

# Traverse Area Community Media

## 11th Annual Report to Local Government Sponsors

*City of Traverse City*

*East Bay Charter Township*

*Charter Township of Elmwood*

*Charter Township of Garfield*

**Presented by:**



Land Information Access Association  
324 Munson Avenue, Traverse City, MI 49686  
[www.liaa.org](http://www.liaa.org)

**September, 2019**

## 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 eleventh major report concerning the development and operation of the public- and government-access TV systems. This report describes the work undertaken by LIAA's **Traverse Area Community Media** 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**.

## A Note About the Name

Prior to May 2019, **Traverse Area Community Media** was known as the **UpNorth Media Center**. Before this change of name, the media center was frequently mistaken for other area organizations and businesses that shared the "up north" name, and the confusion was exacerbated by a recent regional proliferation in the use of the "up north" name. This brand confusion prompted LIAA to explore alternative names. After much discussion, Traverse Area Community Media (TACM) was chosen because it better describes what we do and where we work.

## Last Year's Goals

In our last Annual Report, we set out a list of our top goals. Throughout the year, these goals helped us to make sure that we were striving to keep progressing within an environment of changing media needs and consumption habits.

Here are those top goals, and what we did to meet them:

- **Increase and diversify volunteer support**

We strived to meet volunteers where they are at, both figuratively and literally. More than any other previous year, we worked with volunteer producers one-on-one to make sure that each person was getting support that fit their skill level. We also met volunteer producers out in the field to give hands-on support during their remote productions. This has led to a higher percentage of completed volunteer programs as well as an increase in production quality.

- **Broaden our approach to media trainings**

We worked hard to offer more trainings that took on a workshop format. We helped producers flesh out ideas and turn them into more polished pieces. Past trainings focused on operating the tools needed to make good videos, but had less of a focus on the actual content in the videos. This past year we hosted multiple documentary workshops where volunteer producers were able to pitch ideas and receive help fleshing out those ideas.

- **Remove barriers to participation**

This past year we worked to make our trainings and events more accessible by making them free to all residents of the participating jurisdictions, offering more trainings outside of business hours, and by creating roles for people with varying levels of ability. For residents of non-participating jurisdictions, we introduced a monthly membership option in addition to the annual membership option, lowering the barrier to entry.

- **Highlight our local focus**

Our Production Team has prioritized coverage of events that have regional significance. This year we reduced the number of National Writers Series events that we covered in order to focus on more locally oriented events. This has also led to a renewed interest in volunteer participation on community events. During the reporting period, we organized a volunteer production team to help us record more than 35 community events. We see our volunteer production team, and the hyperlocal content that they produce, as two of the main ways that we separate ourselves from other media organizations.

On top of these main goals, we also were able to reorient our workflow for content delivery. Before 2018-19, remotely broadcasting live to the cable channel (CommunityTV 189) required a physical cable connection at the event location, as well as a truckload of cumbersome equipment. Because of the rapidly changing field of broadcast technology, we were able to replace this aspect of the system with two pocket-sized devices that enable relatively simple broadcasting to social platforms (e.g. Facebook, YouTube, etc.) and the cable channel simultaneously. All this has made it much less expensive, time-consuming, and complicated to broadcast live events from almost anywhere in the region.

## Next Steps for Traverse Area Community Media

We will continue to encourage public access to the cable television and online video venues 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:

- **Expanded hours of operation**

We are committed to expanding our hours of operation in order to accommodate the schedules of working people. In the coming year, we will work to gauge the public interest in hours outside of normal business hours. We currently keep the media center open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Other hours are also available upon request.

- **More opportunities to work on live productions**

Volunteers regularly remark that working on live productions is more exciting than simply recording something for later playback. Now that we are able to be more mobile with our live broadcast equipment, we can be more spontaneous and flexible. In the coming year, we hope to dramatically increase the number of live broadcasts that we feature.

- **Broadened volunteer Production Team roles**

Most volunteers that work on the Production Team operate a camera, and though this is an absolutely critical role for a production, we want to encourage volunteers to take on more responsibility. We plan to do this by offering additional roles, including director, sound operator, and editor. We hope that this will give volunteers more ownership over the process and more pride in the finished media.

- **Increased community visibility**

With more and more people consuming their media from non-cable sources, it is a struggle to maintain a presence in the community. We are now challenged with having more face-to-face interactions to keep our name and the work that we do in public view. This upcoming year we will work hard to spread information and be present at community events, as well as engage important community partners.

Traverse Area Community Media 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 Traverse Area Community Media.

## Summary of Community & Local Government Benefits

LIAA's Traverse Area Community Media 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** – Traverse Area Community Media 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 Traverse Area Community Media website ([www.TACM.tv](http://www.TACM.tv)) to watch *CommunityTV* 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** – Traverse Area Community Media provides Field Producer and Studio Producer trainings for organizations and individuals. Traverse Area Community Media also works with area schools to provide instruction for specific projects or classes.

**High-Quality Television Studio** – Traverse Area Community Media provides citizens with access to a professionally equipped, automated TV studio.

**Audio & Video Editing Stations** – Traverse Area Community Media 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** – Traverse Area Community Media's highly qualified staff members are available to answer questions and provide technical assistance 50 hours per week and as requested on weekends.

**Scheduling of Local Content** – Local producers are assured that the video content 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. We have also negotiated the ability to post *CommunityTV* channel programming in the on-screen cable guide, allowing viewers to see what's playing and schedule DVR recordings.

**Equipment Support & Installation for Local Governments** – Traverse Area Community Media provides participating local governments with direct assistance to specify and install 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.



Figure 1: PEG Station Television Viewing Area

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.

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 CommunityTV on Channel 189, and government-access TV as GovernmentTV on Channel 191. During discussions about the channel change with Charter, CommunityTV was able to secure the ability to display programming in the on-screen schedule guide through the company Rovi. CommunityTV programming began appearing on the schedule in March 2014.

# Summary of Community & Government TV Services & Operations

**LIAA Oversight** – Founded in 1993, LIAA is a nonprofit community service organization with 26 years of experience in helping citizens, nonprofits, and local governments use media, technology and community planning to improve civic engagement. 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 Traverse Area Community Media.

<p><b>LIAA Board of Directors</b></p> <p><b>John Egelhaaf, Executive Director</b> Southwest Michigan Planning Commission</p> <p><b>Sandra Clark, Director</b> Michigan Historical Center</p> <p><b>Alicia Kitsuse, Program Director</b> Fundors’ Network for Smart Growth &amp; Livable Cities</p> <p><b>Pat McGinnis, City Manager</b> City of Grand Haven</p> <p><b>Luke Forrest, Executive Director</b> The Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM)</p>
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<p><b><i>GovernmentTV Advisory Committee Members</i></b></p> <p><b>Susanne Courtade</b> Township Clerk, East Bay Charter Township</p> <p><b>Connie Preston</b> Township Clerk, Elmwood Charter Township</p> <p><b>Lanie McManus</b> Township Clerk, Garfield Charter Township</p> <p><b>Katelyn Zeits</b> Deputy City Clerk, City of Traverse City</p>
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**GovernmentTV Advisory Committee** – As the primary financial supporters of Traverse Area Community Media, 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.

**Citizens Advisory Committee** – Traverse Area Community Media 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 CommunityTV. Reviewed and

adopted by LIAA's Board of Directors, these *Policies and Procedures* assure fair and equitable access to all resources, 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 Traverse Area Community Media, 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 Traverse Area Community Media staff consists of a full-time Station Manager and a full-time Media Specialist, each with extensive experience in TV operations and training. In addition, LIAA's Financial Administrator, Technology Director, and Information Technology Specialists provide support for the media center, including contractor management and scheduling, website development and support, and networking and hardware support.

<p><i>2018-2019 Traverse Area Community Media Staff</i></p> <p><b>Matthew Kern</b>, Station Manager <b>Joe Torrence</b>, Media Specialist <b>Kim McNeil</b>, Financial Admin/GovTV Manager <b>Jim Muratzki</b>, Technology Director <b>Rob Astor</b>, IT Specialist <b>Paul Riess</b>, Media Manager</p>
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**Participation/Membership** – Membership in Traverse Area Community Media allows residents to submit content for playback on Channel 189 and gain access to our free video training courses. Individuals who live in any of the participating jurisdictions can be Traverse Area Community Media Members for free. In order to engage people from throughout the CommunityTV viewing region, individuals who live outside of the participating jurisdictions may become Members by paying a fee of \$50/year or \$6/month. All members are given the same level of access to training, equipment, and cablecast services.

Nonprofit organizations that wish to produce and cablecast their own shows can also participate in Traverse Area Community Media. These organizations pay a membership fee 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.

**Equipment & Facilities** – One of the most important tasks of public-access television is the maintenance and loaning of video equipment for community use. We also provide certified producers with access to video editing workstations in LIAA's computer lab, available Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. as well as any time upon request.

Additionally, we provide access to a remote-controlled video and audio studio and control-room facility within LIAA’s building. Among other things, the studio offers access to three remote-controlled High Definition (HD) cameras, a green screen for composited backgrounds, modern fluorescent lighting, a high-quality teleprompter, an array of microphones, audio mixers, and an HD camera switcher.

**Programming** – Another key role of Traverse Area Community Media is the transcoding, scheduling, and cablecasting of video content for both CommunityTV and GovernmentTV. In the past year, CommunityTV scheduled and cablecast 4,593 hours of programming (see [Figure 2: CommunityTV Programming Hours July 2018 to June 2019](#)). Over 2,632 hours of programming were also provided on GovernmentTV (see [Figure 3: GovernmentTV Programming Hours July 2018 to June 2019](#)).

## CommunityTV Total Hours of Programming

July 2018 - June 2019

4,593 total hours

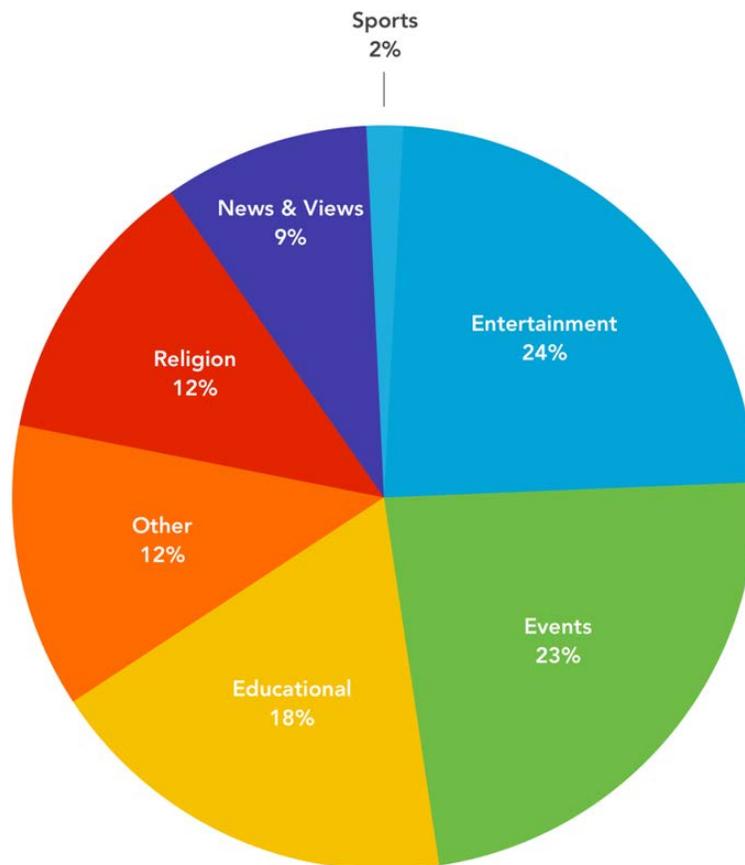


Figure 2: CommunityTV Programming Hours July 2018 to June 2019

# GovernmentTV Total Hours of Programming

July 2018 - June 2019

2,632 total hours

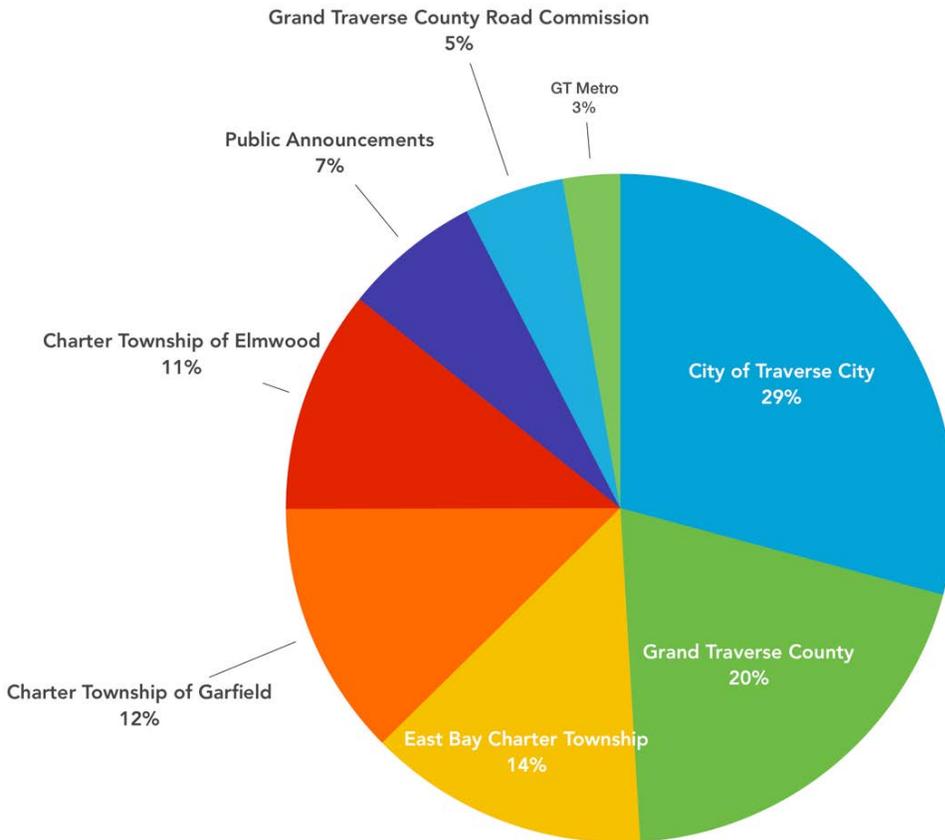


Figure 3: GovernmentTV Programming Hours July 2018 to June 2019

**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.

All producers are required to take our *Producer Orientation*. In the past year, we have begun offering this training as a quick online video followed by a quiz. This 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.

We also offer a course for *Field Producers* that teaches people how to use cameras, lighting, microphones, and video editing equipment. This two-part course gives people the ability to

operate and care for the mobile equipment and editing workstations available through Traverse Area Community Media. 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 (as long as their membership is current).

Our *Studio Producers* course gives members the ability to set up and operate the audio, video, and lighting equipment in the Traverse Area Community Media studio. They also learn how to use the green screen or other backdrops to record their show. Members who complete this course are qualified to use the studio to produce shows at no charge.

Once members are trained, Traverse Area Community Media staff provide ongoing assistance, such as equipment retraining, project planning help, and one-on-one video editing support.

In the last year, Traverse Area Community Media hosted 25 training courses, and logged an additional 480 hours of direct assistance to Producers.

**GovernmentTV Management and Oversight** – Traverse Area Community Media 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, installs and maintains the video equipment for local governments (e.g., cameras, digital data transfer systems), occasionally providing for improvements and repairs.

Traverse Area Community Media 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 Traverse Area Community Media 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.

**Website** – LIAA has a long history of creating and hosting websites for nonprofit organizations, local governments, and special projects. Traverse Area Community Media's website at TACM.tv is a key communications tool for CommunityTV, 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: Members 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 CommunityTV and GovernmentTV online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Visitors can also search the archives for past video presentations and watch them online through a video-on-demand streaming service.

Website hits (i.e., unique sessions) average around 2,685 per month. 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 CommunityTV 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.

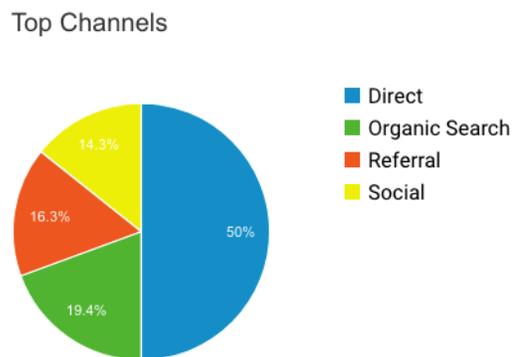


Figure 4: Website Visitor Sources

In the past year, the TACM.tv website received a total of 32,230 visits from 16,599 unique visitors as seen on [Figure 5: Website Sessions July 2018 to June 2019](#). Visitors to the website view an average of around 2.5 pages each, meaning once they get to the website, they are engaged to view pages beyond the one they originally sought.

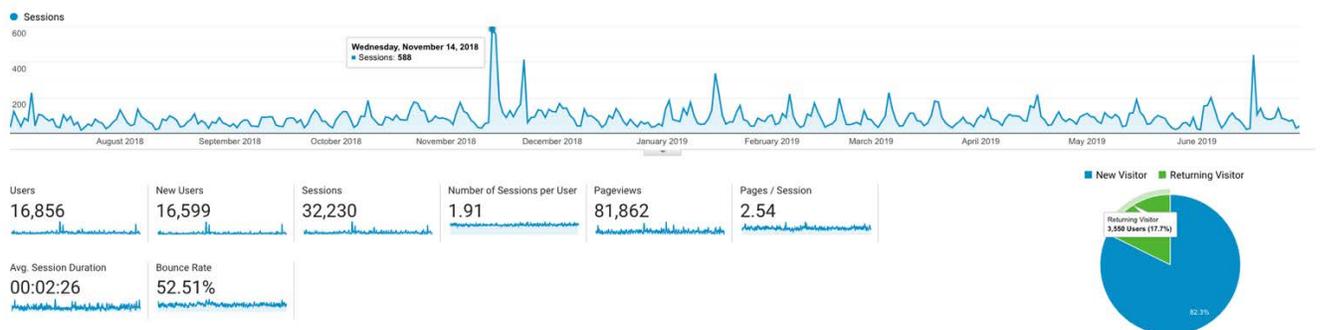


Figure 5: Website Sessions July 2018 to June 2019

The TACM website received 81,862 pageviews last year (see [Figure 6: Website Top 10 Pages July 2018 to June 2019](#)). Out of all the pages on TACM.tv, municipal pages received some of the highest percentages of views. The GovernmentTV concurrent stream page (allowing viewers to watch the cable channel online) had 5,953 views. Grand Traverse County’s page continues to be the most viewed for on-demand video at 3,222 views.

	Page	Pageviews	% Pageviews
1.	<a href="/default.asp">/default.asp</a>	7,609	9.29%
2.	<a href="/govtnow.asp">/govtnow.asp</a>	5,953	7.27%
3.	<a href="/govtmeetings.asp">/govtmeetings.asp</a>	5,651	6.90%
4.	<a href="/govtv_gtcounty.asp">/govtv_gtcounty.asp</a>	3,222	3.94%
5.	<a href="/addyourevent.asp">/addyourevent.asp</a>	2,359	2.88%
6.	<a href="/upnorthvtsched.asp">/upnorthvtsched.asp</a>	2,296	2.80%
7.	<a href="/govtv_cityoftc.asp">/govtv_cityoftc.asp</a>	2,252	2.75%
8.	<a href="/upnorthtvnow.asp">/upnorthtvnow.asp</a>	1,754	2.14%
9.	<a href="/govtvschedule.asp">/govtvschedule.asp</a>	1,610	1.97%
10.	<a href="/upnorthtvshows.asp">/upnorthtvshows.asp</a>	1,456	1.78%

Figure 6: Website Top 10 Pages July 2018 to June 2019

Traverse Area Community Media provides simultaneous web streaming of both CommunityTV 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 to be purchased by Traverse Area Community Media. However, this Internet stream ensures that people who do not have Charter Cable TV can still watch the public-access and government-access stations.

Internet users viewed the CommunityTV stream 1,754 times during the last year, with the highest traffic occurring for the National Cherry Festival’s Cherry Royale Parade on July 7, 2018 (see [Figure 7: CommunityTV Concurrent Stream Viewers July 2018 to June 2019](#)).

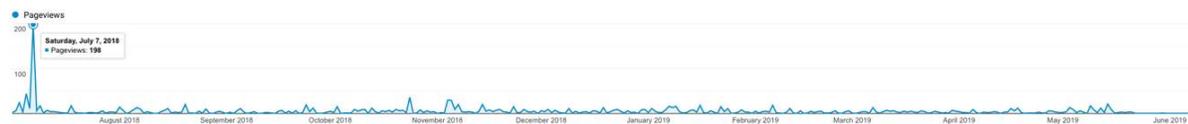


Figure 7: CommunityTV Concurrent Stream Viewers July 2018 to June 2019

The GovernmentTV stream was viewed 5,953 times during the last year, with the highest volume being 271 on February 6, 2019 (see [Figure 8: GovernmentTV Concurrent Stream Viewers July 2018 to June 2019](#)).

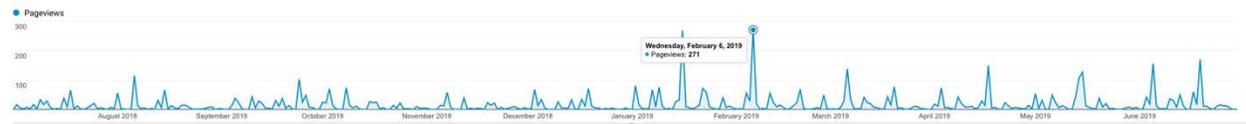


Figure 8: GovernmentTV Concurrent Stream Viewers July 2018 to June 2019

**Facebook** – We continue to use social media as a complement to the website to increase community outreach. Traverse Area Community Media’s Facebook page helps to engage the community in discussion about events and programs on CommunityTV and GovernmentTV. Over the last year, total page likes have increased steadily and we have had over 10,164 minutes of video views.

**YouTube Channel** – This channel provides an alternate place for people to find CommunityTV shows created by Traverse Area Community Media, driving a different demographic back to our website. This past year there were roughly 125,500 views of programs on the CommunityTV YouTube Channel (see [Figure 9: YouTube Viewer Metrics July 2018 to June 2019](#)). A total of 1.9 million 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.

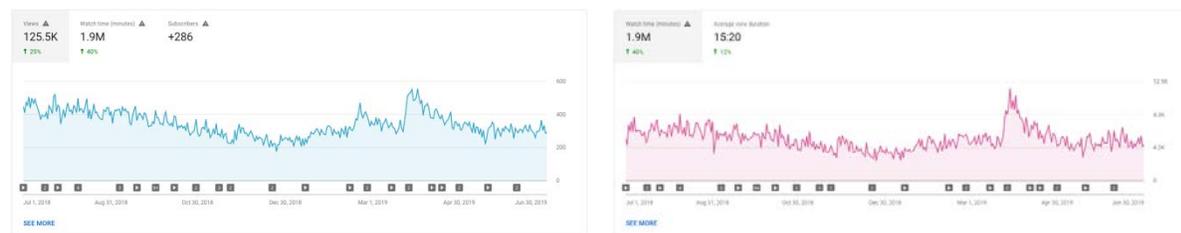


Figure 9: YouTube Viewer Metrics July 2018 to June 2019

## Special Projects of Traverse Area Community Media

To provide citizens and participating local governments of the Grand Traverse region the best public- and government-access TV services, Traverse Area Community Media 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 Traverse Area Community Media has worked on this past year:



**Cherry Festival Parades** – This year, Traverse Area Community Media provided a live broadcast of all three National Cherry Festival Parades. Media center staff and volunteers braved the sun to run cameras and cables, bringing the parade to people who aren't able to attend. The broadcast can be seen on CommunityTV and Facebook Live.



**National Writers Series** – Traverse Area Community Media 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. Traverse Area Community Media recorded 18 National Writers Series events from July 2018 to June 2019.

**Traverse City Film Festival** – Traverse Area Community Media records the daily filmmaker panel discussions of the festival and prepares them for cablecast. Traverse Area Community Media staff and volunteers set up a multi-camera production system at the City Opera House, record the discussions, and breaks it all back down before the next film is shown. Traverse Area Community Media staff then put the finishing touches on the video at the office, and the panel discussion airs on CommunityTV and Facebook.

**77th Annual Rotary Show** – Traverse Area Community Media recorded and cablecast this fun locally-produced show at the State Theatre.



**Public Meetings and Events** – Traverse Area Community Media recorded a wide variety of public meetings and events partnering with organizations such as the Inland Seas Education Association, Traverse City Downtown Development Authority, Northwestern Michigan College Children’s Choir, League of Women Voters Grand Traverse Area, the Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities, Traverse City

Historical Society, Young Playwrights Society, and others.

**Nature Change; Middle School Video Projects** – Traverse Area Community Media partnered with Nature Change, Inland Seas Education Association, and teachers at TC West Middle School to help students in the creation of mini-documentaries. Throughout the creation of the videos, Traverse Area Community Media provided technical support during the filming and editing process. When completed, the students got to see their films on the big screen at the State Theatre.

### **NMC Children’s Choir –**

Traverse Area Community Media has continued the tradition of recording NMC Choirs in concert. Year after year, these recordings prove to be some of our most popular programs for DVD sales. Family members that are unable to attend the live performances regularly contact the media center for copies of the program.



## **Funding & Expenses of the Community Media Center**

LIAA’s Traverse Area Community Media is in its eleventh 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 specification 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 are franchise fees collected from Charter Communications by the local governments in exchange for the use of public property (right-of-ways). The fees are usually reflected on each cable subscriber’s monthly bill.

The franchise agreements between Charter Communications and the municipalities that participate in Traverse Area Community Media were renegotiated in 2017. As a result, the contract between LIAA and the participating municipalities was updated as well. The jurisdictions now provide support for PEG access through the dedication of thirty percent (30%) of their franchise fees to defray operation costs for the Media Center, and thirty percent (30%) of PEG fees to defray capital costs (i.e., new equipment and maintenance). The PEG fee formula was substantially reduced from the original contract with LIAA, as the equipment needs of the Media Center have stabilized over time (i.e., moving from a “startup” to a mature operation). This means more of the equipment fees paid by Charter will remain in the hands of each participating municipality for their own equipment needs.

Our community’s public-access and government-access TV systems operated by LIAA are financially viable under the new 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 eleven years, LIAA has kept costs at or below the funding levels provided. However, with the participation of additional municipalities, the entire PEG TV communications system would be stronger and more valuable to the community as a whole. We continue to work to recruit additional municipalities to take advantage of this powerful community resource.