WISCONSIN COMMUNITY MEDIA

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News from Wisconsin's local public, education and government access TV centers.

FCC action threatens the existence of community access channels in WI

Community Access Television is under an unprecedented attack from the Federal Communications Commission. The FCC, chaired by Ajit Pai, is considering ways to whittle away the public interest obligations cable companies have under federal law by charging cities for anything that does not earn the companies revenue. City expenses will go up, cable company expenses will go down, and cable subscribers will pay the same price for cable but without the Public, Education, and Government (PEG) access channels that air locally-produced programs. The community access channels will disappear because many cities will no longer be able to afford to equip, staff, and pay for them.

For nearly 50 years, communities have been given the use of one or more PEG "access" channels on cable systems for programming of local interest – government meetings, issue debates, local music shows, community events, school sports and more. Knowing that cities have many serious priorities, federal law has also provided two ways to fund these channels so that cities can afford to produce programming for them and train the public to do so, too. Now, the FCC wants cities to pay cable companies for these channels with the franchise fees the law requires cable companies to pay cities for the use of city streets – the same fees cities use to fund community television and other city services. The other fee available under federal law to pay for PEG facilities and equipment has been outlawed in Wisconsin (2007 Act 42).

A comment period is now open on the FCC's *Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* (MB Docket No. 05-311). If the FCC is successful in reinterpreting the law in this unprecedented way, Wisconsin cities will face an unwelcome choice: keep the community PEG access channels and find another source of money to fund production of programming or return the channels to the cable company. If the PEG channels are returned, there will be no local programming on cable anymore. WCM is very concerned about the future of access television here in Wisconsin. If you like being able to see your community on Cable TV, go to www.wisconsincommunitymedia.com for more information and to learn what you can do.

WCM member media centers cover the 2018 elections

Wisconsin Community Media has collected coverage from around the state and put it all on our new YouTube channel: http://bit.ly/WCMYouTubeVideos Click PLAYLISTS on our YouTube homepage to see all the interviews we talk about here unless otherwise noted.

EAU CLAIRE

Valley Media Works, Eau Claire's community TV station, recently partnered with the Eau Claire Chamber of Commerce, WQOW, and The Leader-Telegram to present coverage of a State Assembly and Senate candidate forum. The station also invited the candidates to do brief 15-minute individual interviews. Interviews were conducted with Democratic candidate for Assembly District 67, **Wren Keturi**; Democratic candidate for Assembly District 68, **Wendy Sue Johnson**; Assembly District 91 candidates Democrat **Jodi Emerson** and Republican **Echo Reardon**; Democratic candidate for Assembly District 93 **Charlene Warner**; Republican candidate for Senate District 31 **Mel Pittman**; and Democratic candidate for Senate District 23 **Chris Kapsner**.

HUDSON

Watch recent episodes of the *Western Wisconsin Journal* produced by the River Channel, the Hudson – North Hudson community television channel, for interviews with candidates for office including Democratic candidate for the 7th Congressional District **Margaret Engebretson**; Democratic candidate for State Treasurer **Sarah Godlewski**; Assembly District 30 candidates Republican incumbent **Shannon Zimmerman** and Democrat **Barry Hammerback**; and Libertarian candidate for Governor **Phil Anderson.**

JANESVILLE

Janesville JATV covered the YWCA Rock County candidate forum on October 16. The forum features candidates for the 31st Assembly District, Democrat **Brittany Keyes** and Republican incumbent **Amy Loudenbeck**; candidates for the 43rd Assembly District, incumbent Democrat **Don Vruwink** and Republican **Gabriel Szerlong**; candidate for the 44th Assembly District, incumbent Democrat **Deb Kolste** running unopposed; candidates for the 45th Assembly District, Democratic incumbent **Mark Spreitzer** and Libertarian **Reese Wood**; and Democratic Senator **Janis Ringhand**, who represents Senate District 15, running unopposed. Janesville JATV also covered an October 29 debate between candidates for U. S. Representative Paul Ryan's seat, Congressional District 1, between Democrat **Randy Bryce** and Republican **Brian Stile**. The debate was sponsored WCLO and WSAW and hosted by University of Wisconsin Whitewater Rock County Campus. The forum was broadcast live on radio and played later on JATV Charter/Spectrum cable channel 994.

JEFFERSON

Jefferson JPEG covered a candidate forum on October 24 at the Jefferson Fort Community Credit Union. Participants were District 33 candidates, Republican incumbent **Cody Horlacher** and Democrat **Brandon White**; District 38 candidates vying for an open seat, Republican **Barbara Dittrich** and Democrat **Melissa Winker**; and District 43 candidate Republican **Gabriel Szerlong**. Incumbent Representative Vruwink was unable to attend. The Fort Atkinson, Jefferson and Watertown Chambers of Commerce and the American Association of University Women, in cooperation with WFAW 940AM and the Daily Jefferson County Union sponsored the event.

LAKE MILLS

Lake Mills TV recorded a candidate forum about public education hosted by Citizen Advocates for Public Education. Invited to the forum were candidates for State Senate District 13, Democrat **Michelle Zahn** and incumbent Republican Senator **Scott Fitzgerald** and candidates for the open seat for State Assembly District 38 Republican **Barbara Dittrich** and Democrat **Melissa Winker**.

The Quarterly is produced by Wisconsin Community Media. Find YOUR community media center at www.wisconsincommunitymedia.com. Contact Mary Cardona, Executive Director & Editor at 608-215-5594 or at exec@wisconsincommunitymedia.com. **Strong Media Centers. Strong Communities.**

MARSHFIELD

Marshfield Community Television invited candidates for office into its studio to discuss their views. Three candidates for Assembly District 86 came in: Republican incumbent **John Spiros**, Democrat **Nancy Stencil** and Independent **Michael Tauschek**. MCTV also did interviews with candidates for the open 68th Assembly District seat, Democrat **Chris Kapsner** and Republican **Kathy Bernier**, and interviews with the candidates for Wood County Sheriff, Republican **Sean Becker** and Democrat **John Hiller**.

Marshfield Community TV also interviewed several candidates for statewide office: Secretary of State candidate Republican **Jay Schroeder** and Democratic incumbent **Doug La Follette**; candidates for Governor, Independent **Maggie Turnbull** and Green Party candidate **Arnie Enz**, and Attorney General candidate Democrat **Josh Kaul**.

OSHKOSH

Oshkosh Media co-hosted a live candidate forum with the League of Women Voters of Winnebago County on Thursday, October 11 at Oshkosh City Hall. The forum featured candidates for Wisconsin's 53rd Assembly District, Republican incumbent **Michael Schraa** and Democratic challenger **Joe Lavrenz**.

Oshkosh Media also partnered with the Oshkosh Public Library to cover a series of informational sessions at the library called "Informed Electorate." These four sessions covered the **History of Political Rhetoric**, **Tech for Voters**, a discussion on the Winnebago County **Dark Stores Referendum** and finally a **Fake News** panel featuring representatives from the League of Women Voters Winnebago County, Oshkosh Northwestern daily newspaper and the Oshkosh Examiner, an online news blog dedicated to city news.

UW-Oshkosh

UW-Oshkosh educational access channel is running a public service announcement about how to vote and also did a segment on voting on the *Titan TV News* program.

RICE LAKE

Rice Lake Community Media talked with Curt Witynski, Deputy Executive Director of the League of Wisconsin Municipalities about the **Dark Stores Referendum**.

SEVASTOPOL/STURGEON BAY

This year, the League of Women Voters of Door County staged three candidate forums featuring Door County Sheriff candidates, Democrat **Tammy Sternard** and Republican **Pat McCarty;** 1st Assembly District candidates, Republican incumbent **Joel Kitchens** and Democrat **Roberta Thelen;** and Senate District 1 candidates, Republican **Andre Jacque** and Democrat **Caleb Frostman**. The forums were recorded by Sevastopol TV, Sturgeon Bay Community TV and the Southern Door School District respectively and Sevastopol TV is broadcasting all three forums on its local access channel.

SHEBOYGAN

WSCS Sheboygan has recorded two candidate forums sponsored by the Sheboygan Rotary Club. The first features candidates for the 27th Assembly District, **Tyler Vorpagel**, the Republican incumbent and **Nanette Bulebosh**, the Democratic challenger. The second features the candidates for the 9th District State Senate seat, incumbent Republican **Devin LeMahieu** and Democrat **Kyle Whelton**. The forums can be seen on Charter channel 990 and U-Verse channel 99.

WSCS Sheboygan will report local election results on November 7 as part of *Community News Review* produced in partnership with WHBL radio, a local affiliate of Midwest Communications. WSCS is also running a PSA on its channel's community calendar notifying people that Ebenezer United Church of Christ volunteers are providing rides to the polls, either on election day or for early voting.

STEVENS POINT

Stevens Point Community TV covered live an information session sponsored by the League of Women Voters in the Stevens Point area on the referendums on the November 6 ballot. The forum was simulcast on Charter Channel 984 and WSNP-LP 105.9 FM.

TREMPEALEAU COUNTY

On October 16, Trempealeau County Community Television covered a University of Wisconsin – Extension forum with the candidates for Assembly District 92, Senate District 31, the Sheriff's race and the District Attorney's race. In addition, **Steve Toft**, a Republican running for Congressman Ron Kind's seat was at the forum.

TCCTV always invites all candidates for office into its studio to talk in longer format programs, allowing them to expand on their positions. Several candidates have taken advantage of this opportunity: Democrat **Rob Grover** and Republican incumbent **Treig Pronschinske** both running for Assembly District 92; Democrat **Jeff Smith** and Republican **Mel Pittman** running for Senate District 31; Sheriff candidates **Brett Semingson** and **Kevin Deeren** and candidates for Congress, Congressman **Ron Kind** and Republican **Steve Toft**.

WATERTOWN

On October 31, the Beaver Dam Chamber of Commerce held a candidate forum at the Veterans Center with Assembly District 39 Republican incumbent **Mark Born** and his challenger, Democrat **Elisha Barudin** and State Senate District 13 candidates Republican incumbent Senator **Scott Fitzgerald** and his Democratic challenger **Michelle Zahn**. The format allowed the media and public to ask questions of the candidates and also for the candidates to ask questions of each other.

WAUSAU

Wausau Area Access Media was part of the media covering a President Trump rally held at the Central Wisconsin Airport in Mosinee on October 24. The rally opened with Republican candidates Governor **Scott Walker**, 7th District Congressman **Sean Duffy**, and U. S. Senate candidate **Leah Vukmir** taking the stage. U. S. Congressman **Paul Ryan**, who is not running for re-election, also addressed the crowd in advance of **President Trump**.

Wausau Area Access Media also interviewed State Representative **Katrina Shanklin**, who is running unopposed for District 71 and **John Robinson** from the Marathon County Board of Supervisors. Coverage can be seen at https://waam.viebit.com.

WISCONSIN RAPIDS

Wisconsin Rapids Community Media produced a League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Rapids candidate forum in its studio on October 22 featuring Assembly District 70 Democratic candidate **Cari Fay**, Assembly District 72 Democratic candidate **David Gorski** and candidates for Wood County Sheriff, Republican **Shawn Becker** and Democrat **John Hiller**.

Wisconsin Rapids Community Media invited all candidates to come to its studio for individual interviews. Participating candidates: District 72 Republican incumbent **Scott Krug** and Democratic challenger **David Gorski** and sheriff candidates Republican **Shawn Becker** and Democrat **John Hiller**. U. S. Representative **Ron Kind** also came to the studio for a 25-minute interview.