example, a bookmark in their browser), with a slightly smaller percentage of visitors from search engines (such as Google). This indicates that the website is serving a specific community of users, as would be expected by something as local as UpNorthTV and GovernmentTV. Visitors also access the website by referral, which is usually a link from a participating government’s website. The remainder of visitors come in through our social media offerings.

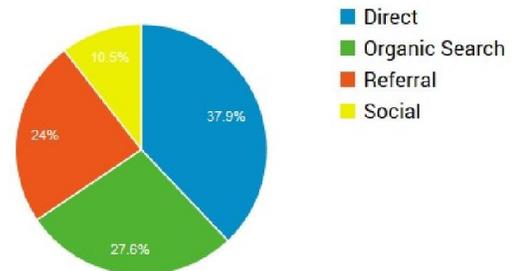


Figure 4: Website Visitor Sources

In the past year, the UpNorthMedia.org website received a total of 32,010 visits from 16,646 unique visitors as seen on *Figure 5: Website Sessions July 2016 to June 2017*. Our highest traffic day in the period was Monday, October 24, 2016. Visitors to the website view an average of around three pages each, meaning once they get to the website, they are engaged to view pages beyond the one they originally sought.



Figure 5: Website Sessions July 2016 to June 2017

The Media Center website received 91,102 pageviews last year (*Figure 6: Website Top 10 Pages July 2016 to June 2017*). Out of all the pages on UpNorthMedia.org, municipal pages received some of the highest percentages of views. The GovernmentTV concurrent stream page (allowing viewers to watch the cable channel online 24/7) had 6,037 views. Grand Traverse County’s page continues to be the most viewed for on-demand video at 4,192 views.

| Page ? | Pageviews ? ↓ | Unique Pageviews ? |
|--|--|--|
| | 91,102 % of Total: 100.00% (91,102) | 65,800 % of Total: 100.00% (65,800) |
| 1. /default.asp  | 9,551 (10.48%) | 7,972 (12.12%) |
| 2. /govtvnow.asp  | 6,037 (6.63%) | 2,790 (4.24%) |
| 3. /govtmeetings.asp  | 5,299 (5.82%) | 3,844 (5.84%) |
| 4. /govtv_gtcounty.asp  | 4,192 (4.60%) | 3,108 (4.72%) |
| 5. /upnorthtvsched.asp  | 3,570 (3.92%) | 2,537 (3.86%) |
| 6. /upnorthtvnow.asp  | 2,863 (3.14%) | 1,686 (2.56%) |
| 7. /addyourevent.asp  | 2,220 (2.44%) | 421 (0.64%) |
| 8. /upnorthtvshows.asp  | 2,196 (2.41%) | 1,602 (2.43%) |
| 9. /govtv_cityoftc.asp  | 2,131 (2.34%) | 1,512 (2.30%) |
| 10. /govtvschedule.asp  | 1,804 (1.98%) | 1,518 (2.31%) |

Figure 6: Website Top 10 Pages July 2016 to June 2017

The UpNorth Media Center provides simultaneous web streaming of both UpNorthTV Channel 189 and GovernmentTV Channel 191. 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.

Internet users viewed the UpNorthTV stream 2,863 times during the last year, with 275 viewers accessing the page during the National Cherry Festival’s Cherry Royale Parade on July 9, 2016 (*Figure 7: UpNorthTV Concurrent Stream Viewers July 2016 to June 2017*). The spikes in February 2017 represent our weekly *Picnic at the Opera* live variety show from the City Opera House.

The GovernmentTV stream was viewed 6,037 times during the last year, with the highest volume being 488 on December 6, 2016 (*Figure 8: GovernmentTV Concurrent Stream Viewers*

July 2016 to June 2017). There was a City of Traverse City Planning Commission meeting that day.

Figure 7: UpNorthTV Concurrent Stream Viewers July 2016 to June 2017

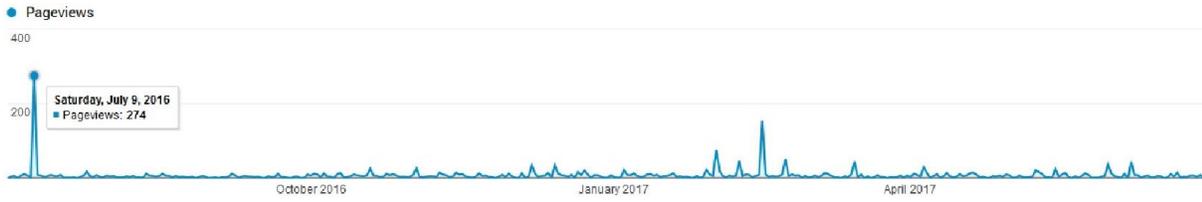
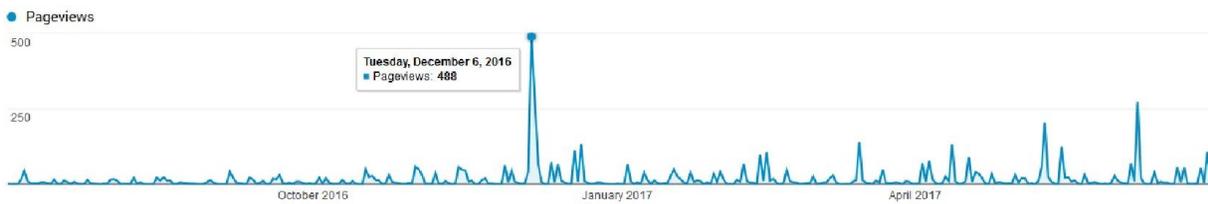


Figure 8: GovernmentTV Concurrent Stream Viewers July 2016 to June 2017



Facebook – We continue to use social media as a complement to the website to increase community outreach. The UpNorth Media Center has a presence on Facebook and YouTube. The UpNorth Media Center Facebook page helps to engage the community in discussion about events and programs on UpNorthTV and GovernmentTV. Over the last year, total page followers have increased 12% and we have had over 23,200 video views via Facebook as well.

Figure 9: Facebook Demographics is a description of Facebook users who follow UpNorthTV. This information has been helpful in developing outreach and promotional strategies for our stations. Figure 10: Facebook Likes July 2016 to June 2017 shows that our Facebook engagement has grown considerably over the past year.

Figure 9: Facebook Demographics

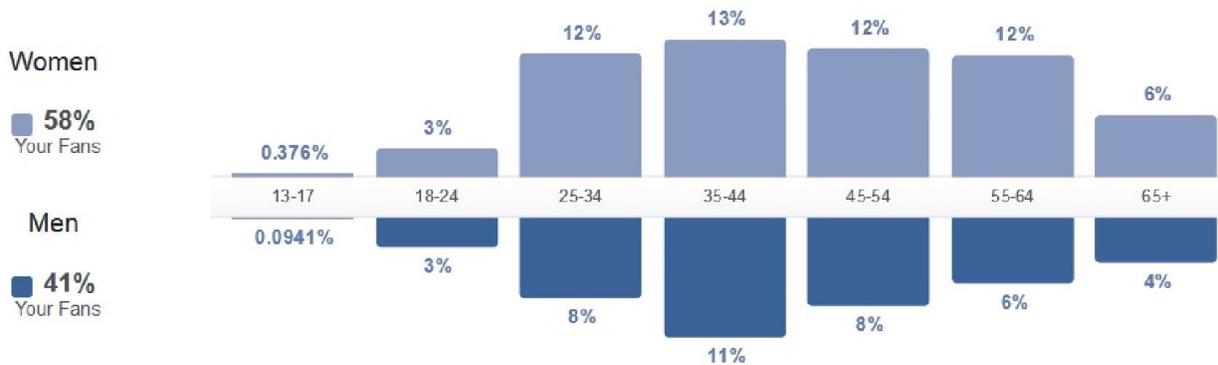


Figure 10: Facebook Likes July 2016 to June 2017



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. We upload only high-definition, high-quality content to this service, limiting its use to a degree. This channel provides an alternate place for people to find UpNorthTV shows created by the UpNorth Media Center, driving a different demographic back to our website. This past year there were 96,350 views of programs on the UpNorthTV YouTube Channel (*Figure 11: YouTube Viewer Metrics July 2016 to June 2017*). A total of 1,477,735 minutes of programming have been viewed on our YouTube page in the last year, with an average viewing time of 15 minutes, 20 seconds — a relatively long duration for YouTube channels.

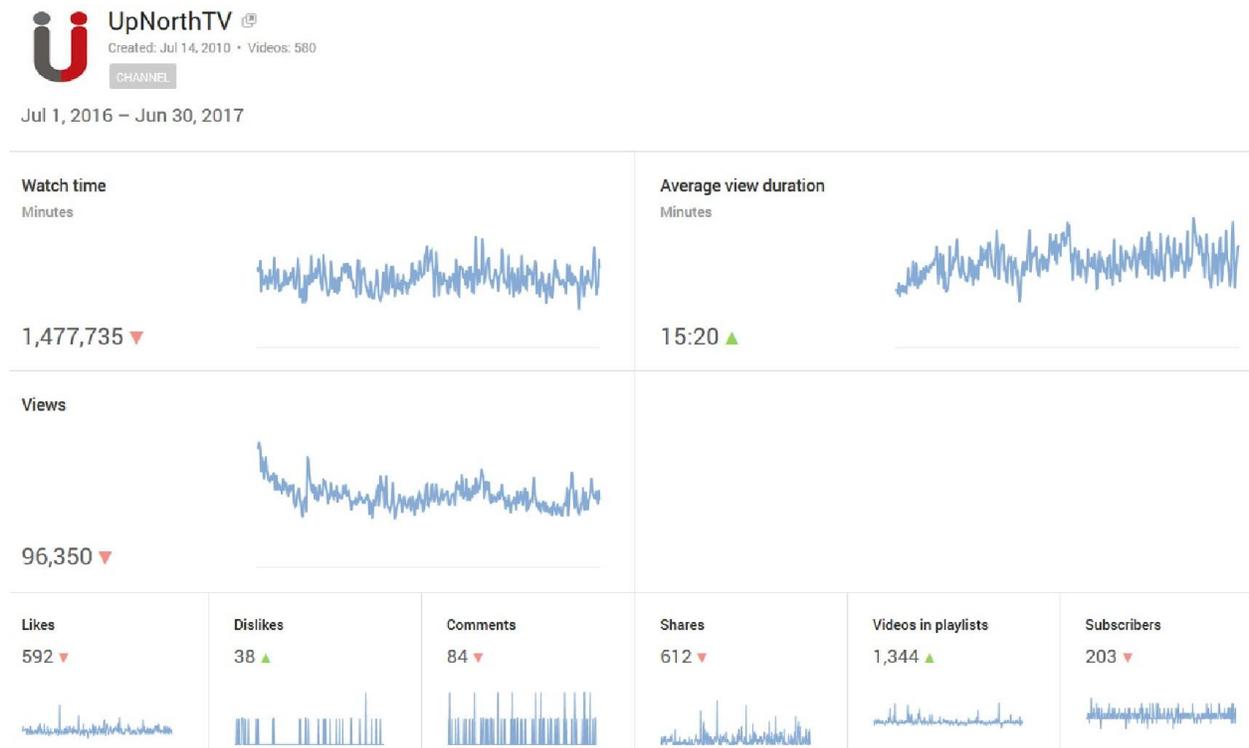


Figure 11: YouTube Viewer Metrics July 2016 to June 2017

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 expanded the number of special projects we produced this 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 public meetings. Here are a few examples of the partnerships and projects the UpNorth Media Center has worked on this past year:

National Writers Series – UpNorth Media Center volunteers and staff record this nationally-recognized program of discussions with popular authors. Held at the City Opera House, this event provides a great training opportunity for volunteer camera operators and production assistants. UpNorth Media Center recorded 17 National Writers Series events from July 2016 to June 2017.

Traverse City Film Festival – The UpNorth Media Center records the daily filmmaker panel discussions of the festival and prepares them for cablecast. UpNorth Media Center staff and volunteers set up a multi-camera production system at the City Opera House, records the discussion, and breaks it down before the following film is shown. UpNorth Media Center staff puts the finishing touches on the video at the office, and airs the panel discussion on UpNorthTV. In addition, the UpNorth Media Center staff (and volunteers) collaborated with staff from the Film Festival to simulcast the Filmmaker Party (awards show) at the end of the Film Festival.



Cherry Festival Cherry Royale Parade – The UpNorth Media Center provides a live simulcast of the Cherry Royale Parade. UpNorth Media Center staff and volunteers brave the sun to run cameras and cables, bringing the parade to people who cannot attend on UpNorthTV and Facebook Live via our Facebook page.

TEDx Traverse City – The UpNorth Media Center provided staff and equipment to record this annual speaking/storytelling event held at Northwestern Michigan College. Because of licensing restrictions from the main TED organization, this event cannot be broadcast on UpNorthTV and so was done as a fee-for-service project with TEDx organizers.

Candidate Forums – The UpNorth Media Center partnered with the League of Women Voters, the Grand Traverse Area Veterans Coalition, and the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce to record and distribute the candidate forums these organizations sponsored. This provides a beneficial service to citizens who cannot attend the events, or who would like a reference when considering their vote.



75th Annual Rotary Show – The UpNorth Media Center recorded and cablecast this fun locally-produced show at the State Theatre.



Public Meetings and Events – The UpNorth Media Center recorded a wide variety of public meetings and events partnering with organizations such as the Inland Seas Education Association, Traverse Area Association of Realtors, Traverse City Downtown Development Authority, Northwestern Michigan College Children’s Choir, the

Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities, Traverse City Historical Society, Young Playwrights Society, Cherryland Humane Society, and others.

Picnic at the Opera Season 5 – The UpNorth Media Center’s live TV variety show enjoyed a successful fifth season, produced for four weeks in February in collaboration with City Opera House. The UpNorth Media Center partnered with the Audio Technology Department at Northwestern Michigan College, dozens of volunteers, and numerous talented volunteer guests (e.g., musicians, artists, poets, dancers, etc.)—totaling over 100 volunteers—to accomplish four shows performed live on stage at the Opera House and broadcast live on UpNorthTV and UpNorthMedia.org. More than 200 volunteer hours went into producing the four programs. The UpNorth Media Center and City Opera House have already scheduled the dates for the sixth season in 2018.



Next Steps for the UpNorth Media Center

The UpNorth Media Center will continue to encourage public access to the cable television and online video environment in the coming year. To both promote this goal and expand into new areas, we have several new initiatives underway and planned for the coming year:

Volunteers and Training – Citizen volunteers and student interns are the mainstays of a public-access television station. Locally, these two groups produce the majority of our community content by operating cameras, directing studio shoots, and developing their own programming.

Three main initiatives involving volunteers are anticipated for the coming year:

1. Volunteers' programming will be shared in HD via online streaming (if they choose to submit content in that format), allowing their hard work to be shown in a higher quality format.
2. We are putting in place a broader recognition program for our volunteers to reward and incentivize continued participation by these dedicated and talented people, including assisting volunteers with award applications to various video competitions.
3. We plan to continue updating our editing equipment as well as field camera equipment so volunteers can learn modern digital single-lens reflex (DSLR) technology.

The UpNorth Media Center remains committed to training and providing learning opportunities related to video in our community. We will continue to maintain producer trainings for community members and nonprofits interested in learning about video and utilizing the equipment at the UpNorth Media Center. During the next year, we anticipate continuing to hold several field training and studio classes at our facilities.

The other regularly scheduled class we offer is our basic orientation, which instructs people on how to submit content and their rights and responsibilities regarding public-access media. Much like the media submittal process, we plan to begin offering the orientation process as an online class. This will make the orientation process easier by making it accessible anytime and anywhere. There will still be orientations offered in person at the UpNorth Media Center, but these will serve primarily as a primer to the more-advanced field training class.

The UpNorth Media Center hosts a wide variety of interns. During the past year we have had two students from the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District (TBAISD) Career-Tech Center. In the next year we intend to increase our work with nonprofits and video production companies to build out a network of experiences for our interns in addition to their work at the UpNorth Media Center. Currently, nonprofit projects work well as training grounds for students who need experience in a client-based environment.

Partnerships – Many partners and nonprofit members help support the Media Center and provide the stations with excellent content. Beyond our service to local governments, helping these local service groups and volunteer-based organizations to showcase their work is one of the most important roles we can play. Using media to tell the stories of the work and events led by our community-based organizations serves many purposes: it helps them get the word out about their programs and services; it helps them demonstrate their value to the community and potential donors; and sometimes it even helps them accomplish their mission, such as in

the case of the International Affairs Forum (IAF), which works to help educate our region about international topics and their impacts here locally.

We plan to maintain relationships with our nonprofit members such as the National Cherry Festival, Traverse City Film Festival, Rotary District 6290, City Opera House, Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce, Great Lakes Children's Museum and many more. In the past year we have assisted area nonprofits with programs such as the Cherry Royale Parade, a variety of content from the Traverse City Film Festival (including teaching at the Film School), Picnic at the Opera, Young Playwrights Festival, Great Lakes Children's Museum promotions, City Opera House, political candidate interviews with the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce, the Traverse City Rotary Show, and TEDx Traverse City.

We are continuing to explore other options for collaboration. We are partnering with *Project Cinema MI* over the next year, a project providing access and opportunity to filmmakers of all ages and skill levels in northwest Michigan through education and hands-on filmmaking. Also, we are discussing a co-curriculum with Trinity Lutheran School in Traverse City, providing middle school students with an introduction and basic overview of television production skills with our equipment and facilities. By studying the disciplines and techniques of communicating through video, students will improve personal communication, leadership, time management, writing, and media literacy skills.

Our relationship with other public-, education- and government-access (PEG) channels is also building. This fall, we will be hosting the annual tour for the Michigan Chapter of the Alliance of Community Media. All PEG stations throughout the state are invited to tour our facilities here in Traverse City. This will be a great outreach event with other professional media organizations, and it was an honor to be chosen as the 2017 host.

Technology and Services – We continue to work with Charter Cable on a variety of enhancements, including the addition of descriptive program information to the on-screen guide for GovernmentTV (something we already have in place for the UpNorthTV channel). Once this is implemented, GovernmentTV viewers will be able to see content information for the station in their user guide, as well as on the screen when they tune in.

Lastly, we are continuing to seek ways to convert the stations to HD. Charter currently carries both channels in standard definition, but since most content is now being filmed with HD capabilities, we see this is as a logical step in delivering the best possible service to viewers.

Content – We have several great series and individual programs being produced here locally and we hope to continue expanding those offerings through support for the producers and by

bolstering our partnership opportunities. This past year, our volunteer producers have launched four new series: *Northern Michigan is Making*, *Slightly Off the Beaten Track*, *Trinity Lutheran Church*, and *Ideas Live*. Plus, we have recently premiered pilots for two new staff-produced series, *Fresh Perspectives* and *Painting on the Peninsula*. Currently, we are in pre-production for additional cultural, arts, and children's programming highlighting the people of our region, for a rich Summer 2017 and Fall 2017 lineup.

Building on the past five years of success, we will continue to collaborate with the City Opera House to deliver the *Picnic at the Opera* series in 2018, a forum to showcase local talent featuring arts and culture from around the region. *Picnic at the Opera* is Michigan's only LIVE television variety show, and in 2017 we hit record-breaking audience attendance at City Opera House, proving amazing community engagement with our series.

Consistent with prior years, we anticipate we will air approximately 6,000 hours of locally-produced content on UpNorthTV in the coming year. We also expect that at least 800 new media segments (including full-length programs, promos, etc.) will be delivered during the year and included in the schedule along with a mix of archived content. For GovernmentTV, we expect to have about 4,000 hours of local government meetings.

Overall, the UpNorth Media Center is hoping to see moderate growth in content and distribution within the next year. We look to online viewership and our social media presence — primarily Facebook and YouTube — for feedback on viewership, public awareness, and perceptions of quality and value for the services provided by the Media Center.

Volunteer Program – The UpNorth Media Center has always been open and available to Producers (i.e., citizens willing to take a video production from concept to finished product). This is a challenging task, though, and one which requires a great deal of time and commitment. Over the next year, we plan to explore new and additional ways in which we can expand our awareness and actively recruit and engage community volunteers in participating in UpNorth Media Center activities.

Expanded Educational Opportunities – UpNorth Media Center continues to look ahead at what's to come and remain relevant as video becomes a favorite information-gathering medium. We will continue to explore new types of educational opportunities and technologies to rise up against challenges in making media and distributing it to our audiences.

Improving UpNorth Media Center Awareness – By working more closely with our current partners and continuing to be visible in the community, we constantly strive to improve our

awareness. Over the next year, we plan to explore new and additional ways in which we can expand our awareness within the community and region at large.

Funding & Expenses of the Community Media Center

LIAA is in the ninth 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.

The franchise agreements between Charter Communications and the municipalities that participate in the UpNorth Media Center are due to be renegotiated in 2017. The UpNorth Media Center will continue to provide information and support to the municipalities as needed as they go through this negotiation process.

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 participation fees and fee-for-service work. In the coming year, we hope to continue building external funding by developing more underwriting and sponsorship opportunities.

Over the past nine years, LIAA has kept costs at or below the funding levels provided and has 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. We continue to work to recruit additional municipalities to take advantage of this powerful community resource.

