

UpNorth Media Center

Eighth 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

September 30, 2016

Introduction

LIAA began operating the public- and government-access cable television (TV) stations for Northwest Lower Michigan on July 1, 2008. This is our eighth 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 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 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 classes, 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 improve 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 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 (TV) 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.

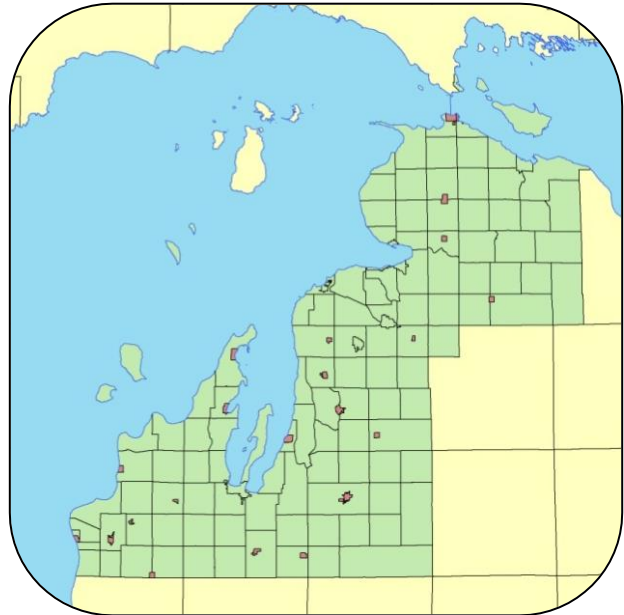


Figure 1: PEG Station Television Viewing Area

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 still await Charter’s approval to display GovernmentTV programming in the on-screen schedule.

Summary of Community & Government TV Services & Operations

LIAA Oversight – LIAA is a nonprofit, community service organization with 23 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 seven well-regarded community leaders, educators, and foundation representatives from across the state. LIAA’s Executive Director and Technology Director provide management of the UpNorth Media Center. The Media Center’s Station Manager is responsible for day-to-day operations.

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.

<i>GovernmentTV Advisory Committee</i>
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, training and support. The Citizens

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

Advisory Committee meets on an as-needed basis to address issues and provide guidance to staff, and has established an Executive Committee which 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, a full-time Media Specialist and a part-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.

2015-2016 UpNorth Media Center Staff

Morgan Burke-Beyers, Station Manager
Joe Torrence, Media Specialist
Bob Chauvin, Media Specialist
Kim McNeil, Agent 99 (GovernmentTV)
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.

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, 27 nonprofit organizations have participated in the UpNorth Media Center.

2015-2016 Nonprofit Member Organizations

- Cherry Capital Cycling Club
- Cherryland Humane Society
- City Opera House
- Community Resource Development
- Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy
- Grand Traverse Conservation District
- Great Lakes Children’s Museum
- Groundwork (Michigan Land Use Institute)
- GT Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians
- Interlochen Public Radio
- League of Women Voters Grand Traverse League
- Little Collaborative
- Mt. Holiday
- National Cherry Festival
- Networks Northwest
- Northwestern Michigan College
- Old Town Playhouse
- Oryana Natural Foods Market
- Relay for Life
- Rotary of Traverse City
- TTCI (TC-TALUS)
- Traverse Area Association of Realtors
- Traverse Area District Library
- Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce
- Traverse City Film Festival
- Traverse City National Writers Series
- United Way of Northwest Michigan

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 roughly 35 times in the past 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 8 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 more than 82 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 events and information talk show, *In Focus*;
- a music performance and discussion program, *Radio Motion* in cooperation with WNMC Radio;
- a music performance and discussion program, *Northern Michigan’s Musician’s Journal*;
- a talk show featuring interesting local people, *Women of an (un)Certain Age*; and
- a news review show hosted by Bill Froehlich, *The Briefing Room*



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 5,109 hours of programming (*Figure 2: UpNorthTV Programming Hours July 2015 to June 2016*). Over 2,640 hours of programming were also provided on GovernmentTV (*Figure 3: GovernmentTV Programming Hours July 2015 to June 2016*).

Figure 2: UpNorthTV Programming Hours July 2015 to June 2016

UpNorthTV Total Hours of Programming by Type July 2015 - June 2016 5,109 total hours

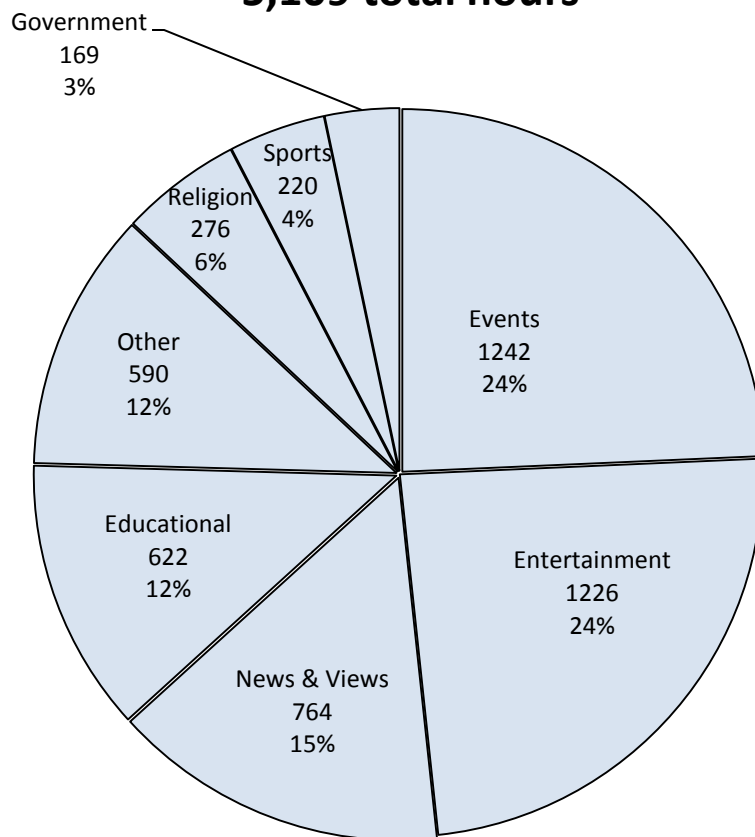
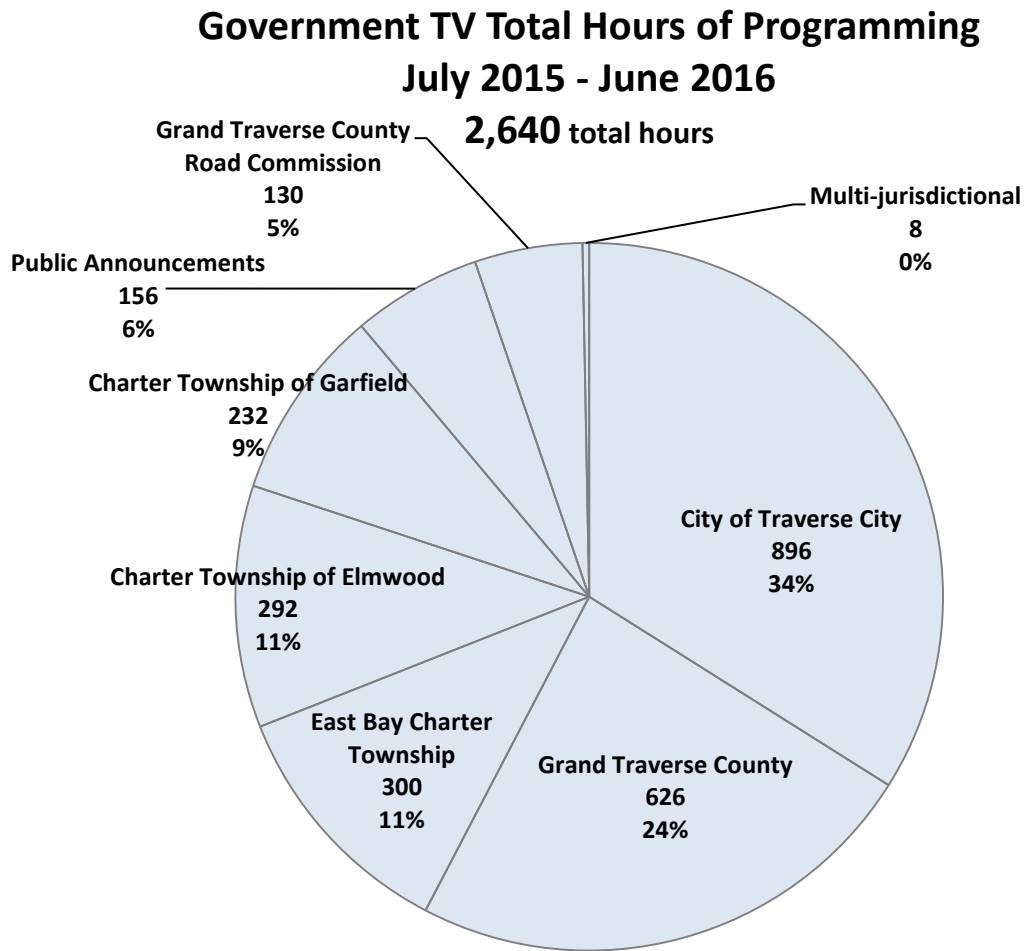


Figure 3: GovernmentTV Programming Hours July 2015 to June 2016



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 available through the UpNorth Media Center. There is a \$60 fee for this class to help offset costs. We promote this course to non-profit 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. In the last year, this course was taught 6 times to 20 students.

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 past year Media Center staff logged 460 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 53 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 average around 2,789 per month. 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 through search (such as Google), though a comparable number of visitors access the site directly (from, for example, a bookmark in their browser), supporting the fact that many are return visitors. 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.

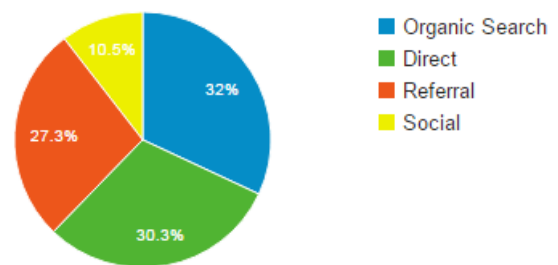


Figure 4: Website Visitor Sources

In the past year, the UpNorthMedia.org website received a total of 33,466 visits from 17,571 unique visitors as seen on *Figure 5: Website Sessions July 2015 to June 2016*. Our highest traffic day in the period was Saturday July 11, 2015, the day of the live broadcast of the Cherry Royale Parade. Visitors to the website view an average of around 3 pages each, meaning once they get to the website, they are engaged to view pages beyond the one they originally sought.

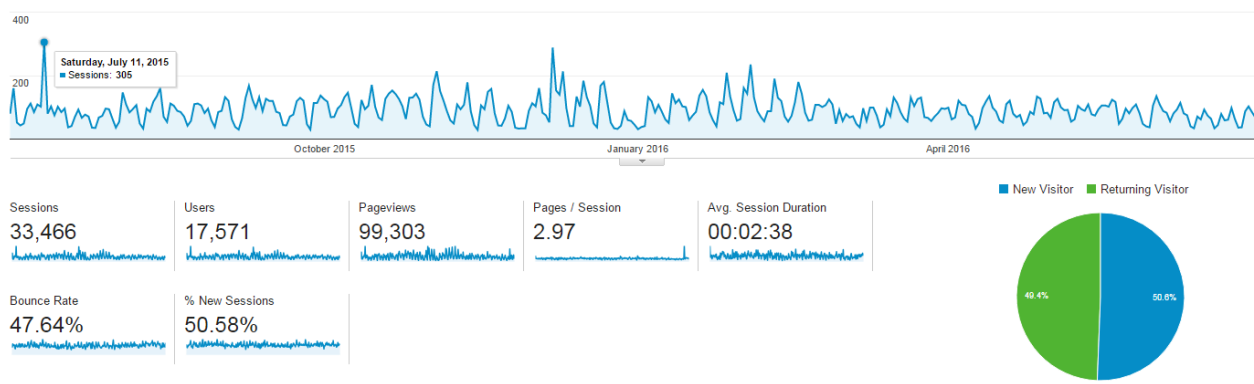


Figure 5: Website Sessions July 2015 to June 2016

The Media Center website received 99,303 pageviews last year (*Figure 6: Website Top 10 Pages July 2015 to June 2016*). Out of all the pages on UpNorthMedia.org, municipal pages received some of the highest percentages of views. Grand Traverse County's page (govtv_gtcounty.asp) had 5,238 views and the City of Traverse City's page (govtv_cityoftc.asp) received 3,785 views. The Government Meeting landing page (govtvmeetings.asp) also has a high percentage of views, garnering 4,526 pageviews. This indicates substantial traffic to the government portions of the website.

Page ?	Pageviews ? ↓	Unique Pageviews ?
	99,303 % of Total: 100.00% (99,303)	73,002 % of Total: 100.00% (73,002)
1. /	9,416 (9.48%)	8,034 (11.01%)
2. /govtvnow.asp	5,302 (5.34%)	3,235 (4.43%)
3. /govtv_gtcounty.asp	5,238 (5.27%)	3,823 (5.24%)
4. /govtvmeetings.asp	4,526 (4.56%)	3,205 (4.39%)
5. /govtv_cityoftc.asp	3,785 (3.81%)	2,787 (3.82%)
6. /upnorthtvshows.asp	3,565 (3.59%)	2,431 (3.33%)
7. /upnorthtvshed.asp	3,476 (3.50%)	2,308 (3.16%)
8. /upnorthtvnow.asp	2,555 (2.57%)	1,681 (2.30%)
9. /default.asp	2,367 (2.38%)	1,449 (1.98%)
10. /addyourevent.asp	2,127 (2.14%)	356 (0.49%)

Figure 6: Website Top 10 Pages July 2015 to June 2016

The UpNorth Media Center also 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 2,555 times during the last year, with over 200 viewers accessing the page during the Cherry Royale Parade on July 11 (*Figure 7: UpNorthTV Concurrent Stream Viewers July 2015 to June 2016*). The GovernmentTV stream was viewed 5,302 times during the last year, with the highest volume being 280 on December 7, 2015 (*Figure 8: GovernmentTV Concurrent Stream Viewers July 2015 to June 2016*).

Figure 7: UpNorthTV Concurrent Stream Viewers July 2015 to June 2016

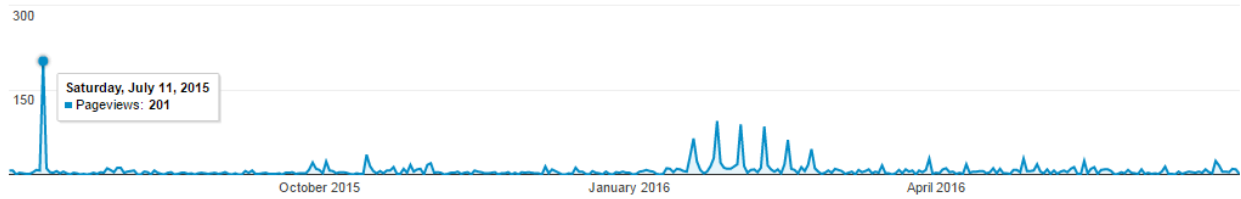
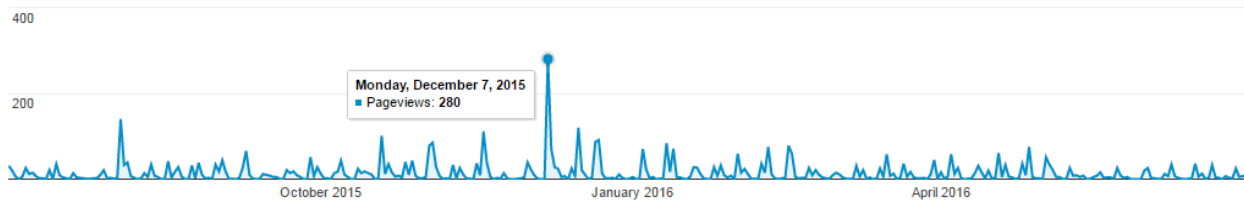


Figure 8: GovernmentTV Concurrent Stream Viewers July 2015 to June 2016



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.

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 2015 to June 2016 shows that our Facebook engagement has continued to grow over the past year.

Figure 9: Facebook Demographics

The people who like your Page

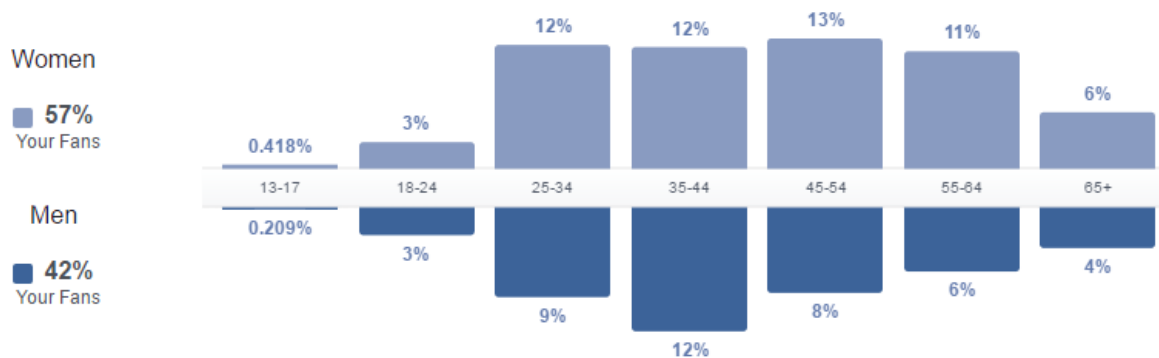


Figure 10: Facebook Likes July 2015 to June 2016



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 year there have been 131,965 views of programs on the UpNorthTV YouTube Channel. A total of 1,837,311 minutes of programming has been viewed on our YouTube page in the last year, with an average viewing time of 13 minutes, 55 seconds (*Figure 11: YouTube Viewer Metrics July 2015 to June 2016*) – a relatively long duration for YouTube channels.

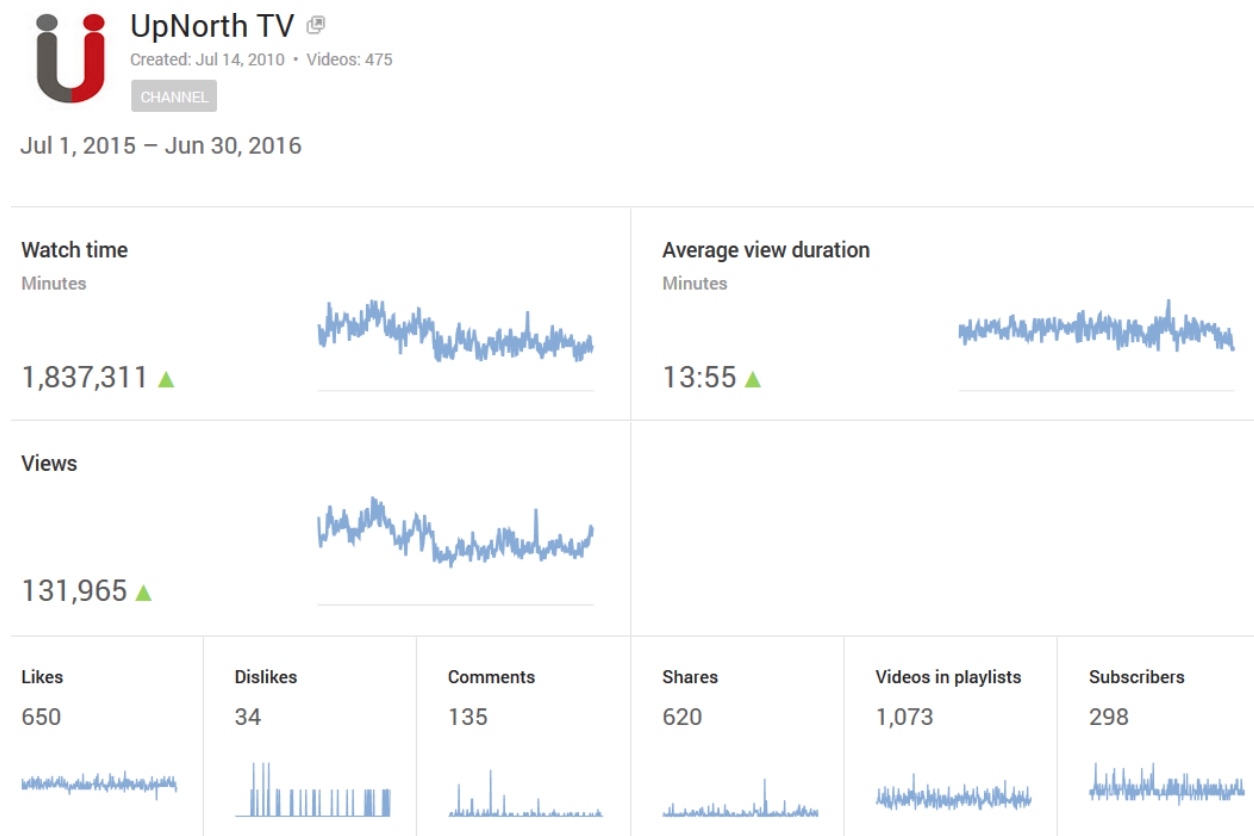


Figure 11: YouTube Viewer Metrics July 2015 to June 2016



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 18 National Writers Series events from July 2015 to June 2016.

Traverse City Film Festival – The UpNorth Media Center records the panel discussions each morning of the festival and prepares them for cablecast later each day. UpNorth Media Center staff and volunteers set up a multi-camera production system at the City Opera House each morning, record the discussion, and break it down before the first film is shown. UpNorth Media Center staff put the finishing touches on the video at the office, and have the panel discussion on UpNorthTV by 9 p.m. in the evening.



Cherry Festival Cherry Royale Parade – The UpNorth Media Center partners with WTCM Radio to provide a live simulcast of the Cherry Royale Parade. WTCM provides the commentators and on-camera (and on-radio) voice talent, while UpNorth Media Center staff and volunteers braved the sun to run cameras and cables bringing the parade to people who cannot attend.

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.



High School Film Contest – The UpNorth Media Center hosted a film contest for local high school students in early 2016. Five students submitted short films that were judged by local film professionals during a showing at the State Theatre in Traverse City. The People’s Choice winner received a cash prize, while the Fiction and Documentary winners each received the judges’ prize of

a Production Assistant position on a Brauer Productions project. We hope to repeat this very positive event in 2017.

74th 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 4 – The UpNorth Media Center’s live TV variety show enjoyed a successful fourth season, produced for six weeks in January and 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.) to accomplish six 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 six programs. The UpNorth Media Center and City Opera House have already scheduled the dates for the fifth season in 2017.



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:

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. In order to involve those who are just developing skills or need to spend relatively less time, the UpNorth Media Center has started a more formal volunteer program. This program features shifts of 2 to 3 hours, many with no prior skills required, along with an online registration system making it easy to sign up and be reminded of shifts volunteers can attend. We plan to actively recruit volunteers from groups in the community, both to expand the awareness of the Media Center, but also to engage volunteers in helping record events in which they may already be interested.

High-Definition Workflow – Viewer expectations of online video continue to grow as services such as YouTube encourage higher quality, and as more traditional video outlets such as networks and cable channels also offer their content online. The UpNorth Media Center will also join this evolution by installing new equipment that will allow us to cablecast, stream and offer on-demand high-definition (HD) video for UpNorthTV Channel 189. Producers have had the capability, with the equipment the Media Center offers for check-out, to acquire and edit video in HD. Soon, online viewers can experience that video in HD as well. Unfortunately, Charter Communications has resisted allowing UpNorthTV to cablecast in HD any time soon, but we will have the capacity to do so should that position change.

Expanded Educational Opportunities – Despite being saturated in media on a daily basis (from cell phones, televisions, magazines, newspapers, and books), most people not in grade school or college rarely have an opportunity to dissect how that media is made and delivered to them. In offering the tools and facilities used to create media, the UpNorth Media Center is in a unique position to convene and provide educational opportunities about media. By offering courses or discussions on topics such as basic media literacy, podcasting, using social media, and design, the UpNorth Media Center hopes to expand the understanding and conversation about media in our community.

Improving UpNorth Media Center Awareness – Many people in our large region simply do not know that the UpNorth Media Center is here. By working more closely with our current partners and continuing to be visible in the community, we constantly strive to improve that

awareness. We have not taken surveys or used other active methods of understanding our audience in the past, but we do feel that we can improve our understanding of our audience and expand awareness by simply taking a higher profile in the projects we have been undertaking throughout the Media Center's tenure at LIAA. Look forward to hearing more about us in the coming year.

Funding & Expenses of the Community Media Center

LIAA is in the eighth 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 plans to provide information 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 eight 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.

