

# Traverse Area Community Media

## 14th Annual Report to Local Government Sponsors

*City of Traverse City*

*East Bay Charter Township*

*Charter Township of Elmwood*

*Charter Township of Garfield*

**Presented by:**



*Innovative ideas for sustainable communities since 1993*

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**September, 2022**

## 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 14th 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 (TACM)** staff members and active volunteers, to record and highlight 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**.

## Last Year's Goals

In our last annual report, we listed some of our top goals for the year to come. Here we revisit those goals and highlight some of the work that we did to realize them.

- **Expanded support for hybrid (in-person/virtual) events and meetings**

Hybrid-style meetings remain one of the most challenging meeting types from a technical standpoint. As pandemic safety measures were dialed back and our operations returned to more in-person event coverage, the demand for hybrid meetings predictably increased. We created a semi-turnkey system based around a laptop with a combination of webcams and specialized microphones and audio in order to be able to offer this service to our government partners as well as the public. In total, we supported 18 hybrid-style events during the current reporting period.

- **Increased use of web-streaming platforms**

In our last report we tracked a significant shift toward online streaming platforms (mainly YouTube and Facebook). Anticipating a furthering of this trend, we continued to increase our usage of these platforms both for public- and government-access content. We continued a trial phase of YouTube broadcasting at East Bay Township's request. This became a popular viewing platform for township residents as well as journalists. We want to meet viewers where they are, on their platforms of choice. We will always support live viewing through our website, but in this upcoming year we will also make use of YouTube and Facebook Live for all our live community events broadcasts.

- **Equipment upgrades for jurisdictions**

The equipment used to record government meetings that is located at all four jurisdictions is reaching its end-of-life. All jurisdictions would benefit from minor to major upgrades of video and audio equipment. During this reporting period, we were able to finalize upgrade plans to be presented to the jurisdictions November 2022. We

will work with each jurisdiction to ensure that we provide equipment upgrade paths that fit the specific needs of each meeting room while fitting within individual equipment budgets.

- **New media trainings**

Media Center volunteers are continuing to request an ever-expanding array of media trainings. In 2021-22, we added multiple podcasting trainings as well as livestreaming trainings, new camera trainings, audio field recording, in-depth smartphone video production, and Zoom webinar trainings.

- **Goals carried over from 2019-20**

As stated in our previous annual report, our ability to fully realize some of our goals from 2019-20 was hampered by facilities closures and the stretched capacities of community partners. Here are the goals upon which we refocused our efforts:

- a. **Increased educational programming**

In 2020-21 we worked with the International Affairs Forum, National Writers Series, and League of Women Voters of the Grand Traverse Area to produce regular education content. In all, we produced about 34 hours of final content that was seen by thousands of unique viewers.

- b. **Increased accessibility for disabled community members**

We do not take this goal lightly, and though we have made some progress in researching and beginning to plan for accessibility upgrades, we have not yet been able to implement the changes we would like to see. We are currently testing Closed Captioning solutions, but the quality of the automated services we have used isn't quite ready for widespread public use. We also hoped to make physical changes to our current building to improve wheelchair accessibility, however, we are currently planning to move the LIAA Office and Media Center to a different location in the coming months or years.

## **Fully reopening after reduced facilities use in 2020-21**

In July 2021, we fully reopened our facilities and returned to relatively normal operations. Though we did notice significantly less foot traffic at first, toward the end of the reporting period we began to get close to pre-pandemic levels of in-person media center use.

We are still offering many of our training and technical support services online for community members that prefer the convenience and safety afforded by virtual interactions. We also continued to host a significant number of virtual community events and candidate forums.

## Next Steps for Traverse Area Community Media

Due to the continued need to manage the pandemic in our community, we have never relied so heavily on media to connect with each another. This dramatic change in media usage and consumption is continuing to inform all our goals for the year to come. Here are our central goals for the upcoming year:

- **Offering government meetings on YouTube, AppleTV+, and Roku live and on-demand**

This new goal is in essence an expansion of a previous goal to increase our usage of online streaming platforms. We aim to include popular SmartTV apps to allow viewers to access content in the most convenient way possible for them. Nowadays, viewers are spread across device types (computers, smartphones, smart TVs/streaming boxes). Each of these device types has different app preferences and different technical specifications for delivery. Our video server upgrade in 2020-21 will enable us to deliver content to all of the most popular apps. Implementing this change will be logistically challenging at first, but our hope is to automate this process to allow it to be scaled to all government meetings.

- **Continue to introduce technical support for new media venues**

In the last year, we introduced support for podcasting production. We also hope to introduce trainings for small-scale, one-person crew, live productions. We plan to do this by creating a small, private, livestreaming station in the media center. This will allow community members to produce programming in line with the burgeoning online livestreaming format (e.g., YouTube and Twitch live).

- **Expanding new trainings**

It is a major understatement to say that the media landscape has changed in the past five years. Ever-changing software, hardware, online platforms, and media consumption habits create a unique challenge for community media centers. We hope to meet this challenge by surveying our content producers. Based on our findings, we will offer new trainings in a range of subject matter, ranging from documentary film production to podcasting.

- **More regional event coverage and place-based content**

We love to work on programming that celebrates the environment and social uniqueness of the Grand Traverse Region. In the coming year we hope to continue working on hyper-local content that features individuals and groups doing great work.

- **Continued and expanded support for virtual platforms**

There is continuing demand for virtual events, trainings, and technical support. We will aim to create more regular virtual training and education events to meet this demand. We will also work to further streamline the process of booking virtual appointments and seeking support.

- **Goals carried over from 2020-21**

- a. **Equipment upgrades for jurisdictions**

- b. **Increased accessibility for disabled community members**

## Summary of Community and 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 core services are described below.

**Government-Access Television** – Traverse Area Community Media provides video acquisition, scheduling, transcoding (i.e., changing media formats), 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 and 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* (with events contributed by the public) and a TV schedule. For video producers, the website provides an easy way to submit video for playback.

**Video Training and 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 and 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 and 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.

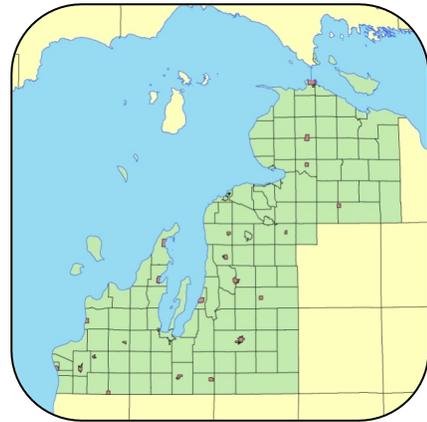


Figure 1: PEG Station Television Viewing Area

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 and Government TV Services and Operations

**LIAA Oversight** – Founded in 1993, LIAA is a nonprofit community service organization with 29 years of experience in helping citizens, nonprofits, and local governments to 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 six 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 style="text-align: center;"><b>LIAA Board of Directors</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>John Egelhaaf, Executive Director</b> <i>Southwest Michigan Planning Commission</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Sandra Clark, Director</b> <i>Michigan Historical Center</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Kathryn Buckner, Executive Director</b> <i>Americana Foundation</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Pat McGinnis, City Manager</b> <i>City of Portage</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Luke Forrest, Executive Director</b> <i>The Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Jennifer McKay, Policy Director</b> <i>Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council</i></p>
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**GovernmentTV Advisory Committee** – As the primary financial supporters of Traverse Area Community Media, representatives of the four 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.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>GovernmentTV Advisory Committee Members</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>Sarah Lutz</b> Deputy City Clerk, City of Traverse City</p>
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**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 Specialist provide support for the media center, including contractor management and scheduling, website development and support, and networking and hardware support.

*2021-22 Traverse Area Community Media Staff*

**Matthew Kern**, Station Manager

**Joe Torrence**, Media Specialist

**Kim McNeil**, Financial Admin/GovTV Manager

**Rob Astor**, Technology Director

**Jim Muratzki**, IT Specialist

**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. 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 and 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 access to video editing workstations in LIAA’s computer lab, available Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 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, production 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 broadcast 4,550 hours of programming (see Figure 2: CommunityTV Programming Hours ). Over 1,913 hours of programming were also provided on *GovernmentTV* (see Figure 3: GovernmentTV Programming Hours ).

## CommunityTV Total Hours of Programming

July 2021 - June 2022

5067 total hours (up from 4,550 hours in the previous reporting period)

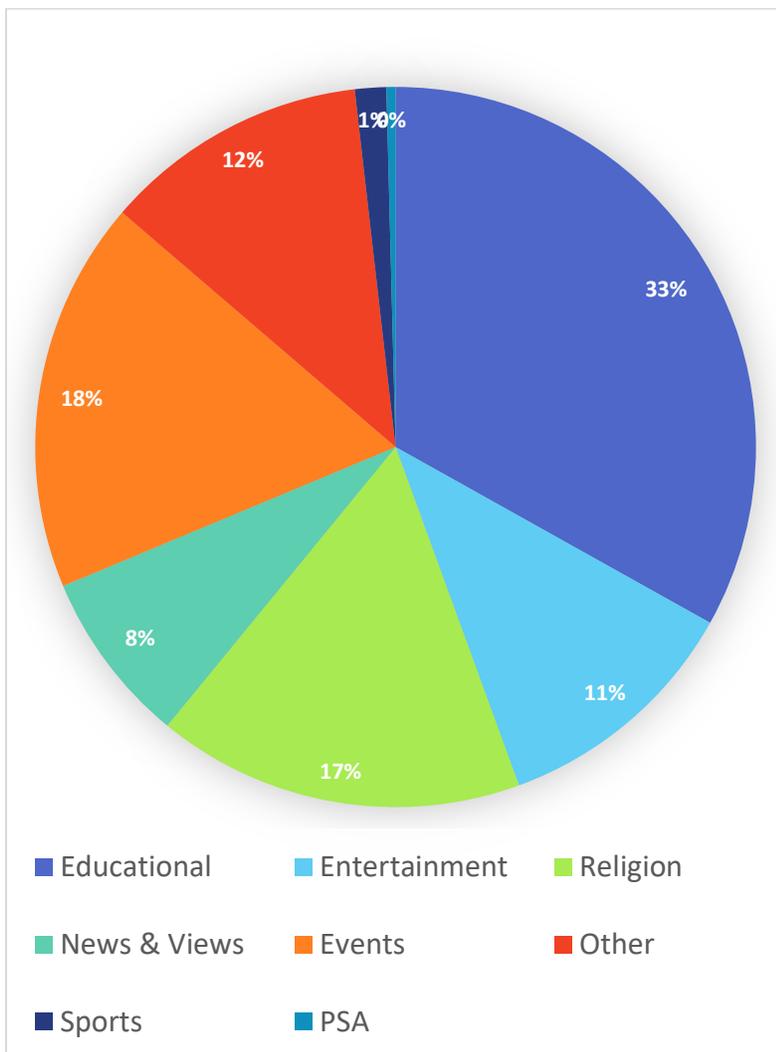


Figure 2: CommunityTV Programming Hours July 2021 to June 2022

## GovernmentTV Total Hours of Programming

July 2021 - June 2022

2194 total hours (compared 1,913 total hours in the previous reporting period)

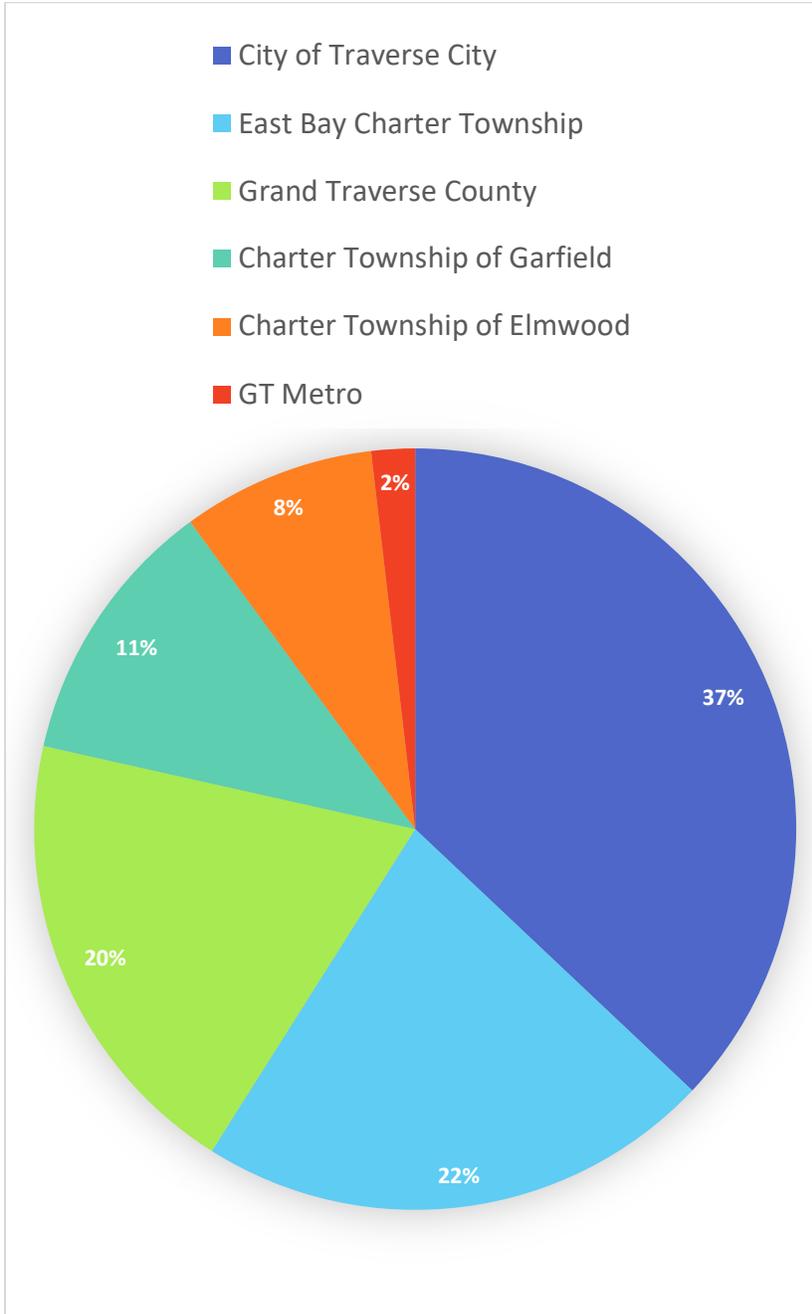


Figure 3: GovernmentTV Programming Hours July 2021 to June 2022

**Video Production Training and Support** – Other important goals of public-access television are educating, training and supporting certified producers 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, lights, 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 (so 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 refreshers, project planning help, and one-on-one video editing support.

In the last year, Traverse Area Community Media hosted 45 trainings, and logged an additional 400 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 helps to specify, install and maintain 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 and 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 2,706 per month (a 20% increase over the previous reporting period). As can be seen in Figure 4: Website Visitor Sources, more than half of visitors come to the website directly (from, for example, a bookmark in their browser). This represents a 45% increase from the previous year. Just under 15% of visitors arrived on the TACM.tv website via 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. Just under one-sixth of visitors access the website by referral, which is usually a

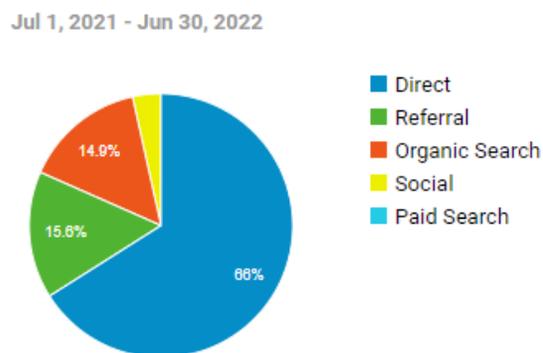


Figure 4: Website Visitor Sources for 2021-22

link from a participating government’s website. The remainder of visitors (3.5%) come in through our social media platforms.

In the past year, the TACM.tv website received a total of 27,017 visits from 14,740 unique visitors as seen on *Figure 5: Website Sessions for July 2021 to June 2022 (blue) compared to July 2020 to June 2021 (orange)*. Visitors to the website view an average of around 2.3 pages each, meaning once they get to the website, they are engaged to view pages beyond the one they originally sought.

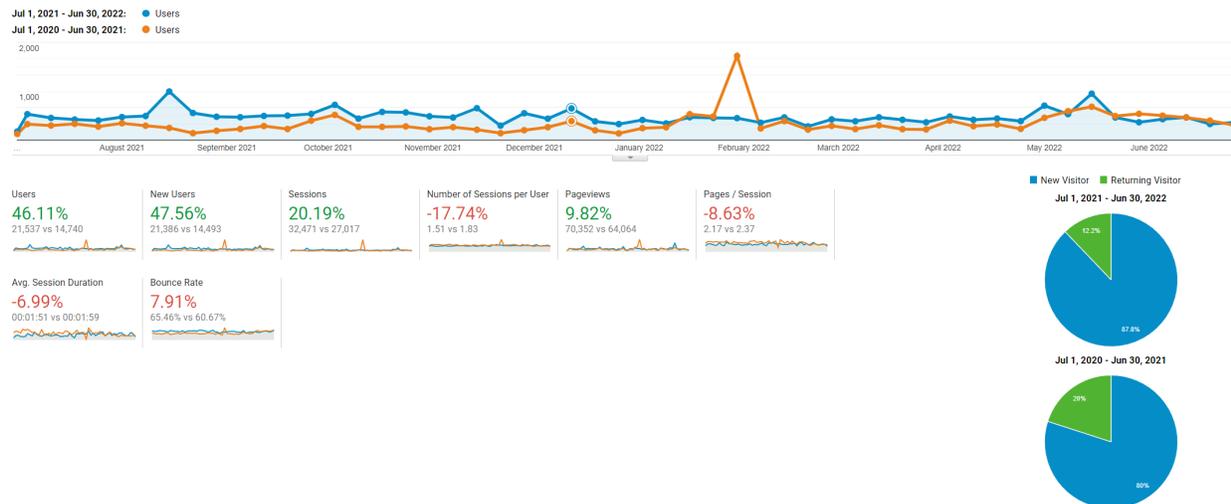


Figure 5: Website Sessions for July 2021 to June 2022 (blue) compared to July 2020 to June 2021 (orange).

The TACM website received 70,352 pageviews for this reporting year, a 9.8% increase (see ). Out of all the pages on TACM.tv, municipal pages received some of the highest percentages of views. The GovernmentTV concurrent (live) stream page (allowing viewers to watch cable channel 191 online) had 8,896 views. Grand Traverse County’s page is no longer the most visited of the six jurisdictions that we televise (including the County and GT Metro). Both the City of Traverse City and East Bay Township have surpassed Grand Traverse County in website traffic. The City of Traverse City and East Bay Township observed 38% and 41% increases, respectively, while GT County saw a 24% reduction.

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 internet bandwidth to be purchased by Traverse Area Community Media. 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 livestream 805 times during the last year, a 19% reduction. This is the second year with a decline in website livestream views, however, we are now streaming all our live CommunityTV programming on YouTube. During this same period we logged 1,848 livestream views and 1,014,900 overall views on our YouTube account. This represents a continued dramatic shift in how our audience is accessing our live content. This shift has informed our goal to utilize YouTube and other web-streaming platforms on all our live productions in the future.

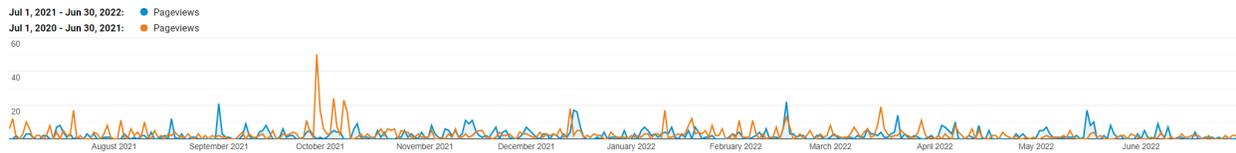


Figure 6: CommunityTV Concurrent Stream Viewers July 2021 to June 2022 (blue) compared to July 2020 to June 2021 (orange).

The GovernmentTV stream was viewed 8,896 times during the last year, with the highest volume being 350 on April 9, 2022 (see Figure 7: GovernmentTV Concurrent Stream Viewers ). In contrast to the reduction in traffic to the CommunityTV stream, the GovernmentTV stream saw a 66% increase in traffic. With operations returning to normal in July 2021, GovernmentTV livestream viewership has now surpassed pre-pandemic levels, with a 63% increase comparing 2021-22 to the annual averages from 2014 to 2019.

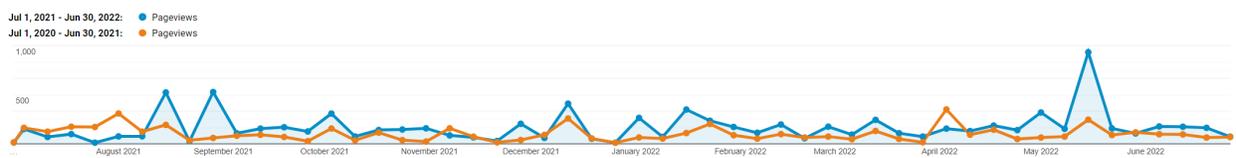


Figure 7: GovernmentTV Concurrent Stream Viewers July 2021 to June 2022 (blue) compared to July 2020 to June 2021 (orange).

**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. Throughout 2021-22, we utilized our Facebook page to broadcast 16 community events. In 2022-23, we will aim to increase this number to ensure that we are growing our Facebook account in conjunction with our YouTube account.

**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, views of programs on the CommunityTV

YouTube Channel increased by 125%, from roughly 125,500 to 283,300 (see Figure 9: YouTube Viewer Metrics ).

A total of 314,900 hours of programming (15% annual decrease) have been viewed on our YouTube page in the last year, with a slightly reduced average viewing time of just under 19 minutes. This continues to be a relatively long duration compared to most YouTube channels.

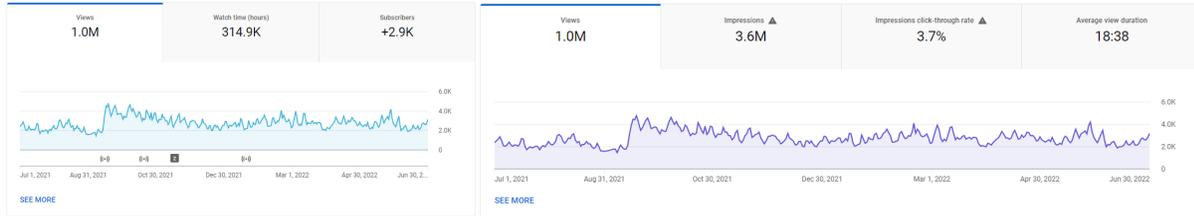


Figure 8: YouTube Viewer Metrics July 2021 to June 2022

## 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 continued to expand the number of special productions this year. These projects help provide live virtual access to key community events, celebrate community culture and heritage, and help to assure easy access to video records of community events. During this reporting year, we broadcasted 22 live community events, a slight decrease from the prior reporting year (2020-21), but still a substantial increase from the six live broadcasts in 2018-19. Here are a few examples of the partnerships and projects Traverse Area Community Media has worked on this past year:

**National Writers Series** – Traverse Area Community Media volunteers and staff record this nationally-recognized program of discussions with popular authors. We recorded eight National Writers Series events during this reporting period.

**International Affairs Forum** – Similar to NWS, IAF brings in world renowned authors and exports to discuss global political and economic issues. We recorded six IAF events during this reporting period. Some of these events were hybrid style in-person with virtual guests. This provided a great testing ground for our hybrid production skills.

**League of Women Voters of the Grand Traverse Area Monthly Programs** – Once per month, LWVGTA hosts an educational program with topics ranging from voter education to the nitty-gritty details of a township and county clerk’s job.

**Daily Exercising Classes for Seniors** – For the entirety of the pandemic, we have aired exercise programs for seniors every weekday at 9 a.m. We have partnered with the Senior Center to make sure that seniors are getting the programs that they want. We have also utilized Zoom as a platform to host virtual exercise classes and recordings.

**Public Meetings and Events** – Traverse Area Community Media recorded a wide variety of public meetings and events partnering with organizations such as the Battle of the Books, League of Women Voters Grand Traverse Area, the League of Women Voters of Leelanau County, FLOW, SEEDS, Traverse City Historical Society, GT Metro, Traverse Area District Library, Newton’s Road, Glen Lake Association, Traverse Symphony Orchestra, and Hear:Say Storytellers.

## Funding and Expenses of the Community Media Center

LIAA’s Traverse Area Community Media is in its 14th 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 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 14 years, LIAA has kept costs at or below the funding levels provided. 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.