

# SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE FUNDING FOR QUALITY COMMUNITY TELEVISION

## **IN TOWNS AND CITIES ACROSS MINNESOTA, COMMUNITY TELEVISION IS CRITICAL TO INFORMING AND ENGAGING RESIDENTS**

Community television programming keeps community members **connected, informed and entertained**, from high school sports and city council meetings to newscasts and local events, **through public, education and government (PEG)** programming.

### **Benefits:**



**Covering news** - We report the hyperlocal stories of our communities, a public service not met by regional, state or national media. As more local media outlets close, we are often the only source for important community information that affects residents' daily lives.



**Engaging residents** - We provide neutral, unbiased coverage of public meetings, city services and local elections – strengthening democracy through accessible, transparent and accountable coverage.



**Enriching lives** - We spotlight high school sports, parades, local concerts and community events for viewers near and far, connecting them to their hometown action.

## **HOW IS COMMUNITY TELEVISION PROGRAMMING CURRENTLY FUNDED?**



Primarily through a cable franchise fee negotiated by individual cities with cable television providers as part of the contractual use of the public right-of-way.



In some cases, through an additional fee that is negotiated between cities and cable television providers.

## COMMUNITY TELEVISION IS UNDER THREAT

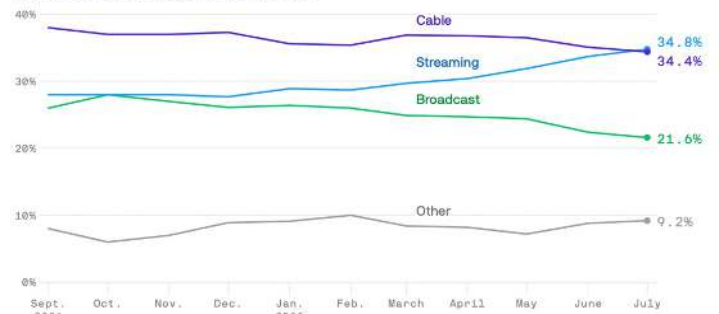
Put simply, the 40-year-old approach of using the cable franchise fee as a community television funding stream **doesn't work**. The video programming marketplace has **changed significantly** since the early 1980s when cable operators relied on physical infrastructure for television and later, internet/broadband services.

**Subscribers are abandoning traditional cable services and turning to streaming services instead.** Referred to as cord-cutting, customers continue to use their original cable "cord" to access video via streaming, instead of the cable box. As cable subscribers drop, **so too does community television funding.**

Under current state law, most corporations that make a profit from using the public right of way or selling digital video streaming services are not required to compensate cities. They are getting a free ride for the use of public infrastructure.

### Share of total TV consumption, by type

For people ages 2+; Monthly, September 2021 to July 2022



Data: Nielsen; Chart: Axios Visuals

Fischer, Sara. "Streaming Surpasses Cable as Top Way to Consume TV." Axios, 18 Aug. 2022

## MODERNIZING COMMUNITY TELEVISION FUNDING

Community television funding must be modernized to reflect marketplace changes. This can be accomplished in several ways:

- **Assess a fee on streaming services**, collected by local governments, for use by public, education and government community television.
- **Create a state broadband franchise requirement** for private use of the public right of way, in which local governments dedicate a portion of the associated fees for community television support.
- **Establish a state allocation** to support community media stations providing public, education and government programming.



### MACTA LEGISLATIVE CHAIRS

#### Karen George

QCTV/Quad Cities Cable  
Communications Commission

#### Shannon Slatton Schwartz

CCX Media/ Northwest Suburbs  
Cable Communications Commission

#### Sam Temple

Northfield Public Broadcasting

## PROTECT COMMUNITY MEDIA!

Current funding for community media is inadequate and unsustainable. Help us **preserve this vital public service** by developing modernized, reliable funding streams.

## ABOUT THE MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY TELECOMMUNICATIONS ADMINISTRATORS

The Minnesota Association of Community Telecommunications Administrators (MACTA) is a statewide organization of communications professionals who ensure the public has reliable access to information about the communities in which they live, work and play.

MACTA members **provide television and streaming services that deliver local community programming to area residents.** MACTA's mission is to promote quality, hyperlocal community television programming and modernize its funding source for future sustainability.