

Saco River PEG Access/Telecommunications Vision Plan Summary – 12/7/98

Year 1 Capital Grants for PEG Access Capital

(Figures shown are final amounts following Franchise negotiations)

- 140,000 Equipment to create a regional Public Access Center in a central location to provide for training and production by nonprofits, business groups and community members of the six towns, cablecasting public access programs and a community bulletin board as well as the cablecasting of tape-delayed Government Access programming and the regional government bulletin board. Includes capital for leasehold improvements to create studio, control room, edit suites and offices for a regional center. Funds to be held in escrow until town participation is defined.
- 10,000 Equipment for interfacing with the Municipal Intra-net data network that will be established between 20 locations within the six towns as described in Schedule 1 of the Franchise Agreement. Funds to be held in escrow until system rebuild is complete.
- 30,000 Equipment for Government access purposes. Funds to be used to purchase audio and video equipment for recording and or televising municipal meetings and events. Government access equipment can also be used for public access use with permission.
- 20,000 Production equipment for SAD #57 and upgrade, expansion and replacement of existing production equipment at SAD #6 - may be combined with state money from the distance learning initiative and other grants. Allocation = \$10,000 ea. for SAD # 6 & SAD # 57.

Year 2 - \$15,000 for PEG Access Capital - Upgrade/Replacement

- 8,000 Equipment for Public Access
- 3,000 Equipment for Government Access
- 4,000 Equipment for Educational Access (\$2,000 to each SAD).

Year 4 - \$15,000 for PEG Access Capital - Upgrade/Replacement

- 8,000 Equipment for Public Access
- 3,000 Equipment for Government Access
- 4,000 Equipment for Educational Access (\$2,000 to each SAD).

Year 6 - \$15,000 for PEG Access Capital - Upgrade/Replacement

- 8,000 Equipment for Public Access
- 3,000 Equipment for Government Access
- 4,000 Equipment for Educational Access (\$2,000 to each SAD).

Year 8 - \$15,000 for PEG Access Capital - Upgrade/Replacement

- 8,000 Equipment for Public Access
- 3,000 Equipment for Government Access
- 4,000 Equipment for Educational Access (\$2,000 to each SAD).

Saco River PEG Access/Telecommunications Vision Plan 1997 *(History Reference Only)*

(Note: Listed figures are requested amounts prior to Franchise negotiations)

From focus groups, surveys and interviews and discussions with educational leaders, government professionals, community leaders, state legislators, members of the Saco River Cable Committee and representatives of Saco River Area nonprofit organizations the following plan has been proposed to seed the development and support of a telecommunications infrastructure for Saco River citizens in partnership with the new cable company, FrontierVision. The following distribution of funds is seen as a fair and equitable way to involve the largest number of people who live and work in the community.

It is understood that, due to practicality and cost, not all of the telecommunication capital and operational needs will be met through the negotiations with the cable provider and that these funds should be considered as seed money to create a communications infrastructure foundation for the next ten years. To maximize the opportunities presented by funding from several sources and to prevent unnecessary and costly duplication, wherever possible, resources need to be combined and made available to the greatest number of community users.

This plan anticipates that a site will be selected for a regional Public Access center and that modest renovations will be needed to accommodate an adequate production facility for the six towns. The proposed capital allocations include:

\$25,000 is earmarked for leasehold improvements. Since there is minimal public access located only in Standish at this time, the new regional public access center will have to start from scratch in terms of production equipment and office equipment and furniture.

\$125,000 in the first year to provide for a production studio with control room, at least one edit suite, field equipment, cablecasting and bulletin board(s) equipment in a regional Public Access center. As part of this plan it is anticipated that the public access center will not only be used for public access but it can also serve as a cablecasting site for taped government access programming and staff will also be responsible for overseeing input and maintenance of the data on a regional government access video bulletin board which will be seen on the government channel when no live or other programming is taking place.

\$40,000 is earmarked for government access purposes. \$6,000 of this is intended for Standish to upgrade their current government access facilities. \$8,000 is earmarked for Buxton to improve their government access efforts and \$10,000 is set aside for Waterboro for the same purpose. Neither Hollis, Limerick or Limington have expressed interest at this time to cablecast their government meetings however \$6,000 is set aside in this initial government access grant so that if one or more of the three towns decide they want to begin using the government channel there is seed money available for this purpose.

\$20,000 is set aside for educational access purposes. This fund is intended to provide some production equipment for SAD #57 and to provide for upgrade and replacement of existing production equipment in SAD #6.

The RFP is also requesting that the cable contract provide \$20,000 equipment upgrade/replacement capital grants every two years (years 3,5,7 & 9) to allow the Saco River PEG systems to maintain the access equipment base and to be able to take advantage of changes in technology over the term of the cable franchise.

The RFP states that the cable operator shall pay a franchise fee to the towns equal to 5% of their gross annual revenues from the Saco River cable system. The current franchise fees that the towns receive are based only on subscriber revenues, not total gross revenues and range anywhere from none to 3%. This increase per town to 5% of gross revenues is seen as a possible way to provide for the operational support of Public and Government Access in the six towns. It is hoped that each of the six towns will set aside a portion of these franchise fees to fund the operational support of the regional Public Access center as well as their own government access efforts. The respondents from the many questionnaires received often named accessibility to equipment and training as a need to use access television. The fees would translate into necessary paid staff for this purpose and the grants above would deal with the capital equipment expenditures.

The RFP is requesting the cable provider allocate four channels on the basic tier of programming for Public, Educational and Governmental ("PEG") programming. One of these channels would be for public access, two of the channels would be for educational access (one for SAD #6 and one for SAD #57) and one would be for government access. The RFP is calling for a contract reopener at the beginning of the fifth year do discuss the need, if any, of up to two additional PEG channels on the system.

There have been requests from some of the towns for their own channel on the system but it is not seen as practical to allocate six full channels for government

access purposes so a system has been proposed that will allow each of the towns, whenever they want, to take control of the government channel within the town without disrupting programming on that channel in any of the other towns. In this way a single channel will function as both a regional government access channel and as a locally dedicated government access channel. This system will involve the cable company designing the new system so that by simply turning on a piece of equipment (a modulator) in a given town office building, the signal on the regional government access channel will be superseded for the subscribers in that town only, by the signal coming from the town office building. In this way live programming can originate in each of the towns and be seen only by the residents of that town. For example:

On Wednesday night Buxton has a Selectman's meeting which they want to go out to the Buxton residents live. The signal currently being seen in all six towns on the government channel is a computer generated bulletin board with area governmental announcements on it. At 7:00 pm the operator at the Buxton Town Offices flips a switch turning on the Buxton modulator to begin the meeting coverage. Anyone within the town limits of Buxton would see that meeting coming from the Buxton Town Offices on the government access channel. Meanwhile the subscribers in the other five towns are still seeing the computer bulletin board on the government access channel. At 8:00 pm the same evening the Town of Waterboro is holding a special government meeting. The operator in Waterboro turns on their modulator and the residents of Waterboro can watch the government meeting live on the government access channel while the remaining four towns still see the bulletin board and Buxton residents are still watching their Selectman's Meeting.

The addition of an Institutional Network (I-Net) to the Saco River communities will provide a basic telecommunications infrastructure that will enable the Towns, when they are ready to purchase accessing equipment, to share data and computer resources over a high-speed data network. Initially this area-wide data network would be setup to allow any of the municipal buildings and libraries in the six communities to be linked together when desired and when financially feasible. This network will connect to the SAD #6 High School where it can be bridged when desired to the existing SAD #6 data network and/or the proposed SAD #57 I-Net. This would allow for increased school/town communications.

A dedicated I-Net system is being proposed to link the SAD #57 schools within the franchise area and to link the SAD #57 Middle School and High School with the SAD #6 Middle School and High School. This system will allow for future data interconnects between the two SADs, interconnects between SAD #57 and

the existing SAD #6 data network, and the possibility for shared video-based distance learning capability between the SADs.

At the beginning of the fifth year of the franchise it is anticipated that the towns and the cable provider will meet to discuss whether these I-Net systems are sufficient or if they need to be expanded.