# VIDEO VOTER

## Producing Election Coverage for Your Community

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**CGS** Center for Governmental Studies
*Solutions for Democracy*

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# About CGS

Founded in 1983 as a 501(c)(3) organization, The Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) creates innovative political and media solutions to help individuals participate more effectively in their communities and governments. CGS uses research, advocacy, information technology and education to improve the fairness of governmental policies and processes, empower the underserved to participate more effectively in their communities, improve communication between voters and candidates for office, and help implement effective public policy reforms.

CGS has a history of developing technology for community benefit. CGS built The California Channel, the nation's first statewide public affairs ("state C-SPAN") channel, which is now operated by the California Cable Television Association and is available in nearly five million homes. CGS also developed the Democracy Network (DNet), an interactive web-based system of voter information designed to enhance voting and citizen participation. DNet provides online candidate debates at every level of government and now serves as the primary online voter information system for the League of Women Voters Education Fund of the United States. ConnectLA (www.connectla.org), a CGS website, is a multi-lingual portal that provides critically needed employment, health and community information to low-income individuals, families and communities of color in Los Angeles.

CGS is an experienced, respected leader in political reform and community development. For more than twenty years, CGS has received critical acclaim from community leaders, legislators, media, civic organizations and activists.

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# Foreword

This Video Voter guide provides step-by-step assistance on how to produce effective election programming for your community. It also explains how to use new technologies such as Digital Video Recorders, Video on Demand and the Internet to promote and distribute your finished product. Whether this is your first time producing election programming or you're a seasoned pro looking for new ideas, this guide can help.

Because many of our readers have production experience, we focus on the political and editorial challenges of election programming—identifying valid candidates, learning how to work with candidates and campaigns to minimize concerns of bias, choosing formats that suit voter needs and navigating legal concerns with this type of production. This guide is like having an in-house political programming consultant on your staff!

The Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) created Video Voter to improve the quality and quantity of voter information available nationwide. Video Voter does not look to large commercial broadcasting stations. Instead CGS is focused on tapping into the currently underutilized resources of Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) Access channels, which are uniquely positioned to provide high quality, substantive election programming at the often-neglected local level. In time other underutilized production resources at universities, public TV stations and even commercial stations can be added to the mix.

Video Voter also explores how new technologies can be used to "push" this programming to viewers, and how viewers can "pull" this programming into their TV sets on-demand using Digital Video Recorders (DVRs) and cable TV's Video on Demand systems. The result will make voter information more easily accessible to potential voters, ultimately creating a more vibrant, inclusive democracy.

For this guide, CGS worked closely on election coverage with CityTV of Santa Monica, California, the Pasadena Community Access Corporation of Pasadena, California, and City Channel 4 of Iowa City, Iowa. CGS also drew on the experience of Los Angeles Governmental Access Channel 35 in producing video candidate and ballot measure coverage. CGS staff and interns conducted focus groups and interviews, and sent questionnaires to more than 100 PEG access stations in all 50 states, and reviewed over 500 hours of PEG election coverage. We are energized and excited by the work we've seen, and hope this guide will help you become part of a nationwide effort to overcome voter malaise.

# Acknowledgements

# Introduction

Voting is the heartbeat of modern democracies. Democracies cannot function, however, if citizens lack the information they need on the candidates, issues, personalities, endorsements and ballot measure pros and cons—to cast informed ballots.

## Why Video Voter is Needed

Americans cite local TV newscasts as their leading source of political information, yet local TV news provides very little information on elections. During the 2002 elections, over one-half of the nation's local news programs provided no coverage of candidate positions.[1]

In those that did, only 28% contained candidates speaking (instead of reporters commenting on them), and the average candidate sound bite was only 12 seconds long. Most of the stories focused on the election "horserace"—who was ahead, who was raising the most money—but not the issues. Only 7% of all TV newscasts focused on state and local races.

Americans also get political information from cable TV news (38%), but the overall audiences are small (2.4 million), and most cable TV news coverage (68%) consists of repetitive stories. Americans also get political news from network TV news (35%), but audiences have dropped 44% since 1985, and shows' news content has shrunk by 11% since 1991 to make way for ads, promos and teases. Americans also get political news from newspapers (31%), but readership has declined 11% since 1991.

Although television is still the dominant political information medium, it generally portrays negative images of government service. Local television is virtually devoid of intelligent coverage of politics or candidates for office.

In fact, voters receive much of their information about political candidates through paid advertising-television, radio, direct mail, Internet appeals and yard signs. Yet voters are scarcely better informed about candidates and issues than they were 50 years ago. One reason is that political TV ads are too often shallow, distorted, trivial and mean. These 30-second "hit pieces" typically highlight flaws or omissions (sometimes minor or distorted out of proportion) in an opponent's record and magnify them to monumental proportions. Negative ads attack, but they rarely propose reforms or communicate significant information about the sponsoring candidate.

One result is falling voter turnout. According to the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate, the United States now stands 139th in voter turnout out of 172 democracies in the world.[2]   Voting rates in presidential elections dropped more than 25% in the 36-year period from 1964 to 2000. In 1964, 95.8% of regis-

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[1] Survey by Norman Lear Entertainment Center, USC Annenberg School of Communications, www.learcenter.org. The study reviewed the highest rated half-hour local TV news shows on 122 randomly selected stations in the top 50 national markets 7 weeks before the 2002 election.

[2] Gans, Curtis, "Citizen Participation in the Political Process" at an Educational Testing Service Civic Life in America Issues Forum, May 14, 2002. http://www.ets.org/aboutets/issues/0005.html.

[3] Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, United States Graph:  Retrieved July 27, 2004 from http://www.idea.int/vt/country_view.cfm.

tered voters cast a ballot, but only 67.4% of registered voters did so in 2000.[3]  This is a sizeable drop, but it's still a better turnout than we see in a non-presidential election. For off-year elections, participation rates are closer to 20% or 30%, and often drop to less than 10% of registered voters casting a ballot.

People choose not to vote for a variety of reasons, but lack of information is a critical factor. Most want to vote responsibly, but feel uncomfortable voting for candidates they know nothing about.  Accurate, timely and easily available voter information on the local level may very well be the key to improving voter turnout. That's where you come in.

The power to change the status quo is at your fingertips.

## Why *You* Should Produce Election Programming

PEG access cable TV channels are perfectly positioned to produce and distribute free election programming for candidates and ballot measures. They have the community focus and desire to produce programming which can help support a vibrant local democracy. They also have several distinct advantages over broadcasting as a medium for local political communication.

- First, the cablecast footprint of most community media outlets is narrower than that of local broadcast stations, which can cover dozens of local communities and jurisdictions.  Community media channels can therefore focus on the elections that are of particular concern to their specific communities.

- Second, many PEG stations are established with the express directive to serve their communities. What better way to do so than to provide the election programming necessary for citizens to make informed voting decisions?

- Third, PEG stations have both the equipment, facilities and personnel to create election programming; and the channels to distribute it.

Video Voter programming has the potential to vastly change the depth and breadth of political information in your community.

## How to Create the Ideal Video Voter System

The process is straightforward and economical. The ideal Video Voter system would allow voters to watch candidate and ballot measure programs in their homes and on-demand wherever they want them. This system requires three steps: production, distribution and retrieval.

**Production:**
This step involves putting voter information into usable video formats.  That's where you, the PEG producer, come in.  Many cities have TV production studios connected to their local access cable TV systems.  These are available for use by local governments, educational institutions or members of the public on a first-come, first-served basis.  But TV production can also be done at many other places -- high schools and universities, public TV stations, commercial broadcast stations, even private production studios.  It doesn't matter where the videos are produced.  What's important is that they be produced in formats that are generally consistent and attractive to both candidates and voters.  This guide explains how to produce these candidate and ballot measure videos and discusses different formats you can use.

**Distribution:**
Voter information programs produced in PEG access studios can then be distributed over PEG access channels.  Voters can watch them in their homes. The videos can also be distributed over the Internet by using an existing city or nonprofit organization's website or by creating your own. Eventually digital TV stations, direct broadcast satellites and even cellphones capable of receiving videos can one day distribute these videos as well.

**Retrieval on demand:**
Voters can record your election programming in their homes on their Digital Video Recorders (DVRs) such as TiVo and watch it whenever they choose. They can view your programming on the Internet. They can view it on new Video on Demand (VOD) cable TV systems that cable providers are installing around the country. And they can, in the near future, view it on their cellphones.

The Video Voter approach connects the resources of local access producers and production facilities with local politicians, produces videos of candidates and ballot measure committees, uses multiple platforms (cable TV, Internet, digital TV, cell phones) to distribute the videos, and incorporates the technologies of home digital video recording (DVRs) and Video on Demand cable TV to allow viewers to watch the videos on demand. The result is a low-cost, easily accessible system of Video Voter information that will ultimately create a more informed and engaged electorate.

In short, the day is rapidly approaching when voters will be able to watch Video Voter information whenever and wherever they choose. The necessary distribution technologies are already in place or will be shortly. Now, all that's needed is for you to begin producing candidate and ballot measure programming in your own community.

# Getting Started

Once you decide to produce election programming, there are two key decisions you should make immediately: decide whether or not you want to work with a partner, and define the scope of your coverage.

## Working with a Partner

Some stations rely entirely on internal staff to produce election programming. However, many find it helpful to enlist the aid of a partner. A nonpartisan partner who shares your goals of informing the public can:

- Provide a nonpartisan voice to protect you from perceived bias and external pressures that may come with election coverage,

- Add needed personnel to your production, help with candidate outreach and scheduling,

- Provide valuable political insight into how to obtain candidate participation, particularly if your partner has put together voter guides in the past, and

- Help organize candidate debates, allowing you to focus on production.

The League of Women Voters Education Fund is an excellent partner for many PEG access systems. Across the country, local Leagues are the most common program partners. In fact, many systems that produce election programming started by airing local League-sponsored political debates, and additional programming grew out of that partnership. The League of Women Voters has 50 state Leagues and over 1,000 local Leagues. To find the League nearest you, contact the League of Women Voters of the United States at 202-429-1965 or go to their online list of state and local Leagues (www.lwv.org).

**Video Voter Tip:**

The League of Women Voters Education Fund is non-partisan and never endorses candidates, which makes the League a credible partner.

It's important to distinguish between the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) and the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF). Both are operated out of the same offices, but the LWVUS is a political organization that takes stands on issues, while the LWVEF is a tax-exempt, non-partisan educational organization which does not take stands on issues. Neither organization ever endorses candidates, though the LWVUS may take positions on controversial ballot measures. The LWVEF engages in activities such as voter registration and candidate debates, and it is careful to maintain a separation between the LWVEF and LWVUS activities. If you choose to work with the League of Women Voters, you'll be working with the Education Fund side of things.

If the League is not a viable partner for you, there are many other nonpartisan alternatives in your community. A research institute such as the Center for Governmental Studies, a local newspaper, the chamber of commerce, a town hall organization or a university can complement your production strengths with their political and editorial expertise.

No matter the partner, be sure to include them as early as possible in the process. They may have valuable insights on which offices and issues you'll want to cover and what formats you may want to use.

## Setting Your Scope

Each community has its own unique interests and needs. Does your city have a strong city council or a strong mayor? Is there an important local initiative on the ballot? Whatever the case, be sensitive to the needs of your community and make informed decisions by asking yourself the following questions.

### Which offices to cover?

In an ideal world, you would cover all of the candidates for all the elected offices—city, county, state, federal—on the ballot in your community. But time and money are finite, so consider the following:

- You don't have to cover every office in your election. You can choose the races you want to include (e.g. mayor instead of city council, or one controversial state assembly race instead of all them).

- Try to cover races that are important to your community, especially those that may not have significant coverage elsewhere such as on broadcast stations.

- Consider covering highly contested races, which often make for more interesting programming.

- Does one race have more dynamic candidates than another? Don't be afraid to pick and choose races that will make for better TV.

- If you are already covering the visible races, try to expand to contests that receive less attention. There are a wide variety of local offices ranging from mayor to judge to dogcatcher to mosquito abatement commissioner. The more obscure the race, the more voters may need your help obtaining information.

- Find out how many candidates are running for each office. For logistical simplicity, if this is your first election program, you may want to cover an office with two or three candidates rather than a dozen.

- When possible, it's wise to cover all offices of a similar type. If you cover one city council race, it's preferable to cover them all. That way you have programming for the entire community instead just one part of it.

### Which candidates should be included?

It is best to invite all candidates to participate who will appear on the ballot for the office you're covering. You can easily find this information from the city or county clerk, the registrar of voters, or whoever runs elections in your jurisdiction. Ask for the filing deadline as well, so you'll know when the list is final. Remember that you don't have to cover all races, but its good policy to invite all viable candidates in races you do cover.



**Video Voter Tip:**

Try to include all candidates for the office you cover.

In general, we don't recommend including write-in candidates unless you have specific guidelines defining a "valid" write-in candidate. Otherwise, anyone who hears you are doing programming may pester you for airtime claiming to be a write-in candidate. In reality, write-in candidates are very rare, but it's a possibility you should prepare for ahead of time.

Of course, you know your community best. If you have an important race with a viable write-in candidate, or your election officials

have specific rules about who is a "valid" write-in candidate, then by all means include them. If your jurisdiction doesn't have specific guidelines, you may wish to consult the Federal Communications Commission's rules which define "write-in" candidates. These guidelines don't necessarily apply to PEG, but in considering write-in candidates, you can follow them if you want. Remember that the most important thing is to help voters make their decisions from among the candidates. For a more detailed exploration of these and other legal issues consult *Appendix A: Legal Issues*.

## What if a candidate doesn't participate?

If a candidate doesn't participate, you should go on with the show. Whether a candidate can't free up his or her time or simply chooses not to participate, don't let this interfere with your goal of informing the electorate about the candidates who do participate. Make it clear to your candidates and audience that all candidates are invited and given equal opportunity so that you maintain credibility. Chances are good that your participation rate will increase from one year to the next, particularly once candidates realize that the show will go on without them.

**Video Voter Tip:**

Contact PEG stations in neighboring communities to see if they want to co-produce or share programming.

If you find that many candidates can't work the taping into their schedules, consider a time, venue, or format change. As an example, if you know that the incumbent will be in the Capitol during your taping period, consider a format that allows all candidates the option of submitting their own taped statements. Or if many candidates can't attend your debate because it conflicts with another campaign event, change your time or date to allow for more complete participation. Be flexible, but don't reward obstructionism.

## Which ballot measures to cover?

The ideal is to cover all ballot measures, but if you have limited resources, focus on a specific "level" of government (i.e. county) and cover each of those. You could also select the most important, visible or hotly contested measures. Or you might focus on measures that have limited coverage elsewhere. For instance, when CGS partnered with Santa Monica CityTV, state, county and city measures appeared on the ballot. The state initiatives tended to be well-funded, with significant advertising and debate.  Santa Monica therefore chose to focus on the seven Santa Monica city measures which had received little other media attention.  They also re-broadcast ballot initiative coverage from the Pasadena Community Access Corporation, another local PEG station that covered county

**Video Voter Tip:**

Pick the office that's likely to be of interest to the most people and focus on that. Start with a citywide office (like mayor) rather than to try to cover districted city council seats on your first try.

measures. As always, consider what may be controversial or confusing to your audience and have your coverage mirror audience interests and needs.

## How much programming can you produce?

Only you know what you can afford and how much time you can devote to programming. If this is your first time, you may want to start off with one or a few offices and add more in the future.

## Setting Your Ground Rules

Decide on your format, ground rules and rules of decorum in consultation with your partner before inviting candidates to participate.  That way you won't be forced to make decisions on the fly, which might open you up to accusations of bias from a campaign that doesn't get its way. Campaigns also appreciate clarity up front so they know what to expect.

See *Appendix A: Legal Issues* for a discussion of the Equal Time Rule. The Equal Time Rule requires broadcast stations to be fair in providing airtime to candidates. PEG stations are exempt from the rule, but the principles it contains are good ones, and adhering to them may prevent any appearance of bias.

If you are a Governmental access station, also see the discussion of First Amendment concerns in the legal section of this guide. By treating candidates equally and establishing non-content based restrictions before you start programming, you will avoid most concerns. It's best to be familiar with the legal issues before you contact a single candidate. Don't worry; you don't need to be a lawyer to understand them!

# Finding Funding

Budgets for PEG stations differ greatly.  No matter how small your station's budget for political programming, even if it's non-existent, there are ways to provide effective voter information, either through low- / no-cost production or by securing additional donation funds to cover the projected costs.  The following is a brief discussion of alternative funding strategies that might be useful in producing Video Voter information without adding to your station's bottom line.

We have identified four types of partners that can help you produce Video Voter programs, each of which can contribute in different ways.  One partner can provide multiple forms of assistance.

1. **Editorial Partnerships:**
   As discussed earlier, organizations like the League of Women Voters or the Chamber of Commerce may be good partners in structuring the debates, determining questions to be asked, or suggesting issues to be discussed.

2. **In-Kind Partnerships:**
   One way to reduce costs is to find a partner such as the local paper or news radio station that may have facilities in place to tape candidates or hold an event or debate free of charge. Perhaps it is already equipped to tape events and provide lighting or sound equipment at no out-of-pocket cost to your station.  Or perhaps an experienced news producer from a local station would donate his or her time to the project. A local political science professor could likewise act as an interviewer.

3. **Financial Partnerships:**
   A third type of partner such as a local bank branch or car dealership may be interested in providing financial underwriting for your program.  The type of production you wish to create and anticipated costs will most likely determine the type of funding you should seek. Who to approach, and for how much will depend on your community's particular situation. Please be aware, however, that some potential funders will only provide grants and financial support to 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations.  Here are some general guidelines

   - For requests under $1,000, local businesses are probably the best target. They serve the same customer base as you do, have a keen interest in the outcome of local elections, and are often community-minded.

   - For requests between $1,000 and $5,000, larger local corporations may be a better target.  Contact the headquarters of the bank in your area, for example, rather than an individual branch. Although not as community-focused, they may have a larger pool of discretionary funds to draw upon. Consider the size of the company when considering the size of the request.

   - For requests over $5,000, approach private or corporate foundations.  They have more resources, but the request process can be more involved and can take three to six months.  Again, consider which organizations are based in your community.  Is there a local community foundation?  A community foundation's mission is to serve people directly who live in its

geographic area, most likely the same area in which you broadcast.

Editorial partners such as a local paper might also be financial partners. Your local League of Woman Voters, in addition to organizing events, may be able to provide an interviewer or split production costs.

**4. Local Government Partners:**
Even in an era of limited funding, don't ignore the possibility that you may be able to secure funding from your local government. City council members all have a vested interest in engaging their constituents in local affairs. Registrar-Recorders (or your county elections office) have an interest in increased voter turn-out, as do Secretaries of State, and they may already distribute printed voter pamphlets. Why not suggest, with your help of course, that they distribute Video Voter Pamphlets. Some of these offices have limited discretionary funds available that you might be able to access with a well thought out plan.

Partners and sponsors may be essential to producing election programming, but if your sponsor or partner is perceived to have a political agenda, your station may be subject to criticism. To avoid this pitfall, steer clear of local businesses, public employee unions or community groups that have or most likely will have issues pending before the body for which the election is being held. Acknowledge sponsors at the beginning of a show, the end of a show, or both, preferably with a disclaimer *(See Appendix A: Legal Issues for a sample disclaimer.)*

While you're trying to raise money, also think about creative ways of cutting costs. For example, the City of El Monte, California produces election coverage at "no cost." The staff obtains free resources such as volunteer anchors, sets designed and built by the parks and recreation department, headsets on loan from the police department, and even an "election results" board designed and built for them by the City Hall janitor. As in life, try not to let money stand in your way.

# Reaching Different Types of Voters

As you consider what types of programs you want to offer, it's helpful to keep in mind what voters want out of their election programming. When choosing a candidate, voters gather and assimilate information in many different ways. Almost no one has the time to find out everything there is to know about every candidate. Instead, most voters resort to shortcuts of one type or another. We've identified three kinds of voters based on the type of information shortcuts they use to make their voting decisions: Issue Voters, Personality & Experience Voters and Endorsement & Party Voters.

## Issue Voters

Issue voters base their voting decisions on a candidate's position on one or more issues. For instance, if a candidate is for gun control, a pro-gun-control-issue-voter will vote for him or her, possibly without regard for the candidate's other issue positions. Sometimes a voter uses these issue stances as a rubric for how "like them" a candidate is, even if the candidate would not likely have decisions to make relevant to that issue. For instance, a pro-life candidate may get the support of a pro-life voter, even if the office is a seat on the mosquito abatement board, which is unlikely to be faced with abortion issues. The issue position becomes a short cut or "cue" for the voter. If they agree with the candidate on that issue, they think they will likely agree with the candidate on other issues more relevant to the office. For these voters, the issue or issues are the key to understanding the candidate.

## Personality & Experience Voters

Personality & Experience voters base their voting decisions on factors such as charisma, intelligence, compassion, honesty or a candidate's perceived political experience or expertise. Political press machines work very hard to create a particular image of their candidate, but voters may wish to see candidates in a more unrehearsed setting. Personality & Experience voters are apt to prefer programs that reveal background information and that show the candidate interacting with other candidates or with citizens, so they can get a sense of the way he or she works with others.

## Endorsement & Party Voters

Endorsement voters rely on the opinions of others to aid them in the decision process. Whether an endorsement voter confers with a neighbor, follows the voting advice of a newspaper or bases his or her voting on the endorsement of a specific group or association, endorsement voters are looking for cues from others. Party voters vote along party lines or follow party recommendations. These voters might appreciate a program in which each candidate can pick an endorser to explain why he or she support that candidate.

In reality, most voters probably use some combination of these three approaches to voting, but it's helpful to keep in mind what voters are looking for as you select your program formats.

# Program Formats

Choosing a format that will capture and keep viewer attention is crucial to your program's success. CGS focus groups show that viewers get bored with lengthy or formal political programming. Comments such as, "I don't like sitting and listening to the candidate go on and on," were common. However, the goal of election coverage is not to entertain as much as it is to inform. How then can you hook your audience without compromising your standards? How can you do so on a shoestring budget?

The answer lies in your willingness to think and work outside the box. The following is an exploration of the three basic types of voter information formats, plus suggestions for how to get creative. We encourage you to build on the basics to make programming that people will find engaging.

## Candidate Statements

The first program format is the Candidate Statement, sometimes also referred to as "talking heads." This format is a good choice if it's your first time producing election coverage, due to its minimal production elements. Many voters prefer this format because it lets the candidates talk simply and directly into the camera and explain their views succinctly.

Candidate Statements typically consist of a head-and-shoulders shot of the candidate speaking towards the camera, or perhaps the candidate behind a desk or podium. They should range between 30 seconds and 3 minutes, contain unedited speaking and consist of either an issue statement or a candidate listing his/her qualifications and reasons for candidacy. Statements can be taped in a studio or may be submitted by a candidate who can't make it into the studio. If you allow candidates to send in a tape, be sure to clearly outline production specifications, such as what their surroundings must look like, sound requirements and what kind of tape stock is acceptable for airing on your station. *See Appendix B: Fact Sheet for Candidate Statements* for helpful tips.

### Key Benefits
- Allows candidates to speak directly to the voters in their own words.

- Can give good insights into the personality of a candidate and his or her grasp of the issues.

- Allows candidates to address issues that concern them and to speak directly to voters (instead of a moderator or studio audience).

- Does not require the use of a moderator.

- Keeps production costs relatively low.

- Requires only one camera.

- Allows candidates who are out of the district and would otherwise be unable to come into the studio to participate by preparing and submitting their own tapes.

- Produce each candidate's statement as its own individual, self-contained segment. By introducing him or herself, the statement can stand alone without a moderator, thus lending itself to Video on Demand retrieval, Internet streaming or cell phone delivery.

## Hurdles

- There is no moderator to make sure the candidates stay on topic or address the questions or issues posed.

- The format can be a bit stilted, and viewers may find that watching a long string of these is tiresome.

- Without an interviewer or audience to interact with, candidates may come off as wooden or boring.

### Video Voter Tip:

To combat candidate fears about being in front of the camera alone, have a producer or someone from their campaign stand just to the side of the camera, eye-level with the lens. This way the candidate will address their statements to the person, yet appear to be speaking to the camera. This should put candidates more at ease, making their statements smooth and conversational.

## Production Tips

**Length of statements**

Research tells us that the shorter the candidate statement, the better. Our focus groups indicated that a good length for a candidate statement is under two minutes. However, we suggest the ideal length of a candidate statement should be closer to 30 to 60 seconds. Americans are used to getting their information in short concise packages: 60-second news updates, ever-shortening newspaper articles and e-mail news bulletins. Although 30 or 60 seconds might sound far too short, the end result will be much more effective than a rambling five-minute statement. It's better to have a 30-second clip someone watches than a five-minute clip they will turn off. Ultimately, use your own best judgment as to what statement length is best for your community.

**Script Reading**

Speaking on-camera is a daunting task for many novice candidates. They tend to rely heavily on written notes or a prepared statement. This does not make good television, nor does it instill confidence in the speaker. Viewers respond better to a candidate who speaks in a conversational tone with more natural mannerisms. Although you can't force candidates to be more comfortable in front of the camera, you can help them work through their statements, so they can present without staring at their notes.

**Teleprompters**

Teleprompters are a great tool for on camera presentations, such as candidate statements, but teleprompter reading is an acquired skill that many local candidates may not have had the chance to master. Here are some suggestions on how to help candidates make the best program possible:

- Allow candidates to practice with the teleprompter several times before taping.

- Encourage candidates to practice their statements in front of a mirror or, better yet, on a home video camera before tape day.

- Encourage candidates to email their statements or bring them on disk. Teleprompters operate using common word processing systems such as Microsoft Word. This allows candidates to spell things phonetically and use the italics, bold and underline features to help with presentation.

- Tell candidates they need to be comfortable with their statements but need not memorize them. Candidates should deliver their statement as if they were telling a favorite story.

### Cue-Cards

Having a teleprompter isn't always possible, and that's fine. You can get equally good results using bullet-pointed cue cards. As a producer, you may want to offer to help candidates to break their statements into main points. By highlighting their main ideas and not transcribing their statement verbatim onto cards, candidates will end up with more natural, successful statements. It's okay to help candidates with their presentation in this way so long as you do not seek to alter their statements and you make the same offer of assistance to all candidates.

## Creative Twists

Candidate statements are usually shot in the studio with a plain or simple background, but why not try some of these simple variations on the format to liven things up a bit?

### Location

Shoot on location. Come up with locations related to the campaign—a new housing development, the steps of the Capitol building, or an iconic landmark in your community. Or let the candidate choose the location, so that it says something about his or her candidacy. This will add an interesting visual element to the candidates' statements. Be sure to get any necessary permits. Government access stations may also need to clear locations with the city attorney or manager—the use of city seals, uniformed personnel or certain props may pose legal issues.



**Video Voter Tip:**

Be sure to choose locations that are conducive to a successful shoot. Sound is critical, so avoid high noise or wind areas. Avoid distracting visuals or locations where excessive background activity will interfere with your shots!
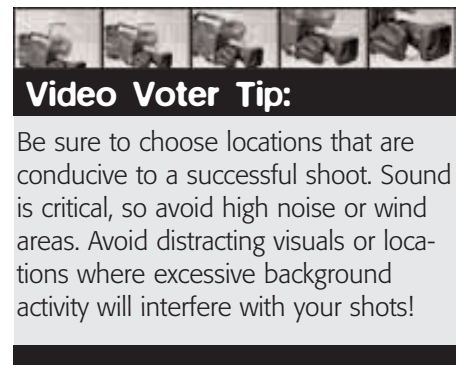
### Issue Shows

Candidate statements can be the building blocks for other programs. The City of Santa Monica, for instance, taped an introductory statement and 5 issue statements (on Growth, Traffic and Parking, Homelessness, Affordable Housing and Rent Control, and Public Safety) from each candidate. They then made six separate shows by grouping the statements by topic. One program was devoted entirely to "Meet the Candidates," another to growth, another to traffic, and so on. This allows you to create numerous shows with little extra studio time and is an excellent way to meet the needs of Issue voters, who can then decide to watch those shows most relevant to their interests.

### Endorsement Shows

For another twist on the talking heads format, ask each candidate to line up an endorser to tape a statement in support of his or her candidacy. Who the candidates choose can say as much as the actual content of the endorsements. Did they choose the President of the Chamber of Commerce, the Police Chief, the head of a local environmental group, or perhaps their 10-year-old-child? This type of program is of particular interest to Endorsement voters. Endorsers can also list others who endorse the candidate.

## Candidate Interviews

Candidate interviews are an effective way to cover issues in a campaign while giving voters an opportunity to see how the candidates conduct themselves when asked questions. This format is useful for both issue and personality voters. The traditional interview is done either one-on-one with a host or in a group setting in which a candidate interacts with several citizens or journalists. In either case, the candidate may be asked very gener-

al questions about his or her background and goals, or he or she may be asked specific questions on issues. This format works best with multiple cameras, allowing the audience to get the best sense the interaction between interviewer and interviewee. See *Appendix C: Fact Sheet for Candidate Interviews* for sample materials.



## Key Benefits

- Candidates often feel less awkward talking to a person rather than a camera, and a more relaxed candidate makes for better viewing.

- Questions help make information about the candidate's background, positions, etc., better organized and easier for viewers to digest.

- Interviews feel less formal than watching candidates read prepared statements.

- Candidates can answer key questions surrounding the elections without having to do so in the competitive format of a debate.

## Hurdles

- Usually requires candidates to come into the studio (unless interviews are taped at outside locations).

- Much of the success of the interview often rests on the shoulders of the interviewer.

- In order to maintain objectivity, questions should be similar for each candidate, but this sometimes makes them overly general (e.g. What would you do about crime in our community?).

## Production Tips

**Choosing the Interviewer:  Facilitators & Investigators**
The key to a successful interview is to make sure that the interviewer you choose is appropriate for the type of interview you want to produce. There are two types of interviewers. The first type is a facilitator who asks the candidates generic questions, keeps the conversation moving, and serves as a focal point for the candidates so they can direct their comments to a person, which helps them feel less awkward than they might talking to a camera. The second type of interviewer is an investigator who may ask the candidates more pointed questions, prod candidates who give non-specific responses and ask follow-up questions to ensure the candidates' answers are thorough and understood. The investigator should be challenging but not confrontational.

It is probably easier to find a facilitator than an investigator. A facilitator should be welcoming and non-confrontational, but firm enough to keep the conversation moving. An investigator needs to have all that, plus he or she must be well versed in the issues of the campaign, familiar with the candidates' records and stands on issues, and able to respectfully but firmly insist that the candidate answer the questions thoroughly and directly.  Of course, the distinction between a facilitator and an investigator is not always clear cut.

When the City of Santa Monica conducted its interviews, they wanted the interviewer to act largely as a facilitator, but also to ask follow up questions if candidates said something unclear or that was likely to be misunderstood. The moderator was not asked to challenge the candidates, merely to fill in the blanks conversa-

tionally if, for instance, the candidate used an acronym with which the audience would be unfamiliar or if the candidate misspoke and the moderator felt he or she might wish to clarify.

Either type of interviewer should be seen by the candidates and the public as non-partisan and unbiased. It's also important that the interviewer be comfortable. If the interviewer is nervous or flustered because of inexperience, it will make the candidate uncomfortable and will undermine your whole program.

So where do you find an interviewer? You might look to local professors, journalists, local TV personalities or news anchors, or even retired politicians if they are seen as unbiased. Leaders of local civics groups can also make good facilitators.

Here are some tips for your facilitator from Sandy Jacobson, moderator and host for Santa Monica City TV.

1. Concentrate on maintaining eye contact. This helps candidates feel like they're in a conversation and will reduce their "I'm on TV" anxiety.

2. Establish a relationship. Before the cameras ever roll, let them know that you are connected and invested, and that it's important to you that they look good.

3. Engage in small talk before the cameras roll. Do this by going off-topic. Chit-chat can get them comfortable with the situation. Right before cameras roll is when candidates will most likely get nervous.

4. Promise them no surprises. They'll feel reassured and comfortable.

5. Establish cues ahead of time. Agree on non-verbal cues such as rapid eye blinking to indicate they need to wrap-up their answer. If candidates don't respond, interject yourself into the conversation with an "OK" or an "mmm-hmm." Candidates need to know this indicates that they are going on too long, and that they need to finish their thought.

6. Tailor your interaction to each candidate. Most incumbents have been through this process before. They may not need much reassurance or guidance. But remember that challengers may be extra nervous. Be prepared to spend a little extra time explaining the process and easing their anxiety.

**Developing questions**
The questions you ask will depend greatly on what's important to your community and the particular office involved.  If you have program partners, they may be a good source of questions; if not you might wish to scan community newspapers to identify the hot topics. Many cities conduct surveys of residents, which can also provide good sources of issues. You can even poll the community through the web to see what questions people want answered.

Once you have your issues, you must still develop the phrasing of a question. Do your best to avoid loaded words—words that could be seen as biased on an issue one way or another. As an example, you shouldn't ask a candidate "Are you pro-gun control?" The question itself implies a position. Instead try "Where do you stand on the gun control issue?" Another example: let's say your city is about to undertake a large renovation of city hall, but some people are concerned about the cost and environmental impact. When phrasing a question about a controversial issue, it can be helpful to represent the opinions of both sides in a positive light and then solicit the candidate's opinion. For instance, you might say "Proponents cite fire and earthquake safety risks as reasons to renovate city hall, but opponents have voiced concern about the cost and environmental impact. Where do you stand on this issue?"

**Sharing questions ahead of time**
Once you have the questions, you're bound to have candidates ask you for them ahead of time. Your gut instinct may be not to share. After all, we usually think of interviews as something journalists conduct to

"catch" a candidate in an inconsistency. But that's not the goal here. We're looking to help the candidate share his or her views with voters so they can make informed choices. Prepared candidates make better programming than candidates who sit there looking confused. That said, if you give candidates the exact phrasing of a question, they may prepare a canned speech, which undermines the conversational flow of an interview. A good compromise is to share the topics with the candidate, so they can be prepared to talk about an issue, but leave the specific question until the actual interview. Of course, if you share questions or topics with one candidate, you must share with all of them.

## Sample Questions

The best questions are those that address the concerns and issues of the people in your community. We've included some sample questions you may wish to build on for your interview show.

1. Why did you decide to run for office?

2. What do you see as the key issues of this election?

3. What are some of the qualifications that you bring to the office?

4. What specific ideas do you have for improving the (insert topic: budget, housing crisis, traffic, homelessness, etc.) situation?

5. What are some of your goals for the (city, county, jurisdiction etc)?

6. What experiences in your career have most prepared you for this office?

7. Which endorsements are you most proud of and why?

### Dos and Don'ts:

✗ Don't ask a question that presumes to know the answer: "You're against the redevelopment of city hall, right?"

✗ Don't ask a loaded question: "There are a lot of so-called 'environmentalists 'who are against the renovation of city hall to its original splendor. What do you think?"

✔ Do ask a question that represents both sides as viable: "Proponents cite fire and earthquake safety risks as reasons to renovate city hall, but opponents have voiced concern about the cost and environmental impact. Where do you stand on this issue?"

## Timing

There are viewers out there who want to hear everything a candidate has to say about an issue, but focus group research reveals that most viewers prefer the responses to be straightforward and brief. For this reason it's a good idea to give candidates a time limit up front. Alternatively you can tell them that the shorter their answers are the more questions they will receive. In an interview, you'll want to let them know how long they will be on camera, and how many issues you plan to cover. You don't need to be overly rigid about the exact timing of their responses, but you'll want to work out cues for the candidate to know when it's time to move on to the next issue so that you can cover all the questions. Encourage your interviewer to keep the interview moving in a conversational manner. As a producer you might want to keep time, stand in eye-line with the host and give signals when it's time to move on.

## Closing Statements

You may want to give a candidate the opportunity to make a closing statement. However you don't want to give the candidates free rein to grandstand or attack their opponents. Be sure to establish clear rules. Statements should be concise, preferably no longer than 30 seconds, and you may set out guidelines that prevent them from mentioning an opponent directly. This keeps the candidates focused on the positive aspects of their own campaign rather than degenerating into a negative attack on the opponent. For more on this, see our legal section.

## Creative Twists

Interviews, like candidate statements, are good building blocks for creating interesting programming.

### Issues

As with candidate statements, you can ask each candidate a series of issue questions, and then create multiple issue programs with all candidates addressing one issue in each program.

### Life history

This show explores the candidate's personality. Questions such as, "What were the key events in your background that prompted you to run for elected office?" or "What life experiences have helped you prepare for this office?" are examples of appropriate questions. Although such questions might not be as specific or substantive, they provide insight into a candidate's personality, which is a defining factor for many voters.

### Location

By simply changing the location of the interview from a studio to a mall, a housing development or even the candidate's home, you add elements that will draw in more viewers. Perhaps give each candidate a choice of two locations—one that illustrates a place important to him or her, and another significant for a particular issue. If you choose to shoot on location, avoid any perceived bias, by avoiding the inclusion of city seals and uniformed personnel.

### Hypothetical

In this variation, candidates are asked how they would address hypothetical situations or problems. For example: "How would you solve traffic congestion in the downtown area?" Or "How would you speed up the transition to democracy in the middle-east?"

### Koffee Klatch

In this variation the candidate is interviewed by a group of citizens in an informal setting such as a living room, coffee shop or mall. Viewers like to see "real people" asking questions. How a candidate interacts with the community is essential to his or her ability as a politician. This would be a great opportunity for candidates to put their talent for interaction on display. In order to maintain equality, be sure to use the same panel for all candidates in an election.

### 20 questions

A great way to create a lively show is to take the interview format, speed it up, and turn the interview into a fast-paced round of Twenty Questions.  By simply changing the pace you create something new and different. For example: "Is there one word that describes your approach to K-12 education?" "What's your favorite time of the year?" What's the most important issue facing this state?" " Are you a dog person or a cat person?"

### Citizens Q&A

Videotape citizens or experts in various fields asking questions. Then show the candidates these questions and they can either answer directly without a moderator, answer after a moderator reiterates the question and builds on it.

### Editorial Board Interview

Instead of producing your own programming, take your cameras to cover news events produced by others. Editorial Boards, for example, meet with candidate to discuss their positions and qualifications. Why not arrange to tape these meetings? Your interviews support the local newspaper, and its staff can handle contacting the candidates. This can be a low-cost way to start election programming, and since editors tend to promote their participation in your program in their papers, that's free publicity!

### Interview Package

Interview packages are like mini-documentaries or segments one might see on the evening news. In addition to direct footage of the candidate speaking, packages can include video montages of a candidate at work, speaking with others or giving presentations, all paired with voice-overs. This is a powerful format, but you must be particularly careful to maintain objectivity and equal treatment of all candidates. No one candidate should feel that his or her production value is lower than any other candidate's.

# Candidate Forums & Debates

Forums and Debates can be taped at almost any venue, from a studio, to city council chambers, to a high school auditorium. These formats bring multiple candidates together to discuss issues. We use the word "forums" to refer to less structured gatherings and discussions. "Debates" on the other hand follow a more structured, formal set of guidelines.



After an introduction by the moderator, debates commence with each candidate giving an opening statement. Questions are then posed to the group; each participant has an opportunity to give a timed response before moving on to the next question. Debates typically finish with a closing statement from each candidate.

The regulated format of a formal debate is intended to ensure that the conversation is fair and impartial and that each candidate has an equal opportunity to be heard and to respond to the other candidates. Forums are similar to debates in that all the candidates are brought together, but there they are less regulated. There is typically more interaction between candidates in a forum than there is in a formal debate. But a forum is not a free-for-all. Ultimately the difference between debates and forums is just a matter of degree; both formats typically involve one or more moderators and possibly a studio audience. Also, both formats are usually most engaging when candidates have widely differing opinions.

Chances are that as a PEG channel, you won't be staging your own debate. Debates and forums require the most experience, manpower and funds of any of the formats we've discussed. For that reason, it may be wise to find someone who is already planning a debate and simply arrange to tape and broadcast that debate. That said, don't be discouraged to give it a try if there isn't a debate planned and you feel your viewers would benefit from one. At a minimum, try to get a partner with some experience. The League of Women Voters is extremely experienced in hosting and producing debates, and is typically eager to have them televised. Seek out your local League at www.lwv.org for assistance.

If the League is not a viable option for you, other non-profit, non-partisan organizations such as the Center for Governmental Studies or your local chamber of commerce may prove to be an equally good option. Just be sure to choose a partner without an agenda to push in your election, and remain as non-partisan as possible. See *Appendix D: Facts Sheet for Candidate Debates & Forums* for sample materials.

## Key Benefits

- Allows voters to see all the candidates together in a face-to-face public meeting.

- Provides a chance for the community to ask questions and compare candidate responses on specific policy points.

- Shows candidates interacting with each other.

## Hurdles

- Works best if all candidates are able to appear together on the same day.

- Must have a moderator with a strong presence in order to control response time.

- Can be logistically complicated to arrange.

- Can be tedious to hear from each candidate when there are four or more candidates for an office.

## Production Tips

### Choosing a moderator

Choosing a moderator is arguably the most important editorial decision in producing a forum or debate. Once the camera rolls, the entire program rests on his or her shoulders. Choosing the right moderator is crucial, and balance is essential. Be sure to select someone who is strong, will keep the participants in check, yet who knows that they are a facilitator and not the star of the show. The most important challenge in picking a moderator is to find someone who is perceived by the community as an impartial host. Any sense that the moderator has a particular prejudice could compromise your show and your reputation. As with interviews, look to professors from local colleges, experienced journalists or members of civic groups such as the League of Women Voters in your quest for a moderator. If you feel that you're unable to find an appropriate person, consider choosing another format such as an interview or candidate statement. Or you can always find a civic group that is already conducting a debate and inquire about taping their event.

### Opening and Closing Statements

Opening and closing statements are brief opportunities for candidates to speak directly to voters at the beginning and end of a debate or forum. While these statements are pretty typical in formal debates they are entirely optional in forums. One benefit of such statements is they enable voters to see what the candidates believe to be important and how they present themselves. Closing statements also give candidates the opportunity to address issues that arose during the discussion and which they may not have had time or opportunity to address earlier. Such an opportunity can defuse a lot of frustration for candidates who may feel confined by formal debate rules. The drawback of opening and closing statements is that they can be tedious for the audience, particularly if you have many of candidates running for a single office. So if you allow opening and/or closing statements, set short time limits and make sure your candidates follow them.

### Asking Questions

The subject and phrasing of debate and forum questions shouldn't favor any candidate or point of view. To find topics relevant to your community, you might see if the city or local newspapers conduct surveys of residents. Alternatively, perhaps you could post a poll on your website, ask local journalists, or even ask the candidates themselves to submit topics.

Be even-handed when turning a topic into a question. A good way to ensure that you create unbiased questions is simply to start a question with phrases like, "What would you do about…" or "What do you think about…." These open ended questions let participants demonstrate their speaking skills as well as share their opinions. Remember, it's not about creating questions to stump the participants, but instead creating an environment in which voters can evaluate how the candidates might represent them no matter what topics arise.

### Length of responses

Brevity is essential. Set time limits and persuade your candidates to communicate their positions as succinctly as possible. Remind them that focus group research shows that viewers have little patience for long-winded political programming. This is especially important when numerous candidates are participating in a show.

### Keep things as impartial as possible

No candidate should have any advantage over another. Candidate seating must be as equal as possible in terms of accessibility to the moderator, to microphones, to audience view and to the camera.

## Maintaining control

Maintaining control of a forum, particularly the more free-form variety, can be especially challenging. Here are a few tips.

1. Create a rule sheet; be sure to be specific about things like timing of responses, use of visual aides, absence of campaign materials (banners, buttons, T-shirts), references to one's opponents, decorum and even dress codes.

2. Circulate the rules well in advance of tape day and request that every participant sign a statement that they have read the rules and agree to follow them.

3. Have an easily visible clock or a timekeeper so that there are no questions about timekeeping. Here's a good way to let candidates know how much time they have left: have someone with a stopwatch sit in the candidate's line of vision and hold up a paddle that says 30 when there are 30 seconds left, a paddle that says 10 when there are 10 seconds left, and a big red paddle when it's time to stop.

## Make the rules clear

In addition to letting the candidates know the rules, let your audience know what to expect. Give them an overview of the events to come before the candidates start debating.

## Do a run-through

Debates and forums usually involve multiple cameras and lots of changes in shots from the moderator to a candidate, to another candidate, to the audience…it can be dizzying. Take the time before the shoot to have the producer, director and camera people work on their cues and run through the plan for the program.

# Creative Twists

## Formal Debate with rebuttals

This format is the same as the formal debate (each candidate is given a set amount of time to answer a question), but after each candidate speaks, the opponent has an opportunity to rebut instead of just answering the same question. So the order would be

1. Moderator poses question #1

2. Candidate A responds to question #1

3. Candidate B rebuts candidate A

4. Moderator poses question #2

5. Candidate B responds to question #2

6. Candidate A rebuts candidate B

Though each candidate doesn't necessarily answer the exact same question, they are given a chance to touch on it in their rebuttal. They key is that by calling for a rebuttal, you ask the candidates to address each other and engage more than they would in a formal debate. This format works best when there are only two or perhaps three candidates; many more and it becomes difficult to follow.

## Formal Debate with Follow-Up Questions

If the formal debate feels too stilted and doesn't allow enough depth, why not add follow up questions? Follow up questions give viewers a better grasp of the issue and help candidates clarify their positions. After each response, allow the moderator to ask follow-up questions. Better yet, give candidates the opportunity to ask each other follow-up questions either after their rebuttal or in lieu of a rebuttal.

**Moderated Conversations**
In this format, the moderator presents the question and the floor is then open for a set amount of time for interactive discussion between participants. The moderator may jump in to guide the conversation or to try to give a candidate who has not been able to speak a chance to respond. However, every effort should be made to let the candidates talk among themselves. This gives unique insight into the candidates; are they pushy and rude, or thoughtful and polite? This "real-world" format can work extremely well but an experienced moderator is a big plus.

**Roundtable with Moderator**
In this format, the moderator asks a question and each participant has a set amount of time, preferably short, to answer that question, as they do in a classic debate. Once each candidate has had an uninterrupted opportunity to speak, the moderator opens the floor for a brief (perhaps three minute) free-flowing un-moderated discussion between the candidates. The initial statements allow each candidate to be heard, but the discussion gives viewers a better sense of how the candidates interact in a group and how well they can represent their ideas in a discussion. For an idea of how to do this with a large number of candidates, see *Appendix E: Case Study: Santa Monica Live Candidate Forum*.

**Citizen Q&A**
Use a moderator to maintain control of the program, but roll in man-on-the-street footage for some of the actual questions. The citizens' questions, taped perhaps in a public park or other identifiable location, provide a nice visual break, and the moderator can then allow the forum participants to address the questions one by one or as a group.

# Production Guidelines for All Formats

Although each format has particular guidelines to follow, here are a few things to keep in mind no matter which format you choose.

## Lower Third Graphics

Our focus groups told us that lower thirds or chyrons (the typed information that appears at the bottom of the screen, such as name and office for which the candidate is running) are crucial. This chyron information can bring a viewer up to speed if they tune in late, or help the audience distinguish between the different candidates. Viewers like to keep this written information in mind as they listen to the candidate speak, so try to keep this information visible while the candidate is on-screen.



Include the following in your lower third:

- Name of candidate

- Office

- Party affiliation, if applicable

- Website, email or phone number (space permitting)

It's also wise to have the name of your program or a station logo somewhere on the screen (e.g., lower right). Be sure to confirm the lower third information in writing with candidates prior to taping or at the taping. See *Appendix F: Sample Booking Sheet* for an example.



## Introductory graphic

In addition to keeping the lower-third visible while the candidate is talking, viewers find it helpful to have a graphic summarizing the candidate's experience and issue stances while the candidate is being introduced. To make useful introductory graphics, you'll want to gather a bit more information than
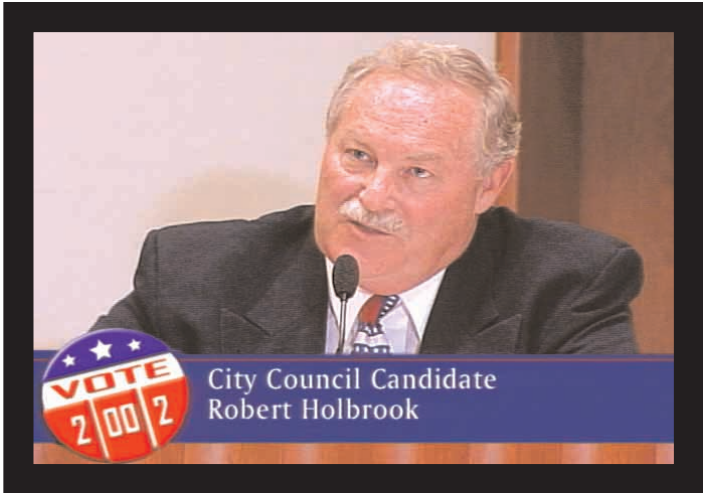
just name, office, party affiliation and contact information. Fill out the graphics with a picture of the candidate, a description of his or her occupation, and a two- to three-word position on a few critical issues. For instance, one candidate may be "for gun control" while another "favors personal responsibility." The bullets you use in the graphics should summarize the voice over introducing the candidate

## Release and Confirmation Forms

Use the booking sheet to confirm the lower third information and at the same time get the candidate's signature on your release form. It is essential that all candidates complete a release form prior to taping and airing their segments. See *Appendix G: Sample Release* for a sample release form. Review the legal section of this guide and check with your legal counsel to tailor the release to your channel and its particular needs

# Working with the Candidates

A common stumbling block for producers as they tackle political programming is a lack of familiarity with the political process. Working with a partner can help; they may have the expertise to contact and coordinate with campaigns. If you don't have a partner, here are some tips for working with political campaigns.

## Contacting the Candidates

### Find out who the candidates are.
For most races, your city or county clerk, registrar of voters, or official who handles your jurisdiction's elections can provide a list of officially recognized candidates. Having an official list of recognized candidates is essential.

### Create a contact list.
Identify a specific contact person or persons at each campaign. Depending on the size of a campaign, this may be a press secretary, a communications director, or even the candidate him- or herself. You will work closely with this person.

### Your best contact is one that comes through someone you know.
It never hurts to ask around to see if anyone you know, knows someone within a specific campaign or within a political party.

### Send your invitations by certified mail.
This way, if asked, you can easily verify that you've treated all candidates equally and, if relevant, that you are in compliance with local election rules. If you can't afford certified mail, keep some record such as a time-stamped photocopy of when and to whom the invitations were sent.

### Keep your invitation short and to the point.
Make sure your cover letter hits the highlights of what, when, where and who to contact. You can provide facts, procedures, rules and other details in attachments. See *Appendix H: Sample Candidate Invitation* as an example.

### Follow-up with phone calls, emails and faxes.
The key to success is persistence and organization. Following up on your initial contact is crucial since campaigns and candidates are responding to numerous requests. The best way to stand out is to be persistent but not badgering. Well-written follow-up letters or e-mails are an effective means of staying on their radar screen. For a sample follow-up letter, see *Appendix I: Sample Follow-Up Letter*. The occasional phone call also helps move things along, but remember to be respectful and not to cause the campaign any frustration. Yes, you



**Dos and Don'ts:**

When calling to compile your contact list:

✗ Do not ask to be connected to someone immediately.

✔ Do ask who the contact person is and confirm title and spelling of his/her name.

✔ Do get an appropriate mailing address, email address, and fax number.

✔ Do wait to call the direct contact until after you have sent out an introductory letter or at least have something ready to send. This will provide a frame of reference for your call.



**Video Voter Tip:**

Try to have your follow-up letters coincide with the addition of new information, such as the confirmation of another (perhaps front-running) candidate's participation, the promise of another station to air the tapes, or a scheduling change. New information gives you a nice excuse to contact the campaign without being a pest.

are offering the candidate a valuable opportunity, but they have to balance a hectic schedule. Your attempts to be helpful and accommodating will be appreciated by the campaign staff and the candidate.

### Make your pitch attractive

Explain the benefits to the candidate of appearing on your Video Voter program. If you have impressive audience numbers, use them. If you have produced successful candidate programs in the past, cite them. If this is your first candidate program, explain the advantages of participating—reaching many swing voters with the candidate's issue positions.

## Scheduling the Candidates

Coordinating the schedules of multiple campaigns can be a challenge, but there are a few simple things you can do to ease the process:

- Plan ahead. As the election date draws near, candidates are pulled in many directions, making their schedules hard to coordinate. The earlier you plan your programming, the higher your success rate will be.

- Establish convenient times and offer several choices of taping dates, if possible.

- Choose the format that best coordinates with candidates' schedules and your community's needs. For instance, if it's too difficult to coordinate all the candidates in one place at one time, try individual interviews or candidate statements instead of a debate. If one or more of your candidates is not in the area, you might use a candidate statement format and allow them to record and submit their own tapes based on your guidelines. (e.g., head-and-shoulders shot, plain blue background with state flag, etc.).

- Create a booking sheet that has all pertinent information, including contact information, confirmed spelling, and confirmed schedule. Fax out the booking sheet to the campaign for review and approval and ask that it to be returned with any corrections. See *Appendix F: Sample Booking Sheet*.

What do you do if a candidate won't commit? There are several strategies:

1. Update them when other (particularly favored or well-known) candidates agree to participate.

2. Consider offering alternate taping days or times. Make every attempt to offer similar flexibility to all candidates to avoid any hint of favoritism.

3. Air the programming without them. Their non-participation should not preclude your coverage of other candidates. Be certain to let your audience know that all candidates were given equal opportunity and that some chose not to participate.

## Make Yourself Attractive to the Candidates

The easier you make it for candidates to participate, the better. Just being cordial and efficient in your offer of a free media opportunity will make you attractive to a campaign, but there are some things you can do to make your programming even more appealing. Highlight the best aspects of your audience. Do you have strong numbers? Are your viewers likely to vote? Try to pique the candidates' interest. Also, look for ways to expand your audience. See if your cable company will carry the program or the promotions on its local origination channels—the more eyes candidates can get in front of, the happier they are.

If an office or ballot measure crosses the jurisdiction of your cable company, see if cable stations in neighboring areas will air your programming as well. Increasing your audience can really make it more attractive for the candidate to take the time to tape for you. You also provide a valuable voter service to others, and your channel can get some much-deserved credit. Everybody wins! If you're not familiar with other systems in your area, try contacting the National Association of Telecommunication Officers and Advisors (NATOA) or the Alliance for Community Media (ACM). For an idea of how to approach other stations, see *Appendix J: Sample Letter to Other Stations*.

## Helping the Candidates do Their Best

Once you have the candidates committed to participating, you must still prepare them so that your programming is as engaging as possible. It's not your job to try to trick candidates or catch them in a flub. Remember your goal is to provide a neutral platform for candidates to express themselves as clearly as possible so voters can make informed choices.

But voters can't be informed by your programming if they don't watch it or if they are distracted by a candidate's herringbone jacket or unconscious habit of saying "um" every other word. It is well within the scope of your non-partisan effort to provide all candidates with some guidance to help them present their candidacies as clearly as possible. Here are some tips for helping candidates to do their best. Make sure you give them to all the candidates equally.

1. Give candidates a tip sheet on what to wear. Many local candidates haven't had media training and don't know what to wear. Don't make following your tip sheet's guidelines a requirement, just explain what does and does not work on television. See *Appendix K: Clothing and Make-up for Television*.

2. Make timing apparent to them. Candidates have to work within your guidelines, but while they're taping give them cues at the one minute, 30 seconds and ten second mark (or whenever makes sense given your format) so they have a chance to wrap it up and aren't cut off at an awkward moment.

3. Let them practice and do more than one take on interviews and candidate statements. If you allow more than one take, let the candidate choose which take to use.  Have them sign something indicating their choice before they leave the taping, and offer all candidates comparable opportunity to get their statements right.

4. Between takes, you can share with candidates what was effective about their prior take. Don't go so far as to comment on the policies they put forth; stay focused on their presentation. Did they have good eye contact with the camera or host? Did they use acronyms with which voters might be unfamiliar? You can help them make good programming without influencing the substance of what they're saying.

5. Create a positive environment for your candidates. Let them know you appreciate their participation and make them feel welcome. Be friendly.

# Interactive Television

Interactive television (ITV) is the next generation model for making video programs available on-demand. With the ability to pause, rewind and fast-forward through programming, ITV presents a wonderful opportunity to increase the retrieval of voter information by the public.  The two most common types of ITV applications today are offered by cable television's Video on Demand (VOD) and Digital Video Recorders (DVRs).[4] While both technologies provide the viewers with similar functionality, they are technologically different, and those differences are important to your efforts.

VOD technology is run by your cable company, and you need its permission to upload your content into its system. DVR technology is controlled by viewers, so you need to let them know that your program is available and how to record it. Because the technologies behind them vary slightly, there are differences in the types of programs that are best suited to each technology.

## Video on Demand

VOD is available through an increasing number of cable systems nationwide. Movies and other video clips for VOD are typically stored on servers at the cable company's head-end, and they can be ordered and downloaded by the subscriber at any time (typically for a small fee). Subscribers select the videos they want, and the videos appear on their screens instantly.

Getting your election video into the cable company's VOD system may involve a bit of work. First, you need to contact your cable company and arrange for it to carry your election videos—preferably as a free community service. Second, once your cable company agrees, there may be some cost of digitizing your video and uploading it to the company's servers.  The cable company will also need additional information to attach to the digital video file, so that the program appears properly in the menu structure.  Live programs are not suited for a VOD environment, since content must first be stored on the servers.

The VOD process does require a good deal of advance planning; decision-makers at the cable company must give their approval, and the world of VOD is still in its early stages. In case you run into any resistance, here are good reasons for your cable company to participate:

1. Providing this content for free encourages subscribers to try out the VOD system without risk. This paves the way for them to use the cable company's pay services at a later date.

2. The project gives the cable company good visibility with elected officials in the area. Remember that some of the candidates you tape will eventually sit in positions of power!

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[4] "Near-Video on Demand" is also widespread. In Near-Video on Demand, the same program will start on different channels every half hour or so. Though the subscriber can't start the program at the exact instant they wish, the shows repeat frequently enough on various channels that subscribers rarely have to wait long for the next showing. Near-Video on Demand is used in some cable systems and in direct broadcast satellite. We do not address satellite delivery in this guide since its broadcast footprint is typically too large to make local election coverage practical, but if your cable system uses Near-Video on Demand, you should follow the same process outlined for Video on Demand.

3. This is also a dynamic, yet low-cost public service a cable company can provide to the community. It can make a great story for the local paper.

4. Providing localized election coverage allows cable companies to distinguish themselves from satellite TV, their main competitor.

## Programming for VOD

VOD is an ideal medium for airing short clips of each candidate. Viewers will appreciate the ability to scroll through a menu and select only those candidates that particularly interest them. Better still, go one step further and segment the content by issues (e.g., candidate X on issues 1, 2 and 3.)

Candidate statements work particularly well in this medium, but keep in mind that programming for VOD varies slightly from programming for more linear, broadcast programming in several ways:

1. Each candidate statement needs to stand on its own. For instance, if all candidates are asked the same issue question, each candidate needs to remember to restate the question at the beginning of his or her segment. Similarly, if it's a "meet the candidates" introductory statement, each candidate should start by introducing him or herself, and not assume that a moderator will do so.

2. Keep a lower third on screen at all times with the candidate's name, office and party affiliation, if applicable.

3. Consider including an introductory graphic at the beginning of each clip, summarizing the candidate's experience or issue stance.

4. When working with the cable company to add your content into its menu structure, remember to make candidates for the same office appear next to each other. For example, if you list all candidates by last name, then a candidate for city council may end up surrounded by candidates for school board just because of the spelling of their names. That's not ideal. Voters prefer to see candidates for the same office grouped together, and they'd like to see party affiliations when applicable. So try to list candidates by office, then name and party identification, like this:

> COUNCIL, Smith, Joe (D)
>
> COUNCIL, Zengna, Alice (R)
>
> SCHOOL_BOARD, Feliz, Hope
>
> SCHOOL_BOARD, Thompson, Frank

## Digital Video Recorders

DVRs like TiVo® are another form of Interactive Television. Instead of video files stored on a server at a cable company's head end, the DVR stores content on a consumer's set-top box in the home. The user can program the recorder to capture any program for later viewing. A DVR is very much like a videocassette recorder, but with far greater digital functions to increase the viewing experience. While most videocassette recorders are cumbersome to program (most people can't even program the clock to stop flashing 12:00), DVRs are quite user-friendly. The DVR device records programs directly to an internal hard drive, which

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[5] TiVo® offers both services and hardware. Not all DVRs are TiVo®s, and likewise not all DVRs use TiVo® services. However, many people use the word "TiVo®" as a catch-all term for digital video recorders, which isn't technically correct. You may even hear people use TiVo® as a verb ("Tivo'd") for capturing a program for time-shifted viewing, whether through the actual TiVo® service or through a non-TiVo® DVR, such as those provided by some cable companies.

doesn't require any videotape. Some DVRs also come with a service like TiVo®,[5] which provides menu structures and the ability to find programs to record by keywords found in the program names or descriptions. With TiVo®, for instance, users can set up a Season Pass for a show, and it will automatically record that program whenever it airs, without the user having to know the program schedule.

As part of your marketing responsibilities, you will need to convince the viewers at home to program their DVRs to record your program. Consumers can always record your program by time and channel, but as part of your regular promotion, you will need to encourage them to do so. There are also some steps you can take to make your programming even easier to capture in a DVR.

Talk to your cable company about how to get your programs listed so that DVRs can pick up your programming automatically. Be sure to get your individual shows listed with descriptions. When election time rolls around, include relevant keywords, like "election" or "Video Voter" in your program description. Then publicize those keywords in your community. For instance, you may remind people to record all programs with the keyword "Video Voter." Most DVRs can automatically pick up programming, so viewers can watch whenever they wish.

## Programming for DVRs

Because DVRs pick up and record programming during your normal cablecast, it's impractical to produce a series of one-or-two minute programs, each with its own description. Instead you'll want to air an entire program consisting of candidate statements or interviews, or even a live debate. But there are still ways to produce your regular programming to optimize it for DVR viewing.

Remember that DVR viewers have the ability to fast forward and jump through your program. For that reason it may be helpful to keep a visual, on-screen that lets viewers know both when to expect each candidate, and where they are in the program at present. At the simplest level, you can put a small note in the lower right corner that says "Coming Up" with the next candidate's name and party affiliation. For a more comprehensive approach, create an on-screen graphic that lists each candidate's name in the order they will appear, and even the time (e.g., 0:32) they appear. As you progress through the candidates, highlight the candidate you're currently on. That way, DVR viewers will know where they are in the program, and they can rewind or fast forward to the candidate or issue they wish to view. This technique is also useful for VOD programs in the event that you are unable to break the program into smaller video segments.

To read about an example of Video Voter on VOD, see *Appendix L: Case Study: Video on Demand*.

# Creating a Website

Creating a website can help to both promote and distribute your Video Voter programming. Depending on the resources available, you can use it to promote your program schedule, stream video clips, or even create an entire election portal with a variety of election information to serve your community. The first step is to evaluate those resources and develop goals and priorities to match.

If you have an existing website, or you are a government channel with access to your local government's webmaster, the first thing to do is meet with the technical people and ascertain what's possible. Perhaps your site or the local government site is already set up to stream video, or maybe they've been thinking about doing so but have been waiting for the right opportunity. Alternatively, maybe the technical resources available to you are pretty lean and instead you need to focus on getting up a single page with your program schedule. The details of developing a website could occupy a separate guide, but we've laid out a few scenarios below for you to build on as you see fit.

## Choose your Scope

### Basic website
The most basic website should include a schedule of when your election programming will air on your channel so that people can tune in. It is essential to keep this information up-to-date so you don't alienate your audience by providing inaccurate information.

### Video streaming
Since more and more people have high-speed connections to the internet, putting short video clips on your site can be an excellent way of expanding your viewing audience. Viewers can decide which candidates' statements they want to see, and when they want to see them.

### Election portal
In addition to program schedules and video clips, there is a great deal of election information you can assemble in one place for voters. Creating an election information center makes your site valuable to voters, increases word-of-mouth promotion and ultimately increases the visibility of your programming. For ideas on the types of content you may wish to consider providing, see the sidebar at right.

## Determine Where your Website will Reside

### Existing website
If your channel already has a website, then you can just create a new page or section of the site for election information and the name (also called address or URL) of your

**Video Voter Tip:**

Consider including the following content on your site:
- Program schedules
- Video Clips of candidates
- Candidate & ballot measure information
    Lists of candidates and measures
    Campaign contact information
    Candidates' official campaign
      statements
    Candidate photos
    Links to official campaign sites
    Texts and analyses of measures
- Voting information
- Instructions for registering to vote
- Instructions for requesting
      absentee ballot
- Important election dates and deadlines
      for voter registration
- Links to other resources such as:
    Polling place look up
    Campaign finance data
    Job descriptions for offices
    Election returns

website can be something like www.yoursite.com/vote or www.yoursite.com/election.

If your site is a subsection of your local government's website, see if you can get them to assign you a memorable name, like "yourlocalgovernmentsite.gov/election," where "www.yourlocalgovernmentsite.gov" is the URL of your local government's current site. If the name has to be longer than that (such as http://www.cicityname.ca.us/hsd/progs/channel/2.htm) think about registering a more easily remembered name and having it redirect to that page (see below).

## New website

### Registering a name

If you are going to build a stand-alone site, you'll need to choose and register a name for it, such as yourcityvote.gov or yourchannelelection.org. You can find a list of low-cost domain registrars (companies that register names for you) on our website at www.videovoter.org. Costs for a name typically run around $35 a year but can be found for less. Once you register your name, you'll need to tell the registrar where you want the name to point—that involves knowing the IP address, which you can get from the technical person running your website or from the hosting company where you plan to put your site.

### Hosting your site

If you don't already have a website or your local government can't give you space on its servers, then you will need to find a place to host your site. This isn't complicated or even very expensive. Hosting can cost as little as $5 a month, but it does involve some technical work. You'll need to register a domain name (also known as a web address or URL) and you'll need to find a company with an internet server to make your files available online. Our website, www.videovoter.org features an up-to-date list of affordable webhosts.

## Building your Site

Building your site can be simple or complicated, depending on the technical resources available to you.

### Low resources

If you don't have a technical person to help with your website, you can still build a basic website even if you don't know any HTML. (HTML stands for Hyper-Text Markup Language and is a computer programming language websites use.) There are lots of programs that can help. At the most basic level you can even use a word processing program like Microsoft Word to build a simple, one-page site with your program schedule on it. Simply design your page in the word processor, and when you're ready to save it, choose "Save As…" and save your file as an HTML document. Name it index.htm and then you can upload it to the host server.

### Medium resources

If you have access to anyone with even a little bit of web-programming knowledge, you can build a fairly nice website. Once you've decided on the content you want, visit our website at www.videovoter.org and download one of our ready-made webpages. Your programmer can fill in these pages with your content and then upload them to your host server.

### High Resources

If you have access to experienced web programmers, then you've probably handed your content over to them and washed your hands of the whole thing by now. But you may want to check on two things: first, make sure the programmer looks at the www.videovoter.org to see if the templates we provide are helpful. Second, have a talk with your programmer about custom graphics. If you have the resources available, having nice graphics for your site can make your site more inviting and user-friendly.  For instance, if you can use stills from your video as graphics to link to the actual candidate video, that can help users know what to expect.

## Putting Video on your Website

Putting video on the Web involves the following steps:

> 1. **Shoot your video footage.** Use an analog or digital video camera or even a digital
>    camera with video capability.

2. **Capture video to the computer.** Make sure you use a fast computer with a large amount of hard drive space available. If your video is in analog format, your computer will need a video capture card. Follow the instructions that came with the capture card to transfer your video to the computer. If your video is in digital format, transfer the video from the camera using the connection that came with the camera (e.g., Firewire or USB).

3. **Edit your video.** Use a consumer-level software video editing tool. Microsoft bundles Windows Movie Maker software free with the XP operating system, and Apple bundles iMovie with its OSX system. Other companies that offer good video editing software are Ulead and Adobe.

4. **Compress/Encode your video.** Video files can be quite large, so you need to "compress" your video for it to be delivered over the web. You will also need to "encode" the video to play in at least one of the streaming software programs used by people browsing the web. The most popular Web video streaming formats are Windows Media, RealVideo, and Quicktime. Some of the video editing software we mentioned includes the ability to compress and encode for different formats. Windows Movie Maker software automatically compresses and encodes the video in Windows Media format. iMovie uses the Quicktime format for Web delivery. Real offers media creation software tools in a basic free version and a feature-rich commercial product.

5. **Set up an account with a streaming media host.** If your video clips are more than 3 minutes long, or if you have several clips, you'll probably want to get an account with a streaming media host. Generally, streaming media providers charge according to the size of the media files and the amount of traffic accessing those files. For more information on finding a streaming media host, visit our website at www.videovoter.org.

6. **Upload your video and link to it.** Your streaming media host will provide you with instructions for uploading and linking to your video.

## Promoting your Website

When you develop a website plan, be sure to develop a promotion plan for your site as well. Building the site isn't enough—you have to let people know it's there.  Here are some tips to get you started:

1. Make sure your URL appears on EVERYTHING you print.

2. Put your URL at the beginning and ending of every program. That way people will know where to find more information.

3. Try to get a prominent link from the city's home page. People tend to go there first for all city-related information, including election information.

4. Encourage candidates to provide your URL in their materials. Encourage them to link directly to the page of the site that features them.

5. Seek out partnerships with local media outlets, particularly local papers. You can encourage them to link to you, republish your content on their site (with attribution) or even carry your videos. If you do this, try to get them to agree to share website traffic reports with you, so at the end of the election they can tell you how many people used your content on their site. This is an ideal relationship, because they get original content and you get your information out to the broadest public possible.

6. Make your URL simple. Something like channel22-vote.gov (or.com, or .org) is much easier for people to remember than www.cityname.gov/debates_vg/voter_guides/general_2003/index.htm. And try not to use the year of the election in the URL. This way, you can use the URL from one election season to the next, and people will come to learn that you always provide this information in the same place.

7. Optimize your site for search engines. Search engines scour the web and look at what's on your site. When these engines scour your site, it's helpful to have clear titles for your pages and hidden code on your pages called "meta tags" which tell search engines what kind of content they can expect to find there. To make sure search engines find and index your site effectively, make sure the title tags in your pages have relevant titles that reflect the content of your site, such as "Iowa City Election: City Channel 4." Create meta tags for keywords and descriptions, and add them to your HTML pages, especially the homepage. Meta tags help search engines to find and index your site more efficiently. Some examples of keyword and description meta tags:

   <META NAME="keywords" content="vote, voter, elections, media, video, candidates, city council, Iowa City">

   <META NAME="description" content="Video Voter Iowa City, produced by City Channel 4, is an election guide for Iowa City Council elections">

8. Submit your site to search engines and web directories. Instead of just waiting for a search engine or directory to find you, submit your site directly to them. The major search engines and directories are Google and Yahoo (online at google.com and yahoo.com, respectively). Keep in mind that it can take several weeks or even months for your site to be effectively listed, so submit well in advance of your election. These engines also offer expedited service for a fee. In addition, you can subscribe to a service that will submit your site for you. See www.videovoter.org for more information.

Creating a website can be a great way to reach your community and provide a valuable public service. Find out how the staff of CityTV created an election information portal for the city of Santa Monica in *Appendix M: Case Study: Building a Web Presence.*

# Promotion

Producing election programming is a great achievement; however, promoting that programming should be treated with equal importance. Unfortunately the need to get things "in the can" on time and on budget often leaves marketing your programs to the last minute with very little budget. This is a mistake that undermines the hard work you have done on your productions. *Don't let this happen with your election coverage!*

Election coverage is a key way in which a PEG channel can serve its community and thus provides an excellent opportunity to market your channel. The following are some simple and low-cost ideas how to promote election coverage based on the suggestions in SCAN NATOA's (States of California and Nevada Chapter, National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors) guide to starting a government channel, entitled "Creating A Government Access Channel."[6]

## Marketing Slogans

A catchy slogan for your election coverage will dramatically increase visibility and name recognition. A voter information campaign can last a few weeks, but slogans can be repeated each year, allowing you to build on the recognition from the year before. For several years, Denver, Colorado used "Choose to Participate." Denver now uses the slogan "Your city. Your source."

## On-air Promotions

What better way to promote your election programming than using your own airtime? On-air promos that advertise either a specific program or your overall election coverage require relatively little staff time and don't incur any hard advertising costs.

Possible ideas for on-channel promotions include running graphic interstitials, featuring the channel's voter information programming schedule. Another idea is to run a "bug," or graphic logo at the bottom right corner of the screen featuring your election programming marketing slogan. Broadcast stations use these to promote a specific show or special upcoming event such as the Olympics or a season finale.

## Radio Promotion

Radio is a great way to be heard throughout your city. Although access to commercial radio may not be an option, local public radio stations or high school and college radio stations may offer opportunities to promote your channel's election coverage in your community. Partnering with a station to produce programming is also a great way to ensure that they are motivated to promote your programs.

## Newspaper Promotion

You don't have to have a big advertising budget to get your programming in the paper. See if your local paper will write a story or list your coverage. Be sure to seek coverage in both their print and online versions. As

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[6] Xavier, E., Gee, R. & Harvey, J. "Creating a Government Access Channel," a SCAN NATOA and Frame Rate publication, 1999.

with radio stations, newspapers can make great partners, and their buy-in increases the coverage they are willing to provide.

City newsletters are also a great way to promote the channel's election coverage. Many cities publish newsletters for residents with information such as the latest city hall services or listings of city-sponsored recreation classes. These newsletters reach all citizens and there is usually no cost to place an article in the newsletter.

## Cable Company Promos

It's worth remembering that your election programming reflects well on both your station and the cable company that carries you. Why not reach out to the cable company and see if it is willing to promote or perhaps even re-broadcast your programming over the local origination channels? Cable companies may be able to deduct such promotions as either a business expense or charitable donation. Another possibility: Ask the cable company to include an insert or announcement with the next subscriber bill. What better way to hit your target market of cable viewers?

## Signs, Banners and Flyers

Signs, banners and flyers provide an easy and low-cost method to promote election programming for your channel. The most effective ones are simple, clear, short and use large letters.

The interior or the exterior of city buses and the benches at bus stops are highly trafficked areas in your community. These are great locations to advertise your channel's election coverage.

## Local Schools

Local schools are a great resource that should not be overlooked. In most schools, weekly mailers are sent out to parents, either with the students or via mail. Use this opportunity to place flyers promoting your channel's election coverage inside the mailers. Flyers promoting the programs can be distributed in homeroom or social studies classes. Work with local teachers to develop assignments centered on local elections. Find ways to encourage kids to involve their parents.

## Staff Networking

Networking by your staff is an affordable way to market the channel's election programming. Staff can wear shirts with the channel's logo or slogan to promote visibility, distribute business cards with the channel's election site, make presentations to local organizations, and meet with local non-profit organizations to find out what services they offer. Don't forget to give your staff flyers regarding the election programming schedule.

## Get Out the Vote PSAs

The Ad Council of America provides public service announcements (PSAs) that all media outlets in the United States can run free of charge. While these don't promote your specific programming, they do have great get-out-the-vote materials that are a natural complement to your Video Voter efforts. Consult the Ad Council website www.adcouncil.org for more information.

## Contact Other Stations to Expand Your Audience

Some elections are limited to one small, concentrated jurisdiction, which makes PEG access the perfect distribution channel since its cablecasting reach frequently coincides with the jurisdictional boundaries (e.g.,

franchises existing entirely within one city). However, other elections will cross the boundaries of a single PEG access station. In those cases, it's a good idea to create an alliance with other channels whose viewers are also voting on those same candidates or issues. If you can convince others to air your tapes, you increase the audience, making it more attractive for caniddates to take the time to tape for you. You also provide a valuable voter service to others, and your station can get some much-deserved credit. Everybody wins! If you're not familiar with other systems in your area, try contacting the National Association of Telecommunication Officers and Advisors (NATOA) or the Alliance for Community Media (ACM). For an idea of how to approach other stations, see *Appendix J: Sample Letter to Other Stations.*

# Quick Start Checklist

Feeling overwhelmed? Don't be. This quick start guide summarizes the steps for you to produce a much-needed public service.

## Plan

❑ Talk to your producers, board or bosses about what you want to do

❑ Reach out to potential partners

❑ Set your scope (offices, candidates, measures)

❑ Choose your format(s)

❑ Set your ground rules & criteria

## Reach Out

❑ Identify the candidates/ballot measure committee members

❑ Get the contact info

❑ Send invitations with facts & procedures sheets

❑ Follow up with faxes, calls, emails to get commitments

❑ Remind participants the week and day before taping so everyone shows up

## Promote

❑ Build a Website

❑ Get your programming on Interactive Television

❑ Promote your program on-air

❑ Promote your program off-air

## Produce

❑ Get your sets/locations in order

❑ Tape

❑ Edit

❑ Air

## Congratulations! You're making democracy work!

# Conclusion

## The Perfectly Informed Voter

Imagine the ideal voter information system. You sit in the comfort of your home, pick up your TV remote and choose "Elections" from the on-screen menu. Further clicks allow you to pick the races you want to see, watch short video statements from the candidates and ballot measure committees describing their positions on the issues, and view additional candidate interviews, debates, endorsements, websites and other sources of information. You could watch these short programs on demand, whenever it fit your busy schedule. You could watch only the candidates you wanted, rewind their clips and study them again, or fast-forward through the candidates that didn't interest you. You could also view this information over the Internet or on your cell phone—from your office, in your car, or at the beach. This system would give you all the information you ever wanted about elections, at your fingertips, in a video-on-demand format, ready for viewing at any time.

Too good to be true? No. All the components that make up this system of Video Voter information on-demand already exist. CGS has created this user's guide to encourage and enable you to put together the components of a Video Voter information system in your own community. At the same time, you will help to build the preeminent new voter information system of the 21st Century.

# Appendices

A. Legal Issues

B. Fact Sheet for Candidate Statements

C. Fact Sheet for Candidate Interviews

D. Fact Sheet for Debates & Forums

E. Case Study: Santa Monica Live Candidate Forum

F. Sample Booking Sheet

G. Sample Releases

H. Sample Candidate Invitation

I.  Sample Follow-Up Letter

J.  Sample Letter to Other Stations

K. Clothing and Make-up for Television

L. Case Study: Video on Demand

M. Case Study: Building a Web Presence

N. Case Study: Iowa Democratic Presidential Caucus 2004

O. Other CGS Publications

# Appendix A: Legal Issues

Don't Panic!  Relax, and use common sense in approaching any legal questions that might arise.  The bottom line is that you can pretty much create any form of candidate or ballot measure programming that you want, so long as you treat candidates equally and ballot measure committees fairly.

This Appendix generally discusses some of the legal issues that might arise in the course of producing your election programming.  The chapter is not a legal opinion.  It provides general policy advice and guidelines on some legal issues you might encounter.  It is always advisable to check with your station's legal counsel before producing and airing any election program, and whenever specific factual situations arise that require considered legal judgments.  You may find it helpful to share this Appendix with your legal counsel to reassure them if they have concerns about your programming.


## Introductory Concepts

### Communications Act of 1934
The Communications Act of 1934, amended many times since its inception, created the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and today regulates many aspects of interstate communication, including over-the-air broadcasting, direct broadcast satellites and cable television (see 47 U.S.C. §1).  The Communications Act creates a dual system of cable TV regulation, granting some powers of content and structural regulation to the FCC, and extending authority to issue cable TV franchises and related regulations to local franchising authorities (generally cities and counties, but sometimes the states).  It also empowers local governments to create public, educational and governmental access channels.

### Public, Educational and Governmental Access Channels
The Communications Act does not itself create public, educational and governmental (PEG) access cable TV channels.  It simply gives local franchising authorities the power to require cable TV systems to provide access channels, along with the equipment and facilities to operate them (see 47 U.S.C. § 531).  Many cities across the nation have used this authority to require local cable TV systems to create PEG access channels and studios.

*Public access channels* are set aside for use by members of public, typically on a first-come, first-served, nondiscriminatory basis.  A local cable TV system or nonprofit access corporation created by the local government typically operates public access channels.  Citizens or organizations can request time on these channels and present programming of their own choosing.  Cable TV operators have no direct power of censorship over the content of these channels.  Local governments can create public access channels and, to a certain extent, set the rules for their operation, but they typically give themselves no direct power to censor specific programs.  As a result, individual citizens and organizations have the freedom to use public access channels to produce any programming they choose, including Video Voter election coverage.

*Educational access channels* are reserved for use by educational institutions, such as colleges, universities and school districts.  Educational institutions typically use them for instructional programming, but some educational institutions use them for broader community oriented, cultural and political programming, including Video Voter coverage.

*Governmental access channels* are programmed by cities and counties themselves.  Local governments use these channels to provide coverage of city council meetings and departments, local issues and, often, Video Voter election information.

Access channels are islands of free speech in a commercial media world.  Because cable operators cannot control the content of these access channels, ultimate content decisions are left to the individual public, educational or governmental speakers, respectively, who control these access channels.

*Bottom line:* **Public, Educational and Governmental access channels can all provide Video Voter coverage of candidates, ballot measures and elections.**

## The First Amendment

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution provides, in pertinent part, that "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press." The First Amendment prevents almost any form of content-based censorship by the government over otherwise protected speech on public and educational access channels.

You should note three points at the outset. First, the First Amendment does not literally protect every form of speech. There are, of course, reasonably well-established exceptions for obscenity, libel, speech posing a clear and present danger, and so forth.

Second, the First Amendment does not protect against censorship or editing by *individuals*. To raise a First Amendment objection, the potential censorship has to be coming from some *government source*.

Third, governments are involved in PEG access channels, but the extent and nature of their involvement differs between the individual channels. As a result, the First Amendment may apply somewhat differently to public, educational and governmental access channels.

*Government access channels.* Governments create, operate and exercise editorial control over their own governmental access channels. Governments have wide editorial discretion to choose and edit the programming that they carry on those channels. The First Amendment does not prevent governments from creating editorial policies for their own governmental access channels. To conclude otherwise would require these channels to become electronic "bulletin boards," forced to carry all programming upon any citizen's request. Such a policy would destroy the editorial coherence of governmental access channels.

Local governments can make a wide range of legitimate political programming decisions on their access channels. They can decide, for example, only to use their channels to cover live city council meetings, or to provide voter information on all races, or just to provide voter information on some races (e.g., city mayor) but not others (e.g., rent control commission).

On the other hand, governments cannot engage in arbitrary forms of content discrimination. For example, a government access channel could not adopt a policy of covering only Republicans but not Democrats in its general election programming, or only covering candidates who agreed with the current mayor's policies. In other words, governments can make legitimate editorial decisions to cover general viewpoint neutral categories of programming, including political Video Voter coverage, but they cannot discriminate against certain candidates because of their positions on specific issues, or use their channels to help or hinder specific candidates in their campaigns for elected office.

*Educational access channels.* Governments have the power to require cable operators to provide educational access channels that are operated by educational institutions. Governments therefore have a hand in the creation of educational access channels and could not require those channels to operate according to discriminatory election policies (e.g., only covering Republicans but not Democrats). On the other hand, governments generally grant educational institutions virtually complete editorial control over their channels. Unless the original government mandate prohibits election related programming, educational access channels have the discretion to choose to cover candidates and ballot measure positions as part of their regular programming.

*Public access channels.* Governments also have the power to require cable operators to provide public access channels. These channels are distinctive, however, in that they are not generally subject to editorial control by any government-appointed entity. Instead they are open for all citizens to use on a first-come, first-served basis. Editorial control ultimately rests in the hands of the individual public access producer. Of course, an access corporation or other entity overseeing the operation of a public access channel may have broad supervisory authority over the channel—for example, creating time slots for certain forms of programming—but generally public access channels specifically hand programming control to individual access producers. Whether a public access channel covers election programming, therefore, is generally a question for individual access producers, not local governments or even access corporations.[7]

*Bottom Line:* The First Amendment does not limit the ability of Public, Educational and Government access channels to provide Video Voter programming.  In fact, this kind of programming is essential to the smooth operation of a democracy.

## Equal Time, Fairness, Personal Attack, Political Editorializing and Reasonable Access Doctrines Are Not Applicable to PEG Access Channels

For years Congress and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) have applied various content balancing doctrines to over-the-air broadcast stations and cable systems.  These include the:

- *Equal time doctrine*, which provides that if a station allows a legally qualified candidate for public office to use its broadcast frequencies, either on a free or paid basis, it must provide all other candidates in that same race with equal opportunities.  (47 U.S.C. §315.)

- *Equal opportunity doctrine*, which requires that if a broadcaster or cablecaster allows a candidate to use its facilities, it shall provide equal opportunities to all other candidates for that office to use such facilities.  (47 C.F.R. §73.1941 [broadcast]; 47 C.F.R. §76.205 [cable].)

- *Fairness doctrine*, which until 1987 required a station to cover all significant views on issues of controversy and public importance, has since been repealed by the FCC.

- *Personal attack doctrine*, which provides that if a station broadcasts an attack on a named person during the discussion of a controversial issue of public importance, it must provide that person with an opportunity to respond under certain circumstances.  (47 C.F.R. §76.209.)

- *Political editorializing rule*, which provides that if a station editorializes against a candidate for political office, it must provide that candidate with a reasonable opportunity to respond.  (47 C.F.R. §76.209.)

- *Reasonable access doctrine*, which requires broadcast stations to provide legally qualified candidates for federal (but not state) office with reasonable opportunities to acquire free or paid time to present their views.  (47 U.S.C. §312[a][7].)

The FCC has concluded, however, that these political content doctrines do not apply to PEG access programming.  Only programming originated by or controlled by the cable TV operator is subject to these doctrines.  Since the cable operator cannot control PEG access channels or their programming, they are not subject to the FCC's political doctrines.  (*See, e.g., In re Zawicki,* 60 R.R.2d 1657 [1987].)

This does not mean that government or educational access channels can be arbitrary in their election coverage.  The First Amendment still requires government and educational access channels to be reasonable in their content decisions (see public forum discussion below).  Candidates should not be selected for program coverage in order to advance a particular candidacy.

Public access channels are somewhat different, because they generally operate without overall editorial policies.  They have an announced obligation to be open to all those who want to produce and distribute programming over them.  As such, public access channels are already open to all comers.  Discriminatory programming policies would be inconsistent with federal concepts of public access.

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[7] This area of the law is not well developed. Generally, the statutory intent of most cities in creating public access channels is to allow public access producers to produce the kinds of programming they wish.

*Bottom line:* Federal content rules for broadcast stations, including the equal time, fairness, personal attack, editorializing and reasonable access doctrines, do not apply to PEG access programming. The concepts of equality and fairness in these doctrines, however, are useful guidelines in fashioning programming concepts for PEG access channels.

## Covering Some Candidates but Not Others -- Public Forum Doctrines

Governments have wide discretion over the use of their own access channels and do not have to open them up to all comers. Local governments operate their own governmental access channels, transfer editorial control over educational access channels to educational institutions, and typically require public access channels to operate without overarching editorial policies.

Some people argue that the First Amendment prevents local governments from restricting access to government and educational access channels altogether, just as a local government must allow anyone to use a public park or street for generalized and non-disruptive speech purposes (leafleting, picketing, etc.). (Access to public access channels is always open, in any event.) By this reasoning, once governments decide to use their own channels to cover election programming, they cannot cover some candidates and not others. If a government uses its own channel to cover a political debate, it must allow all candidates in the race to participate in that debate, not just the frontrunners. However, this argument is invalid. Understanding why requires a brief explanation of the "public forum doctrine."

The U.S. Supreme Court has defined three kinds of speech forum:

- The traditional public forum (e.g., parks, streets, and other public places) historically used for free speech purposes, such as leafleting, soapbox oratory, etc.;

- The designated public forum created by the government and earmarked for public speech (e.g., a building designated as a public theater or town hall meeting place);

- The nonpublic forum (e.g., a government newspaper or public school classroom used for speech purposes but not open for speech by the public at large). The Court has also described a non-forum as a place not used for general speech purposes at all (e.g., a government owned shipping yard).

Governments cannot restrict access to a traditional or designated public forum without a "compelling justification." However, governments can restrict access to a nonpublic forum for any "reasonable" justification (e.g., to preserve editorial control over a government newspaper, or to give a classroom teacher control over curriculum, decorum, and class discussions). (See generally, *Arkansas Educ. Television Comm'n v. Forbes*, 118 S.Ct. 1633, 1998.)

*Government access channels.* What kind of speech forum is a government access channel? Although no court has ruled on this precise question, it seems fairly obvious that a government access channel is a *nonpublic forum*. Government access channels have not "historically" been used for public communication, and they have not been "designated" by governments as open to speech by all comers. Instead, they operate somewhat like law reviews or other publications by public universities, which require editors to select and edit the articles they publish. Thus, a government access channel might legitimately decide to invite some but not all candidates in a particular race to participate in a debate (as determined by content-neutral criteria such as admitting only those candidates receiving over 10 percent support in the polls). These channels could not, however, cover some candidates but not others based on a decision that disfavored certain candidates because of their views.

*Educational access channels.* The courts would probably also view an educational access channel as being a nonpublic forum. Like government access channels, educational channels are not "traditionally" used for public speech, nor are they designated by the government as open to all comers. Instead, educational institutions receive editorial control over their channels' programming from local governments, and they can

therefore establish broad conditions for their operation -- e.g., that they can, or must not, cover local candidates for office.

For both governmental and educational access channels an important consideration should be the public's perception of the exclusion of candidates. While it may be legal to cover some candidates and not others, it may not be practical or politically wise. To the extent that a local government chooses to exclude candidates from coverage, such a decision should be based on content-neutral criteria (as discussed in the next section) to reduce vulnerability to criticism or challenge.

Another consideration is whether the government itself produces the event or someone else does. If another party produces the debate or candidate forum, coverage of the event is generally considered news and falls under the broad news exemption. This exemption will provide your channel some protection against claims that the debate isn't fair. However, it is best to still exercise good judgment; be certain that the event is newsworthy and has acceptable rules, especially those concerning which candidates are invited and the equality of coverage they receive. Consult the guideline outlined in this chapter and use common sense when covering someone else's debate.

*Public access channels.* Public access channels may be treated somewhat differently, since they are typically designated as first-come, first-served channels open to all who wish to use them. For this reason, courts may view a public access channel as a *designated public forum*, although the U.S. Supreme Court has not yet taken a position on this issue (see *Denver Area Telecommunications Consortium v. FCC*, 518 U.S. 727, 742 [1996] (plurality opinion) ("We therefore think it premature to answer … whether public access channels are a public forum".)

If a public access channel is a designated public forum, then it must be open to all candidates and ballot measure committees. However, individual program producers have virtually complete editorial control over their own programs. An individual program producer might produce his or her own program covering all candidates, some candidates, or just one candidate in one or more local races. If that results in uneven coverage, then the excluded candidates are always free to produce their own programs on access channels.

**Bottom line: Government and educational access channels can choose the categories of candidates they wish to cover (e.g., just candidates for mayor, or candidates in one controversial city council race). Public access channels are generally open to all speakers, and they must accept programming from any local producer, whether or not that producer's candidate acceptance criteria are neutral.**

## Content-Neutral Rules That Comply with the First Amendment

If a government or educational access channel is a nonpublic forum, it can establish content-neutral rules for its political coverage, so long as these rules are not designed or intended to discriminate against specific candidates or ballot measure committees because of their views. Government and educational access channels can establish content-neutral guidelines, such as the following:

- **Format restrictions**—for example, showing only the head and shoulders of the candidates making a campaign statement, or using plain blue backgrounds without logos or campaign slogans when videotaping candidates, or putting generic text descriptions ("businessman," "educator") under each candidate's video, or allowing or disallowing a campaign banner to appear with each candidate, or allowing or disallowing all candidates to wear a campaign button on their lapels.[8]

- **Time, place and manner restrictions**—for example, giving candidates only 2 minutes to make a statement, or limiting candidate opening statements in a debate to 1 minute, or devoting only a half-hour to a candidate forum or debate, or requiring candidates to comply with a specific taping date so long as deadlines apply equally to all candidates.

- **Content-neutral format restrictions**—for example, preventing candidates from attacking or mentioning the names of opposing candidates, or requiring candidates to limit their statements to a defined list of issues (e.g., traffic, education, crime), or requiring candidates to limit their statements only to their own qualifications and not those of their opponents.[9]

Public access channels, because they most likely qualify as a designated public forum, may receive somewhat different treatment. The government must leave all format restrictions up to the public access program producer. If a public access producer wants to interview just one candidate and not another, then that is the producer's option. If other candidates feel excluded, they can obtain their own public access producers or create their own public access programs. Because public access channels are open to all users equally, there is no need for local governments to establish content rules.[9]

*Bottom line:* **Governmental and educational access channels can cover some candidates and not others, so long as they do so according to content-neutral criteria which are established and clearly articulated before the election (e.g., we are only covering candidates for the second Congressional district and for mayor). Public access channels do not have candidate coverage policies; they simply allow all candidates and their supporters to produce their own programming.**

## Defamation, Obscenity and Indecency

Government and education access channels have the normal editorial discretion -- available to any newspaper or broadcast channel -- to prohibit, avoid or edit out potentially defamatory, obscene or indecent statements by candidates or ballot measure committees. Because these channels should be treated as nonpublic forums, they can be editorially controlled as the government and educational access producers wish, and producers can explain to candidates that any potentially defamatory, obscene or indecent materials will not be broadcast.[10]

Public access channels generally operate free from government or cable TV operator censorship or editorial control. A local government or even a public access corporation may not have the power to require deletion of defamatory or indecent programming, although they may be able to time zone indecent programming into late evening hours. Individual public access producers creating political programs, however, may be individually liable if their programs contain defamatory or obscene programming. (See generally, D*enver Area Telecommunications Consortium v. FCC*, 518 U.S. 727, 742 [1996].)

*Bottom line:* **Government and educational access channels can refuse to air candidate statements with potentially defamatory, obscene or indecent content. Public access stations may lack the editorial power to review the content of individual access producers' programs, but those access producers may be held liable for the content of the statements made by candidates on their programs.**

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[9] See Cogswell v. City of Seattle (W. Dist. Wash., Oct. 27, 2003) (government restriction requiring candidates to limit their ballot pamphlet statements to their own qualifications and not mention opposing candidates is "reasonable" in light of the limited subject matter allowed in the forum in question; restriction is also "reasonable" because it furthers the purpose for which Seattle created the forum.)

[10] Some courts have ruled that programming authorities are not liable for defamatory or other unprotected speech if they lack "scienter" or knowledge of existence of the unprotected speech–for example, if they operate certain programming outlets without a policy of pre-screening or overseeing all content produced by others. (See, e.g., Smith v. California, 361 U.S. 147 [1959] [bookseller not liable for possession of "obscene or indecent" publications without knowledge of their contents and no obligation to prescreen their contents); Cubby v. CompuServe, 776 F. Supp. 135 [S.D.N.Y. 1991] [online information service not liable for defamatory statements without knowledge of contents.]) This would suggest that a government or educational access channel might immunize itself against potential litigation by disclaiming, openly and before videotaping, any intent to edit or prescreen candidate statements for potentially defamatory material. However, the Smith and Cubby decisions may rest on the difficulty of prescreening content in those forums (book stores, online chat forums). Governments and educational access channels might not find it difficult to prescreen candidate statements, since there are not many of them and there is time to review them before airing. It may be advisable, therefore, for government and educational access channels to advise candidates that their statements will not be broadcast if they contain speech which, in the judgment of the channel's producers, may be libelous, indecent or obscene. Some channels may also wish to prevent candidates using their facilities from attacking or even referring to their opponents by name.

# IRS Tax Laws

Public and educational access channels may be tax-exempt [Section 501(c)(3)] charitable organizations. As such, they may not engage in prohibited political activities, such as advocating the election or defeat of candidates for public office. Although the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has said that tax-exempt organizations cannot participate or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office, it has also allowed them to create certain "voter education activities" depending upon their "facts and circumstances." The IRS has said the following factors may indicate that holding a candidate forum, for example, does not constitute prohibited political activity:

- All political candidates are invited,

- Questions are prepared by an independent nonpartisan panel,

- Topics discussed cover a broad range of issues of interest to the public,

- Each candidate has an equal opportunity to present his or her views on the topics discussed,

- The moderator does not comment on the questions or otherwise make comments that imply approval or disapproval of any of the candidates.

(See IRS Rev. Rul. 86-95, 1986-2 C.B. 73.)

However, the ruling points out that the presence or absence of any of these considerations is not determinative, and that the matter will be considered under the totality of the circumstances. For instance, candidates can be excluded from debates in primary elections when they are not seeking the nomination of the political party holding the primary.[11] Candidates can also be excluded where inviting all legally qualified candidates is impractical.[12] In the latter example, a modified set of factors in the "facts and circumstances" test is applied:

- Inviting all candidates is impractical,

- The organization adopts reasonable, objective criteria for deciding which candidates to invite,

- Criteria are applied consistently and non-arbitrarily to all candidates,

- Other factors indicate that the debate is conducted in a nonpartisan manner,[13]

A public access channel is like an open public forum. IRS laws concerning tax-exempt organizations would not cover individual program producers, since individual producers are generally not tax-exempt organizations. Public access corporations might be covered by IRS regulations, but the rules of public access channels (first-come, first-served, nondiscriminatory access) would appear to comply with any IRS regulation requiring a content-neutral approach to candidate and ballot measure coverage.

*Bottom line:* **Nonprofit organizations can cover or organize candidate debates, forums and statements, so long as their rules are content neutral and do not discriminate unjustifiably against candidates on the basis of their views. If you have 20 candidates for one office, for example, you can adopt objective criteria allow-**

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[11] Fulani v. League of Women Voters Education Fund, 882 F.2d 621 (2d Cir. 1989).

[12] See TAM 96-35-003 (April 19, 1996)(IRS held that where major party candidates and up to four candidates with at least fifteen [15%] percent share of the vote according to a credible, independent, statewide poll were invited, the forum did not constitute a prohibited political activity).

[13] Judith E. Kindell and John F. Reilly, "Election Year Issues," IRS Exempt Organizations Continuing Professional Education Technical Instruction Program (2002); http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-tege/topici02.pdf.

ing you to include in a debate only those candidates receiving, say, a minimum of 5% support in public opinion polls. (See also, Arkansas Educ. Television Com'n v. Forbes, 118 S.Ct. 1633, 1998.)

## Campaign Contribution Restrictions

Federal law prohibits monetary or in-kind campaign contributions to candidates by corporations, including nonprofit corporations. Some states may have similar laws. Moreover, the federal government and most states limit the size of monetary or in-kind contributions to candidates. It has been argued that providing candidates with free media coverage, either via candidate statements, interviews, forums or debates, is making an illegal corporate contribution, or a contribution that exceeds the applicable contribution limit in value.

These arguments have consistently been rejected. Federal and state campaign finance laws typically create an exception for media coverage of elections. Otherwise, newspapers, broadcast stations, cable TV systems and PEG access channels would be prohibited from providing any coverage of candidatesæclearly an undesirable result. Federal Election Commission regulations allow nonprofit organizations to stage nonpartisan candidate debates, so long as the debates include at least two candidates and are not structured to promote or advance one candidate over another. (See 11 C.F.R. §110.13.) Nonprofits are allowed to use their own funds to defray the costs of such debates or coverage. (See 11 C.F.R. §110.14.4(f).)

State law generally tracks these policies. The California Fair Political Practices Commission, for example, provides that "the term 'contribution' does not include … (10) A payment for a debate or other forum sponsored by a nonpartisan organization in which at least two candidates appearing on the ballot for the same elective office were invited to participate." (See 2 C.C.R. §18215(c)(10).)

Campaign finance laws might not, however, allow a PEG access channel to provide a candidate or ballot measure committee with a free videotape of their statements or their participation in a debate. Such a videotape might be deemed an in-kind contribution. For this reason, it may be prudent to charge candidates and ballot measure committees for videotapes at the producer's cost.

*Bottom line:* **Exceptions in campaign finance laws allowing media coverage of candidate and ballot measure campaigns should apply to PEG access channel coverage of candidates and ballot measure campaigns. Copies of videotapes, however, should be provided to candidates and ballot measure campaigns at cost.**

## Voting Rights Act and Foreign Language Translations

The Voting Rights Act (VRA) (see Title 42, US Code) outlaws discriminatory voting practices, such as literacy tests and poll taxes. It also requires governments, under certain circumstances, to make available multilingual candidate statements if it funds the dissemination of candidate statements in English. According to a spokesperson for the Department of Justice (DOJ) in Washington, DC, if a government access channel funds and disseminates candidate statements in English, then this is election-related information, and it may be covered by the bi-lingual information requirements of the VRA.

Whether the VRA applies to specific communities, however, is a factual question that may depend on a number of issuesæwhether the community has a significant multi-lingual population, or whether the community is under an existing applicable consent decree with the DOJ. In any event, this is a question that, if concerns arise, should be discussed with the local city attorney. Some communities, for example, may not have sufficient multi-lingual populations to bring them under the VRA's requirements.

If the VRA does apply to English-language candidate statements in a particular jurisdiction, there are apparently a variety of relatively easy ways for a government access station to comply. One technique might be for the station to translate its candidate statements into any required languages (e.g., Spanish) and then make them available anyone who requests them in a printed format at the city clerk's office, or as a PDF file on a website.[14]

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[8] Restrictions like these would not be permissible in a public park or other traditional or designated public forum, but these restrictions are legitimate, even necessary, in a nonpublic forum such as a government or educational access channel.

*Bottom line:* Whether the VRA applies to your government access channel is a question best raised with your local city or county attorney. If it does apply, compliance is relatively easy. Public and educational access channels are probably not covered by the VRA, since they do not support the dissemination of English-language candidate statements with government funds.

## Disclaimers

You may want to add a disclaimer at the start of your program. It can be as simple as: "The views expressed in the following programming are those of the candidates [or ballot measure committees] and do not necessarily reflect those of this station  sponsors (if applicable), the City of _____ or its employees." If you are producing election content for interactive TV, you might place the disclaimers at the end of each individual video.

## Copyright and Release Forms

It is essential that all candidates complete a release form prior to taping and airing their segments. A release absolves the station of, or agrees to defend it against, any liability that might arise from a candidate's statement. Check with your legal counsel to tailor the release to your station and its particular needs. You can also use this as an opportunity to confirm each candidate's information for the lower third.

Candidate and ballot measure committee statements are generally viewed as being in the public domain and not under any form of copyright protection. However, release forms should ask candidates and ballot measure committees to relinquish any copyright interests in their statements that they might have, just as a precaution.

## Conclusion

Potential legal questions can always be raised concerning candidate and ballot measure coverage on PEG access stations. However, so long as the Video Voter coverage is fair, neutral and balanced, most legal issues can easily be resolved. Indeed, it is expected that attempts to provide enhanced video coverage of elections should be encouraged and applauded as a significant contribution to voter information and democratic debate across the nation.

## Additional References

The following are additional articles and legal decisions that might be helpful:

James N. Horwood., *The Public's Access to Telecommunications: The Benefits of Public, Educational and Governmental Access and the Challenges in Preserving and Expanding Its Availability*, Presentation to the Illinois NATOA 11th Annual State Conference, Chicago, IL, June 2, 2000 (Horwood is a partner in the Washington, DC law firm of Spiegel & McDiarmid).

Daniel L. Brenner, Monroe E. Price and Michael I. Meyerson. Cable Television and Other Nonbroadcast Video (April 2004).

James N. Horwood and Allison L. Driver. *Political Speech and PEG Access: A Legal Analysis*, Community Media Review, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Winter 2002-2003).

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[14] Conversations with the Department of Justice indicate that there are no formal DOJ rulings on this new issue. Informal advice from DOJ staff attorneys indicate that the issue may turn on a case-by-case assessment of a community's linguistic composition and will differ between jurisdictions based on their own unique factual circumstances. Moreover, if the VRA does apply, there may be a number of reasonable ways to comply, including disseminating candidate information or transcripts via ethnic radio or TV stations, using closed-captioning on video programs, distributing foreign language translations via the Internet, airing public service announcements on Spanish language stations, etc.

Lili Levi, Professionalism, Oversight, and Institution Balancing: The Supreme Court's "Second Best" Plan for Political Debate on Television, 18 Yale Journal on Regulation 315 (2001).

Arkansas Educ. Television Com'n v. Forbes, 118 S.Ct. 1633 (1998).

The Alliance for Community Media, National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Administrators, and National League of Women Voters Education Fund may also have useful information to address legal issues if they arise.

# Appendix B: Fact Sheet for Candidate Statements

Customize this sample fact sheet for candidate statements with your program and station information. Send it to candidates with their invitations (see *Appendix G: Sample Candidate Invitation*).

## Video Voter [year]: Meet Your [Office] Candidates Fact Sheet

### Description
[Program name] is a video voter guide, which will air on [name of station or stations]. The program will contain statements from candidates for [name of office]. Each statement will be placed in the order in which it was taped or received and aired multiple times before the [name and date of election]. [NOTE: if you plan to put them in random order or some other order, such as the order of candidate names on the ballot, change the line above].

### Taping dates
Taping can be arranged at the candidate's convenience in [name of studio] on [dates & specific times]. [OPTIONAL: If you are unable to come to [name of studio] to tape your statement, you may submit a videotaped statement. To do so, see guidelines at the end of this document.]

### Contact information and time
Contact [contact name, number, and e-mail] to select your time slot by [deadline date]. Time slots are filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

### Location
123 Main Street
Your City, USA
Telephone number on tape day

### Content of Segment
The video segment will start with a photo and graphic about each candidate. The graphic will have text that will list the candidate's name, occupation, and number of years he or she has resided in [jurisdiction]. Please provide us with a photo (head shot) of the candidate, or we can take a digital photo of the candidate during the videotaping time.

Each candidate will be given up to [number of] of minutes to answer the following questions:

> **Why are you running for [office]?**
> **What do you feel are the most important issues facing the [jurisdiction of the office]?**
> **What are your solutions?**

The segment will close with a graphic that provides contact information that the candidate has supplied in advance of the videotaping, including e-mail address, web site and/or telephone number.

### Videotaping procedures
1. All candidates for [office] are being invited. Each candidate will be videotaped on the same set (i.e., background) with the same shot composition.

2. To ensure fairness, presentations will be strictly limited to no more than [number of] minutes. You are not required to fill all [number of] minutes, but your presentation will be truncated at the point that it exceeds that length. Time cues will be given to the candidate when there is [amount of time, for instance one minute or 30 seconds] left and when there are 10 seconds left. We will not edit candidate presentations in any way. Feel free to rehearse your presentation prior to the taping date so the length falls comfortably within this time length.

3. Up to [number of] hours of studio time will be reserved for each candidate to videotape his or her statement. This includes about 5 minutes for equipment and set adjustments at the beginning, as well as time at the end to view the completed statements. During that time we can do up to three takes of the statement, at the candidate's discretion. The taping can theoretically be completed in less than 15 minutes if the candidate is happy with the first take. The tape will not be stopped if the candidate falters, stumbles, or misspeaks. Please continue and complete the take. After each take, the candidate and guests may review the tape. The candidate must select which take will be included on the program and will indicate his/her choice in writing prior to leaving the studio. There will be no editing of several takes to make one complete interview. The candidate must choose take one, two or three. Upon request, the candidate can be furnished with a VHS tape of all takes, but these takes may not be used for other campaign purposes, and the candidate may be charged the cost of duplication of the tape.

4. You may have up to [number of] supporters present during the videotaping to provide you feedback on your session. However, these supporters will not be allowed to appear on camera or on the sound track.

5. No visual or audio aids will be allowed on camera (this includes campaign buttons, banners, charts and graphs, or similar aids). Please do not wear anything that advocates any candidate or issue position.

## Airing of the program
The program will air multiple times on [station] beginning [date]. Multiple versions of the program will be prepared so all candidates will appear in rotation on the videotape. Therefore, no candidate will always be first and no candidate will always appear last. The rotation will be randomly selected. The individual interviews will also be made available on the [station] web site.

## On-camera basics
*What to wear:* For camera and lighting purposes, please avoid wearing any light colors like all white or pastels. Please also avoid wearing small patterns such as herringbone, as this causes a "moiré" effect on the cameras.

*Powder:* You may wish to bring your own powder and powder puff to touch up any shiny areas on your face prior to taping. Although the studio has air conditioning, the heat from the lights may cause you to perspire.

*Format:* The format of this program is a statement. Candidates should direct their focus to the camera. The statement is directed to the viewer and is meant to provide insight into candidate positions. Candidates should make their statements conversational, relax and be themselves, because that is what viewers want to see.

## Self-taping guidelines and ground rules
If a candidate is unable to come to the studio to tape his or her statement, a campaign may produce its own candidate statement as long as the submitted tape meets the standards set forth in this document.

1. Time requirements must be adhered to. The statement cannot exceed [number of] minutes.

2. Camera and shot composition will be confined to a single camera, shot straight on, in a medium close up format (head, shoulders, and torso to about the waist).

3. The submitted presentation must be one continuous take; edited versions of the candidate's presentation will be rejected and the candidate will not be included.

4. No materials may appear on screen advocating a particular position. That means no banners, no buttons, and no campaign materials of any kind. The [name of home studio] set will include [describe set, for example, "a plain background and a US flag on a pole to the left of the candidate on screen."] Tapes submitted by campaigns are requested to follow this format as closely as possible.

5. No podiums are to be used or visible in the camera shot in any way. [NOTE: remove this bullet if your set includes a podium.]

6. Please submit your tapes on [insert tape formats accepted, for example beta, VHS, etc.].

7. Please follow standards of civility and courtesy. [OPTIONAL: We ask that you not refer to your opponents by name.] Please keep the focus on your candidacy and your policies. The voters want to know about you.  This is an opportunity to tell them as directly as possible.

8. All tapes must be received no later than [date]. If you plan to submit a tape, please notify [contact] at [number] as soon as possible so we can plan accordingly.

# Appendix C: Fact Sheet for Candidate Interviews

Customize this sample fact sheet for candidate interviews with your program and station information. Send it to candidates with their invitations (see *Appendix G: Sample Candidate Invitation*).

## Video Voter [year]: [Office] Candidate Interviews Fact Sheet

<u>Description</u>
Video Voter: Meet Your [office] Candidates is a series of one-on-one interviews with each candidate for office by a neutral moderator.]

<u>Taping dates</u>
Taping will take place at [name of studios] on [dates & specific times]. Taping times are booked on a first-come, first-served basis. Call early to ensure convenient times.

<u>Contact information and time</u>
Contact [contact name, number, and e-mail] to select your time slot by [deadline date].

<u>Location</u>
123 Main Street
Your City, USA
Telephone number on tape day

<u>Content of Segment</u>
The segment will start with a photo and graphic about each candidate. The graphic will have text that will list the candidate's name, occupation, and number of years he or she has resided in [jurisdiction]. Please provide us with a photo (head shot) of the candidate, or we can take a digital photo of during the videotaping time.

Each candidate will be asked about the following 5 (sample) subject areas to be covered in 5 minutes:

**Why did you decide to run for office?**

**What do you see as the key issues of this election?**

**What are some of the qualifications that you bring to the office?**

**What specific ideas do you have for improving the (insert topic: budget, housing crisis, traffic, homelessness, etc.) situation?**

**What are some of your goals for the (city, county, jurisdiction, etc.)?**

As an alternative, candidates may choose to be interviewed on only 3 of the 5 subject areas for the 5-minute interview. The candidate's choice of subject areas must be indicated in advance on the participation form for this program.

The segment will close with a graphic that provides contact information that the candidate has supplied in advance of the videotaping, including e-mail address, web site and/or telephone number.

<u>Videotaping procedures</u>
*Guests:* Each candidate may bring one additional person with them to the taping.

*Moderator:* The interview will be conducted by [Host Name and brief bio if relevant].

*Time cues:* No time cues will be given to the candidate. The host will moderate and end the interview on time. The interviewer will be given a countdown to exactly five minutes and must adhere to the length specification for the interview. There is no problem with an interview being less than five minutes.

*Taping:* Participants will have the opportunity to tape 2 complete takes of the interview. The tape will not be stopped if the candidate falters, stumbles or misspeaks. Continue and complete the take.

After the first take, the candidate and guest may review the videotape. If the candidate wishes, he/she may do a second take of the interview. After the second interview, the candidate and the guest may review both takes, or just the second take. The candidate must select which take will be included on the program and will indicate his/her choice in writing prior to leaving the studio. The candidate will be furnished with a VHS of both takes although a reasonable copying charge may be imposed.

There will be no editing of the two takes to make one completed interview. The candidate must choose take one or take two.

## Airing of the program
The program will air multiple times on [station] beginning [date]. Multiple versions of the program will be prepared so all candidates will appear in rotation on the videotape. Therefore, no candidate will always be first and no candidate will always appear last. The rotation will be randomly selected. The individual interviews will also be made available on the [station] web site.

## On-camera basics
*What to wear:* For camera and lighting purposes, please avoid wearing any light colors like all white or pastels. Please also avoid wearing small patterns such as herringbone, as this causes a "moiré" effect on the cameras.

*Powder:* You may wish to bring your own powder and powder puff to touch up any shiny areas on your face prior to taping. Although the studio has air conditioning, the heat from the lights may cause you to perspire.

*Format:* The format of this program is an interview. Candidates should direct their answers to the host, not to the camera. The interview is intended to be a conversation that provides insight to you as a candidate. Candidates should make their answers conversational, relax and be themselves, because that is what viewers want to see.

## Ground Rules
Standards of civility and courtesy will be strictly enforced by the moderator. Name calling, referring to opponents and inflammatory statements will not be tolerated.

# Appendix D: Fact Sheet for Candidate Debates & Forums

Customize this sample fact sheet for candidate debates with your program and station information. Send it to candidates with their invitations (see *Appendix G: Sample Candidate Invitation*).

## Video Voter [year]: [Office] Candidate Debate Fact Sheet

### Description
[Program name] is a video voter guide, which will air on [name of station or stations]. The program will contain debates between candidates in the race for [name of office]. Each debate will be aired multiple times before the [name and date of election].

**Taping date**
Taping will take place at [name of studios] on [dates & specific times].

**Contact information and time**
Contact [contact name, number, and e-mail] to RSVP to the candidate debate by [deadline date].

**Location**
123 Main Street, Your City, USA
Telephone number on tape day

### Content of segment
The segment will start with a photo and graphic about each candidate. The graphic will have text that will list the candidate's name, occupation, and number of years he or she has resided in [jurisdiction]. Please provide us with a photo (head shot) of the candidate, or we can take a digital photo on the day of the taping.

Each candidate will be given [number] minute(s) to make an opening statement. Next, a moderator will lead the forum by asking a series of questions relevant to the current election. Each candidate will have up to [number] minute(s) to answer the question when called upon by the moderator. There will then be [number] minutes of cross-talk between candidates, during which time candidates may address one another directly.

The segment will end with a closing statement from each candidate, followed by a graphic that provides contact information that the candidate has supplied in advance of the videotaping, including e-mail address, web site and/or telephone number.

### Videotaping procedures
*Guests:* Each candidate may bring one additional person with them to the taping.
*Moderator:* The interview will be conducted by [Host Name and brief bio if relevant].

### Airing of the program
The program will air [number of] times on [name of station or stations].

### On-camera basics
What to wear: For camera and lighting purposes, please avoid wearing any light colors like all white or pastels. Please also avoid wearing small patterns such as herringbone, as this causes a "moiré" effect on the cameras.

*Powder:* You may wish to bring your own powder and powder puff to touch up any shiny areas on your face prior to taping. Although the studio has air conditioning, the heat from the lights may cause you to perspire.

*Format:* Candidates should direct their answers to the audience. Make your answers conversational. Be yourself, because that is what viewers want to see.

# Appendix E: Case Study: Santa Monica Live Candidate Forum

CityTV of Santa Monica (www.citytv.org) is the government access station serving Adelphia cable subscribers in Santa Monica, California. Headed by Cable TV Manager Robin Gee, the station provides a full slate of programming, including community news programs, coverage of events, profiles, lifestyle programming, and live city council meetings. CityTV has also provided election coverage since 1990.

In the spring of 2002, the Center for Governmental Studies (www.cgs.org) partnered with CityTV to expand its election coverage. Previously in the 2000 elections, CityTV and the League of Women Voters of Santa Monica had covered the city council and school board elections with candidate statements and a live 3-hour election program. For 2002, the goal was to expand the programming, and add coverage of ballot measures. CGS joined the partnership to bring in fresh ideas for formats, serve as another non-partisan partner, and assist in developing CityTV's election portal, www.smvote.org, which would feature video of candidate statements for those viewers unable to watch the programs when they aired. (See *Appendix N: Building a Web Presence.*)

A primary challenge facing the partners in 2002 was the large number of candidates, nine in all, running for city council. In prior years, CityTV produced a live call-in forum with all the candidates for city council. However for this election, with such a large number, a traditional debate format could quickly become confusing, cumbersome and boring.

Staff from CGS and CityTV met several times to discuss possible formats to address the problem. The team started by identifying the following elements of good election programming:

- ✔ It is lively and energetic
- ✔ It has good, pointed questions
- ✔ It features interactivity
- ✔ It is lightly formatted
- ✔ It provides equal opportunity, but not necessarily equal time
- ✔ It has short, direct answers

The team also identified the things voters want to know about a candidate:

- ✔ Where does a candidate stand on issues the voter cares about?
- ✔ Who endorses the candidate?
- ✔ What kind of person is he/she?
- ✔ Is he/she likeable?
- ✔ Trustworthy?
- ✔ Thoughtful?
- ✔ Informed?
- ✔ Does he or she share the voter's attitudes and beliefs?
- ✔ Does the candidate look like they can handle the responsibility and the issues in a way that gives the voter confidence?

Looking the intersection of what made good election programming and what voters care about, the team decided that to produce multiple programs to cover city council, including interviews, issue statements, and a live candidate roundtable. The goals for the programming were:

- ✔ To help voters understand the candidates' positions on issues of importance to the community,
- ✔ To reveal how the candidates interacted in a setting similar to that of a city council meeting; how did they treat others, did they glean information quickly, and could they be precise and articulate when addressing issues,

✔ To encourage interaction between the candidates, as one would have in a smaller debate or roundtable discussion, and

✔ To produce an engaging, energy-filled program so that viewers would stay tuned-in.

With the general formats selected, it was time to get down to details. The statement and interview formats were relatively straightforward, but there were more than a few questions about how to produce the candidate roundtable—the first being whether or not to produce it live. While a live broadcast would provide the opportunity for community members to participate by calling in, were the technical hurdles worth the trouble?

In the end it was decided that while live programs do have a certain energy and provide for some community involvement, there were concerns that that no one would call in or that the calls would provide poorly-phrased questions. CityTV and its partners knew from past experience that pre-screening the questions is difficult to do on the fly. The team decided it wanted the energy of a live broadcast with a live studio audience, but wanted to mitigate the risks of the live call-in. So as a winning compromise, pre-tape questions from city residents and local journalists were rolled in. This solution involved the community, ensured good questions, and provided for great visuals.

The next challenge was how to create a format suitable for so many candidates. Contra Costa County, California's CCTV produced inspirational roundtable discussions, in which the moderator really let the candidates talk amongst themselves but also kept things moving and ensured that there was a rough sense of balance between the two sides. The cross-talk between candidates was very revealing. Viewers got a true sense of how well the candidates could think on the spot, how they treated their opponent, and how they carried themselves in general. The CityTV team decided to adopt the roundtable format, but with a key modification to make it work with nine candidates instead of just two.

The concept of the "pod" was born. The nine candidates would be seated in the semi-circular council chambers. They were then divided into three groups of three—three "pods." After a round of 30 second opening statements, citizen questions would be directed at a particular pod. Each candidate in that pod would have the opportunity to give a 30 second answer. The moderator would then open the topic up for 3 minutes of cross-talk in which the candidates in that pod could discuss the issue amongst themselves. At the end of the three minutes another videotaped question was played, this time asking a question of the next pod. The mini-debates continued, with each pod answering two questions before intermission. At the break, candidate seating was reshuffled, and the process was repeated for several more rounds of citizen questions.

There was initial concern that not all candidates would receive the same questions. However, there was a larger concern that hearing the exact same question over and over would bore the audience, causing viewers to tune out. Producing election coverage that no one would watch didn't seem like a good idea either.

A happy medium was found in which all pods were asked questions on the top issues in the city—homelessness and traffic. The questions varied slightly and were asked by different citizens, but they provided candidates the opportunity to make their views known. Candidates might not get to address an issue posed to another pod, but they were also given a closing statement of up to 45 seconds, and they were explicitly encouraged to use that time to address any issues about which they felt strongly.

To further ensure fairness, Producer Scott Knyrim was responsible for creating the random seat assignments, while Station Manger Robin Gee and CGS Project Director Area Madaras were responsible for selecting the question order. That way, no one knew who would be asked any particular question.

The program was a smashing success. The use of pre-taped questions from various parts of the city created an interesting visual element, the pods allowed for more engaging debate, and a live studio audience provided a level of energy that kept people on their toes. All the candidates were pleased with their performances, and feedback from viewers was overwhelmingly positive.

Here is a list of tips based on our experiences:

✔ Have a good moderator. Even though the questions come from tape, you need a strong moderator who can jump in with a question to keep the conversation going, can ensure that all members of each pod get a chance to speak, and can bring the conversation to a close at the 3-minute mark.

✔ Keep time, and make it obvious. A timekeeper or two strategically placed in the room can help the moderator and the candidates stay on track. Two modified ping-pong paddles worked well to communicate how much time there was left. One paddle had a 60 second marker on one side and a 30 second market on the other. The other paddle had 10 seconds and a stop sign. Make sure the moderator and the candidates can all see the timekeeper(s).

✔ Tape questions in a variety of places. CityTV producers went to a variety of places to invite people to ask questions, including grocery stores, parks, and the farmer's market. Mix it up with people from different parts of town so you can get a variety of viewpoints.

✔ Allow rebuttals. If a candidate makes a derogatory reference to the name or record of an opponent who is not in their pod, that opponent should still be given an opportunity to respond. Allowing the opponent 30 seconds to defend their record is not only a fair way of handing an awkward situation, it's also likely to prevent the attack in the first place. Candidates won't mention their opponent if they know it means the opponent will have the last word.

Organizing a forum is always a challenge, but by using the pod method, CityTV staff and their partners brought the dynamic, engaging aspects of a small candidate forum to a much larger gathering.

# Appendix F: Sample Booking Sheet

Complete a booking sheet for each candidate. Then have the candidate or their representative verify the information and return the corrected sheet to you.

## Video Voter Booking Sheet

Please initial the box next to each entry and fax to [fax number] no later than [deadline]. This serves as confirmation that our information is correct and that you have the necessary taping information. Make changes to your information as necessary, but be sure to initial those lines as well!

**Candidate Information/ On-Screen Information**                                                   **Initial Below**

Candidate Name: _____   _____

Office: _____   _____

Party Affiliation: _____   _____

Website: _____   _____

**Contact Information**

Contact Name_____   _____

Phone: _____   _____

E-mail: _____   _____

Address: _____   _____

**Tape Day Information**

Call Time: _____   _____

Contact # on Tape Day: _____   _____

Location: _____   _____

Notes:  _____

_____

_____

# Appendix G: Sample Release

The following are two variations of releases. The first is a release form used by TV Tacoma of Tacoma, Washington. The second is a release form used by City TV of Santa Monica, California. You may wish to use a similar release for your programming, but be certain to consult your legal counsel.

## Tacoma Release

### Video Voters Pamphlet, Candidates Agreement, for Election 2003

The purpose of the Video Voters Pamphlet is to provide voters with information regarding a candidate's qualifications for office.

THIS AGREEMENT, made and entered into this_____day of_____, 2003, by and between the City of Tacoma, a Municipal Corporation of the State of Washington (hereinafter "City") and_____(candidate's name hereinafter "Candidate");

Candidate intends to voluntarily participate in a televised program for cable television to be shown for non-commercial purposes over municipal channels operated by the City of Tacoma.

The program is to be videotaped and played on a special cable television presentation entitled: "Video Voters Pamphlet."

**Procedure for Production**

A. Statements are recorded at the TV Tacoma Studio, located at 1224 South Martin Luther King Way. Candidates have thirty minutes in which to record as many takes as they wish. They then have fifteen minutes to review the takes and decide which one they want used in the show. Individual presentations will be limited to no more than three minutes.

B. Candidates will be presented in the order in which they appear in the printed pamphlet.

C. Taping for the primary will be scheduled for Friday August 1, Monday August 4 and Tuesday August 5 on a first come/first scheduled basis. To deal with cases of scheduling conflicts, the City requests that each candidate provide an alternative preferred taping time. While a scheduled candidate would not be "bumped", the City may ask for volunteers to shift to their second choice in order to accommodate scheduling conflicts. Taping is scheduled on the hour. You can schedule by calling producer at [telephone number]. Or you can fax [fax number] or return the attached information sheet to the TV Tacoma office or deliver to the City Clerk's Office, [mailing and delivery address]. Candidates who advance to the General Election may choose to participate in a 2nd program. Taping for the General Election will be scheduled for Monday September 29 and Tuesday September 30. General election video participants may choose to replay statements recorded for the primary by providing a $50 inclusion fee or may record a new statement in the TV Tacoma studio for the full participation fee of $100.

D. The programs will be cablecast on TV Tacoma, on Channel 12 in Tacoma. Playback will begin on October 22, and continue until the general election on November 6. Copies will also be available for check out from the Tacoma Public Library through the general election. Each candidate will receive a copy of the finished program. Additional copies are available at a cost of $20.00 each.

E. In consideration of the City of Tacoma permitting the cablecast of such program, Candidate agrees that he/she:

1. Is familiar with the nature of the program material and accepts full responsibility for program content.

2. Warrants and represents that the program does not contain:

   a. Any material to solicit funds for any purpose.

   b. Any advertising material designed to promote the sale of commercial products or services, including advertising by or on behalf of candidates for public office.

   c. Any material that is not directly about the candidate relative to his or her qualifications for the position sought.

   d. Any material concerning lottery information, gift enterprise, or similar schemes.

   e. Any material that is slanderous, libelous or prohibited by law.

   f. Any material requiring union, residual, or other payments including but not limited to talent and crew unless those payments have been made or waived or releases have been obtained.

   g. Any material subject to copyright, ownership, royalty rights or residuals unless releases, licenses or other permissions have been obtained.

3. Candidate agrees to allow TV Tacoma to use excerpts of this program for promotional purposes.

4. Candidate agrees to allow TV Tacoma to make copies of the program available for interested individuals or for tape exchange programs.

5. Candidate is familiar with and agrees to abide by all Tacoma Administrative Rules & Regulations for the Video Voters' Pamphlet.

**Payment**

A fee of $100.00 will be assessed to each participant to cover studio and editing time. Candidates are asked to bring checks made payable to "Tacoma City Treasurer" on day of taping.

Teleprompter services are available for an additional fee of $50. This device allows text to roll in front of the camera lens, allowing the user to make better eye contact when a presentation is not memorized. Candidates choosing to use this service must provide a PC formatted disk clearly labeled with the candidate's name and the document title, as well as a printed copy of their speech, a minimum of 24 hours prior to taping.

An additional taping fee of $100 will be assessed for candidates choosing to re-record his/her statement for any reason, including failure to comply with the terms of the Candidates Agreement.

**Indemnification**

A. In the event any claim or action stemming from telecast of the program is brought against the City of Tacoma, TV Tacoma, its directors, officers, employees, or agents (hereinafter "City"), or any appointed or elected official or agent thereof, Candidate hereby agrees to indemnify and hold them harmless, including all legal fees and expenses involved in defending such claim or action. This indemnification includes a duty to defend such claim upon receipt of the claim or action by the City.

B. Candidate hereby releases the City of Tacoma, TV Tacoma, its directors, officers, employees and agents from all claims for damage, loss or theft of a program while in their custody.

**Failure to Comply**

Candidate statements will be reviewed by the city to insure compliance with the rules and regulations. Statements which do not comply will be pulled from the program and the candidate will be offered a second opportunity to record a new statement meeting the regulations on Friday August 15 for the Primary Election and October 10 for the General Election. Fees will not be reimbursed for statements omitted from the Video Voters' Pamphlet for non-compliance with the rules and regulations.

I have read the foregoing and agree to all of the terms and conditions contained herein.

PRINT NAME:_____

SIGNATURE:_____

ADDRESS:_____

_____

PHONE:  (H) _____(O)_____

TV Tacoma Staff Acceptance: _____ Date: _____

## Santa Monica Release

I, _____, am confirming my participation in "Vote 2002: Meet Your City Council Candidates" co-presented by the Center for Governmental Studies and City TV cable channel 16. I have read the Fact Sheet and Procedures for the Meet the Candidates program and fully understand the procedures for this event. I will follow these procedures throughout the course of the preparation and taping of the series.

I have chosen the following format for my presentation Vote 2002: Meet Your City Council Candidates.

Please check your choice:

_____    I will answer all five of the questions during my five minute interview for broadcast.

OR

_____    I have chosen to answer three of the following questions during my five minute interview for broadcast. Those choices are indicated below.

   Please place a check next to your three choices:

   _____    1. Qualifications/experience.

   _____    2. Why I am running/motivation.

   _____    3. Most important issue in Santa Monica.

   _____    4. Goals, what I would do as a Council Member, where I would make my contribution.

   _____    5. Why me? Why I should be selected over the other candidates to be a member of the City Council.

Again, you, as candidate, may choose to be interviewed on only three of the five subject areas for the 5 minute interview or answer all five questions within the five minute time frame.

I hereby authorize and consent to the videotaping, filming, recording, public display or public dissemination of my image and voice. I further understand that this film, videotape, will be used for cablecast on CityTV of Santa Monica and that the film or videotape may be publicly disseminated, possibly numerous times, on television cablecasts and on the Internet. I further understand that short clips may be edited for promotional purposes for broadcast, cablecast, use on the Internet and as part of the Center for Governmental Studies Election Programming Best Practices Project.

Please sign and date this document and **return to the below address no later than September 10th, 20--**.

_____    _____
Candidate's Name (please print)         Today's Date


_____
Candidate's Signature

City TV
Attn: Video Voter Producer
Vote 2002
111 Main Street
Santa Monica, CA 91111

If you have any questions, please call Video Voter Producer, City TV.

# Appendix H: Sample Candidate Invitation

Customize this invitation using to your station's information. Include the appropriate fact sheet from *Appendix B, C,* or *D*.

[INSERT LOGO OR LETTERHEAD HERE]


[DATE]

[CANDIDATE CONTACT INFO]

Dear [CONTACT]:

[STATION NAME], in partnership with [PARTNER NAME], would like to invite [CANDIDATE] to share his/her views with [JURISDICTION] voters by participating in our upcoming program, [TITLE]. The program will consist of [a series of candidate statements/a series of candidate interviews/a candidate debate] and will air on [STATION] [NUMBER OF] times before the [NAME & DATE OF ELECTION] election.

We are offering this opportunity to all candidates identified by the [OFFICIAL SOURCE OF ELECTION INFORMATION SUCH AS SECRETARY OF STATE, POLITICAL PARTIES OR CITY CLERK'S OFFICE] for consideration in the [ELECTION].

The attached fact sheet summarizes this programming opportunity provided by [STATION NAME] and provides all relevant dates, times and logistical information regarding the taping.

**For further information and to schedule taping time, please contact [CONTACT NAME & INFORMATION]. Please contact us by [DATE] if you wish to be included**

We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

[PRODUCER]

[CONTACT INFO]

Enclosure:

  • Fact Sheet

  • Guidelines

# Appendix I: Sample Follow-Up Letter

Customize this letter with your station's contact information and program details to follow-up on your invitations to candidates. Note that the letter is drafted for a candidate statements program, and be certain to modify it accordingly for candidate interviews or debates.

[DATE]

[CONTACT NAME]

[CAMPAIGN NAME]

[CONTACT INFO]

Dear CONTACT:

I am writing to follow-up on my earlier invitation to Candidate [NAME] to participate in our Video Voter Guide, [NAME OF PROGRAM]. As you know, each candidate is invited to tape up to [NUMBER] minutes on their candidacy and what they view as the important issues.

We know that Candidate [NAME]'s time is tight, so we have arranged for taping several opportunities:

**[TAPING OPPORTUNITY #1]**

**[TAPING OPPORTUNITY #2]**

**[TAPING OPPORTUNITY #3]**

Taping can take as little as [NUMBER] minutes of the candidate's time. Time slot maximums are [NUMBER] minutes each, and are filled on a first-come, first-served basis, so **please contact [CONTACT NAME & INFORMATION] by [DATE] to be certain to reserve your place.**

Alternatively, if the candidate cannot attend these taping dates, **you may submit a videotaped statement as long as it meets the Self-Taping Guidelines described in the fact sheet.**

I have attached another copy of the fact sheet for your convenience, and I hope that we can arrange for a convenient time for Candidate [NAME] to tape his/her statement and speak to the people of [JURISDICTION].

**Please be sure to contact us by [Date] if you wish to be included.**

Sincerely,

[PRODUCER]

[PRODUCER CONTACT INFO]

# Appendix J: Sample Letter to Other Stations

Customize this letter with your station's contact information and program details to encourage carriage by other stations. Note that the letter is drafted for a candidate statements program, and be certain to modify it accordingly for candidate interviews or debates.

[DATE]

[STATION]

[STATION CONTACT]

[STATION ADDRESS]

Dear [STATION CONTACT]:

To follow up on our earlier conversation, [STATION] and [PARTNER] are producing important voter information programming for the upcoming [SPECIFIC ELECTION]. We have invited all the [NAME OF RACE] candidates to participate in [NAME OF PROGRAM] and we would like to offer this programming to your station. Including your station as a partner will greatly enhance the visibility and reach of this program, and we hope it will provide a valuable voter service to the people in your community.

Each candidate has been invited to tape a statement up to [NUMBER OF] minutes in length. We will then create an introduction and closing screen for each segment, and string the statements together in random order to create a single program which you can air on your channel at your convenience. We hope you will join us in this exciting PEG access programming endeavor.

Please contact us at your earliest convenience to let us know if you would like to participate.


Sincerely,


[PRODUCER]

[CONTACT INFORMATION]

# Appendix K: Clothing and Make-up for Television

Include this on-camera tip sheet for candidates with your invitation, follow-up letters, or booking sheet.

## Clothing & Make-up for Television

**Clothing**
***Clothing worn on camera should be attractive, yet comfortable.*** You may be sitting for a prolonged period of time.

***Avoid wearing clothes with small patterns.*** Tiny checks, herringbone and other detailed line patterns cause an undesirable flashing on television, called a moiré effect.

***Avoid wearing all white or all black.*** Jewel-tone colors, like blue, green or even red are your best bet. However, wearing all one color is probably never a good idea—try to break it up. Also, keep in mind that under studio lights, white or highly reflective fabrics can cause "hot spots" on the screen.

***Avoid wearing decorative accessories such as large necklaces, pins or other jewelry.*** Such items may cause distracting glares or interfere with the use of microphones that clip on your jacket or blouse.

## Make-up

In order to have normal and healthy appearance in which facial features are distinct and enhanced, make-up for television is more exaggerated than under normal conditions. For this reason, women should consider using more make-up than they might for every day, and men may want to use a natural powder to decrease shine.

[If the station plans to provide a make-up artist, tell the candidates: The station will provide a professional make-up artist to touch up your make-up. Please let us know in advance if you plan to use this service so that we can schedule enough time to accommodate you.]

Your consideration of the above guidelines will not only enhance your appearance on television, but improve the look of the entire production.

Thank you in advance for you cooperation.

# Appendix L: Case Study: Video on Demand

The following article describes how Video on Demand was used to cover ballot measures as well as state assembly and congressional seats. The article is reprinted with permission from *Community Media Review*, the journal of the Alliance for Community Media, Winter 2002-2003.

## Who Are You VODing For?

### Election Education with Video-On-Demand in Pasadena

**by Brenda Trainor**

Video on Demand (VOD) technology is becoming the "killer application" of advanced residential telecommunications companies. VOD offers subscribers the opportunity to sit in their comfy chair, point the remote control at the set top box and have movies and other videos instantaneously delivered to their television—with all the functionality of a VCR: pause, fast forward, scan, rewind, and replay. It is a technology that puts the viewer in charge of making choices about the timing, speed, and frequency of their viewing choices.

And since elections are all about choices, the opportunity to explore how people make choices with VOD and the democratic process was an obvious nexus. In cooperation with The Center for Governmental Studies (CGS—www.cgs.org) and the Pasadena Community Access Corporation (PCAC —www.pasadena56.tv), Altrio Communications supported the application of VOD technologies in the Election 2002 demonstration project to showcase how the new technology could be used to support voter education efforts.

Altrio Communications is a young company and one that prides itself on doing things differently. The company is a full-service residential telecommunications company offering voice, video and data services to communities in suburban Los Angeles over a brand new fiber optic network. Though the company just began providing service to customers in January of 2002, it has constructed a state-of-the-art telecommunications network currently serving a substantial percentage of three cities (Arcadia, Monrovia, and Pasadena) in the San Gabriel Valley. With many thousands of customers, the company's service area and advanced technology provided a perfect test environment to demonstrate the use of VOD technology for voter education.

## The Project

The VOD Vote 2002 project featured eight videos in three categories that were made available on Altrio's VOD system. Two videos addressed Los Angeles County ballot measures, three videos featured candidates for a seat in the California State Assembly, and three videos featured candidates for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Launched about three weeks before the election, PCAC produced different formats for the three different categories of programming for the VOD Vote 2002 project:

The two county ballot measures were each discussed in a 15-minute studio-taped conversation with a journalist moderator and a proponent and opponent on the issue. One measure was a discussion of county museum funding, and the second measure dealt with funding of health care and emergency facilities.

The California State Assembly race featured three five-minute videos that were one-on-one interviews with each democratic, independent and republican candidate.

The three U.S. House of Representatives candidates were allocated five-minute videos, but used a talking head format with each of the three candidates (also democratic, independent and republican) addressing the audience directly with prepared content. The incumbent candidate sent a video that was produced in Washington.

All of the programs within their category had the same or similar sets, and had consistent production values so as not to alter viewers' perceptions.

## Technical and Production Considerations

When producing for the VOD format, certain considerations must be made for content. In the series of interviews for example, each candidate must be introduced as if the viewer is tuning in for the first time, as each show is a stand-alone choice. A reference to content from other videos is to be avoided and consistency in tone and questions is essential.

The additional level of production for the VOD format is the creation of textual information to facilitate the viewers' navigation of video choice. To use VOD technology, a single channel on the viewer's television set top box is dedicated to a menu of the current offerings. In Altrio's case, some 250 titles are available. Thus, the need for menu selection categories is critical to accommodate viewers' searching needs. Altrio uses over a dozen categories to group the available titles. In addition to an alphabetical listing of all titles, Altrio groups the available titles in genre categories such as kids, drama or thriller.

And while elections might be childish, dramatic, and thrilling, Altrio determined that a new genre title needed to be created. Elections 2002 was the category title, under which the eight video titles were listed. As the navigation menu scrolls for title selection, two additional text blocks needed to be created: one as a summary of the information, and one with detailed information that appears when the title is selected prior to acquisition. And since the format of the text blocks is designed for motion picture purchases, the text data files had to be crafted so the places reserved for listing movie stars names became the places for candidate names instead.

## Races with candidates were listed alphabetically

A very time consuming and expensive process was required to transform the videos and associated text material into the VOD format. Not only did the text blocks need careful attention for the content conversion, but the videos had to be digitized and the whole package of material needed to be transformed with metadata to drive the commands and controls that allow for the digital selection, record keeping, and VCR functionalities. The conversion process cost $1000 per hour of video material, and a substantial commitment of time to create the text files to appear in the right screen, in the correct field, with the correct amount of characters. The whole package is then loaded as a data file onto Altrio's servers in its headend, a process that regularly occurs via satellite for standard movie fare, but that can also be delivered via tape drive.

## Great Demonstration Value

Of course, any election education project is made most effective by fulfilling its ultimate goal of reaching the electorate. About two and a half weeks before the election, and after the production and conversion of data was received and tested for accuracy and functionality, the Altrio Elections 2002 VOD project was promoted via news release to local and trade media. Local news coverage featured the availability of the programs on drive time radio and in local newspaper columns. Trade press also provided coverage, though this probably did little to increase local utilization. So to further encourage the use by voters, Altrio's installers demonstrated the VOD capability using these titles when installing new digital set top boxes in the field.

Of the viewing results, the two ballot measure videos received the highest number of hits; possibly because they appeared first on the menu, or possibly because they were ballot measures and people were seeking out more information about the specific details that were not readily available elsewhere. Voters don't have the benefit of party affiliation in analyzing ballot measures, so it may be postulated they seek out information on such measures.

Localism may also be a factor, a viewing trend seemed to indicate that the more local the race, the greater the viewership: the county issues received 41 percent of the viewings, the state race received 33 percent, and the federal race received 26 percent.

For the two races for elected office, incumbency seems to have driven viewing. In the state race, the incum-

bent received 59 percent of the viewings for that race; and in the federal race, the incumbent received 50 percent of the viewings.

Another possible explanation for these statistics would require a detailed time analysis: each of the highest viewed videos was for a measure or candidate that won the election. The videos were left up for two days past the election and it is possible that they were viewed after the results were in as people seek out information about what just happened in the election.

## Results

The results of the demonstration are easily summarized: the tapes are valuable sources of content about candidates and issues, particularly regarding issues where content may be more important than personality: ballot measures vs. candidates. It appears that localism is a factor in seeking out information with this technology. With respect to the creation and cost of creating VOD election education materials, the commitment is both extensive and expensive, but very doable.

Altrio Communications Inc. was proud to be a part of this project with VOD technology. "Normally used for the sale of movies, this application of VOD technology for voter education is an innovative application that is consistent with Altrio's commitment to provide full-service community communications," said David Rozzelle, Altrio's CEO, "we are pleased to work with these project partners to demonstrate this technology and the power of choice."

*Brenda J. Trainor was vice president of public policy for Altrio Communications Inc. and is now the principal in Frontier Trail, Inc., a consultancy specializing in telecommunications and community issues. She can be reached at Trainor@FrontierTrail.com.  Early in 2004, the assets of Altrio Communications were sold and the LA system is now operating as Champion Broadband.*

# Appendix M: Case Study: Building a Web Presence

The following article describes how the staff of CityTV created an election information portal for the city of Santa Monica. The article is reprinted with permission from *Community Media Review*, the journal of the Alliance for Community Media, Winter 2002-2003.

## Creating an Election Information Portal in Santa Monica, California

by Robin Gee and Al Johnson

Can a community access channel create new opportunities and new roles for itself in the community? CityTV in Santa Monica, California found one answer to that question when it did its election coverage in 2002. The channel created a web site, SMvote.org, and positioned itself as a central Internet portal in the community for local election information, while promoting its traditional television election program offerings. It gave the community a new reason to turn to CityTV for a service not found anywhere else. And, CityTV was able to also make some of its programming available via streaming video clips on the web.

It all started simply enough, with an ambitious agenda to produce 17 election programs, with over 200 air-dates, for the November 2002 election. But how would the community know what was on, and when? Having the program listings available over the web seemed a logical conclusion, but listings alone did not seem a big enough incentive to get many "hits."

A review of other websites showed that there was no central location to find Santa Monica election information and that gave us an idea. Since a voter would have to go to the state, county, and city websites to find all needed election information, and it was easy to miss something if you didn't know what you were looking for, a special one-stop election website, SMvote.org, was created. The site offered CityTV election program schedules, candidate information, ballot measure information, a calendar of local election related events, all of the City Clerk's official information, links to local media covering the election, and links to agencies providing related information, including the County and the State election web sites. In addition, CityTV made streaming video clips available for city council and school board candidates, allowing the community to see and hear the candidates they were interested in, at their convenience.

The ballot measures section included a simple description of each measure, the impartial analysis, and the ballot measure arguments.

The candidate section included photos, contact information, links to candidate websites and statements from the candidates. Included were five Meet the Candidate streaming video clips for school board and city council candidates. In addition, for each city council candidate, there were five short interview video clips on the topics of affordable housing/rent control, growth, the homeless, public safety, and traffic and parking. A total of 59 videos were available through SMvote.org.

The website provided an important resource to candidates who had limited campaign funds. Through CityTV and SMvote.org it was possible for all city council candidates to have access to media and technology opportunities that would be difficult to obtain otherwise.

The site provided a unique way for CityTV to market and promote its voluminous election programming schedule, as it was much easier to promote a single website than over 200 different airdates!

SMvote.org proved easy to promote with fliers, on-air promos, print ads, bus signs and banners in the community. The local library found the site to be an easy resource to refer the community to as well.

Having high quality original content is key to the success of any cable channel today. And, for community access channels, producing local election programming can provide viewers with that high quality original

content while providing relevant, vital information to the community. Creating a companion election website to go with the election programming can be a logical partnership that serves both the community and the community access channel well. More than ever, the community turns to CityTV as a valuable resource, especially during local elections.

*Robin Gee is the cable TV manager for the City of Santa Monica, California and manages CityTV, the city's government access channel. Al Johnson is the production supervisor for CityTV of Santa Monica and coordinates all productions for CityTV. CityTV has been honored with numerous national and local awards, including seven local Emmy Awards. Robin can be reached at robin-gee@santa-monica.org and Al can be reached at al-johnson@santa-monica.org.*

# Appendix N: Case Study: Iowa Democratic Presidential Caucus 2004

City Channel 4 (www.citychannel4.com) is a well-regarded governmental access station serving Mediacom cable subscribers in Iowa City, Iowa. Headed by Cable TV Administrator Drew Shaffer, the station cablecasts numerous shows, some of which are produced in house by the channel's 6-person staff and others which are produced in conjunction with local non-profit organizations. Productions include the Iowa City Council meetings, Johnson County Board of Supervisors meetings, Senior Center TV, Iowa City Arts Festival, Iowa City Jazz Festival, and Coralville City Council meetings.

In early December 2003, Betsy Rosenfeld, project manager for the Center for Governmental Studies Video Voter project (www.videovoter.org and www.cgs.org) contacted Drew to assess his interest in co-producing a Video Voter guide, for the Iowa Democratic Presidential Caucus. Drew, a long-time access producer and active member of both the Alliance for Community Media (ACM; www.alliancecm.org), and the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA; www.natoa.org), was very enthusiastic about the potential for cable access to cover politics. City Channel 4 had prior experience co-producing and cablecasting Candidate Forums produced by the League of Women Voters, but had not previously produced its own political programming. He was eager to cover the Caucus with the support of the Center for Governmental Studies (CGS).

Both Betsy and Drew were concerned that, with only five weeks to produce the programming, and with the Christmas holiday approaching, they were fighting an uphill battle. But they decided to plow ahead and that any information they could share with voters in advance of the Caucus was worth the effort.

Within a week, after confirming the official list of candidates with the Iowa State Democratic Party, introductory letters were sent via certified mail to the communications director of each of the then nine candidates' campaigns. Betsy then made follow-up calls several days later to introduce herself and explain the project in more detail.

The pitch was that City Channel 4 and CGS were inviting candidates to share his/her views with Iowa voters by taping an eight-minute statement about his/her candidacy. The statements would then be edited together with those of the other candidates to create a Video Voter Guide to assist participants in the Iowa Caucuses with their upcoming deliberations.

Most of the nine candidates' communications offices were excited by the idea of a long format opportunity for their candidates. However almost none knew what an access station was, or how many people an access station could reach. Knowing that a broader audience would be a further enticement to participate, Betsy and Drew expanded the audience by offering the tape to numerous stations across the state, many of which enthusiastically agreed to air the tape. Drew also took the project to Mediacom, the largest Iowa cable company. Mediacom was extremely excited by the project and agreed to run it on their Local Origination channels throughout the state.

With a greatly expanded audience, Betsy and Drew reached out to the candidates once again, sending a follow up letter and placing calls to their contacts. By this time their worst fears about the timing were beginning to be realized, and the holidays conspired with the candidates' schedules to make scheduling difficult. But they were persistent, and Drew arranged to have a crew travel to meet candidates in other cities, instead of their having to come to Iowa City to tape.

Many of the candidates had already moved on from Iowa, turning their focus to the New Hampshire primary. Drew then reached out to fellow Alliance for Community Media members in New Hampshire who might tape the candidates and send the tape back to Iowa.

In the end, Iowa City Channel 4 successfully taped Senator John Kerry and Congressman Richard Gephardt. Though they may have wished for more candidate participation, Betsy and Drew deemed the project a suc-

cess, both because of the participation of two leading candidates and because the experience paved the way for City Channel 4 to produce election programming in the future. In addition, their outreach to New Hampshire stations led the Video Voter project to Grace Sullivan at Manchester Community Television (MCTV; www.manchesteraccess.com).

Grace, the managing director of MCTV, is a seasoned political producer having covered the New Hampshire's primaries for many years. Grace offered to tape Dean using the same eight-minute Video Voter format that was used in Iowa. Seeing that it was something unique and different from her usual coverage, Grace adopted the format and created a similar program for MCTV, adding to Dean's statement with ones from General Wesley Clark, Senator John Edwards, Senator John Kerry, and Senator Joe Lieberman. The resulting program ran numerous times on MCTV in the days leading up to the primary.

The project garnered a great deal of attention in PEG access circles, with many PEG access channels wanting to air similar programming. However, with numerous primaries happening simultaneously it became impossible to schedule candidates in all the interested states. In response, CGS arranged to distribute the Manchester tape to access stations in those states still preparing for primaries. CGS contact stations in states with upcoming primaries and ultimately the Manchester tape aired not only in New Hampshire but in Tucson, Arizona; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Tacoma, Washington as well.

The Iowa and New Hampshire projects illustrate how a group of dedicated producers can make a real difference in the depth and breadth of election information available in their communities. Further, it illustrates how stations can cooperate with one another, giving their programming even greater reach by accessing stations in other communities.

# Appendix O: Other CGS Publications

## Reports

*Campaign Finance Disclosure Model Law* CGS/Campaign Disclosure Project (2004)

*Losing Ground: How Taxpayer Subsidies & Balkanized Governance Prop Up Home Building in Wildfire and Flood Zones* (2004).

*A New Sacramento Policy Center: A CGS Feasibility Study* (2004).

*Political Reform That Works: Public Campaign Financing Blooms in Tucson*(2003).

*Public Financing of Elections: Where To Get The Money?* (2003).

*Public Financing Laws in Local Jurisdictions* (2003).

*Electronic Filing and Disclosure Update* (2002).

*A Statute of Liberty: How New York City's Campaign Finance Law Is Changing the Face of Local Elections* (2002).

*Alluvial Amnesia: How Government Plays Down Flood Risks in the Push for Development* (2002).

*Dead on Arrival? Breathing Life Into Suffolk County's New Campaign Finance Reforms* (2002).

*On the Brink of Clean: Launching San Francisco's New Campaign Finance Reform* (2002).

*Eleven Years of Reform: Many Successes, More to Be Done: Campaign Finance Reform in the City of Los Angeles* (2001).

*Access Delayed Is Access Denied: Electronic Reporting of Campaign Finance Activities* (2000).

*Campaign Money on the Information Superhighway: Electronic Filing and Disclosure of Campaign Finance Reports,* CGS/National Resource Center for State and Local Campaign Finance Reform (1996-1999).

*Promises to Keep and Miles to Go:* A Summary of the Joint Meeting of the California Citizens Commission on Higher Education and the California Education Roundtable (1997).

## Books

*Investing in Democracy: Creating Public Financing of Elections In Your Community* (2003).

*Affordable Health Care for Low Income Californians:* Report and Recommendations of the California Citizens Budget Commission (2000).

*Toward a State of Learning: California Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century,* Recommendations of the California Citizens Commission on Higher Education (1999).

*A 21st Century Budget Process for California:* Recommendations of the California Citizens Budget Commission (1998).

*A State of Learning: California and the Dream of Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century*, California Citizens Commission on Higher Education (1998).

*Opportunity Through Technology: Conference Report on New Communication Technology and Low-Income Communities* (CGS/ConnectLA 1997).

*A Shared Vision: A Practical Guide to the Design and Implementation of a Performance-Based Budget Model for California State Health Services,* California Citizens Budget Commission (1997).

*The Price of Justice: A Los Angeles Area Case Study in Judicial Campaign Financing,* California Commission on Campaign Financing (1995).

*Reforming California's Budget Process:* Preliminary Report and Recommendations, California Citizens Budget Commission (1995).

*California at the Crossroads: Choices for Health Care Reform,* Lucien Wulsin, Jr. (1994).

*Democracy by Initiative: Shaping California's Fourth Branch of Government,* California Commission on Campaign Financing (1992).

*To Govern Ourselves: Ballot Initiatives in the Los Angeles Area,* California Commission on Campaign Financing (1992).

*Money and Politics in the Golden State: Financing California's Local Elections,* California Commission on Campaign Financing (1989).

*Money and Politics in Local Elections: The Los Angeles Area,* California Commission on Campaign Financing (1989).

*The California Channel: A New Public Affairs Television Network for the State,* Tracy Westen and Beth Givens (1989).

*Update to the New Gold Rush,* California Commission on Campaign Financing (1987).

*The New Gold Rush: Financing California's Legislative Campaigns,* California Commission on Campaign Financing (1985).

## Media Projects

*ConnectLA:* A bi-lingual, web-based system of information and services for low-income users and communities of color (1998-present) (www.ConnectLA.org).

*Digital Democracy:* An email-based system of communication between citizens and elected officials on public policy issues (2002-present) (see www.cgs.org).

*PolicyArchive.Net:* A new web-based archive of public policy research (2002-present).

*The Democracy Network:* An interactive web-based system of political information for elections in California and other states (1996-2000) (www.dnet.org).

*The Democracy Network:* An interactive video-on-demand system of candidate information on Time-Warner's Full Service Network in Orlando, Florida (1996).

*City Access:* Report on the Design of a New Interactive System of Local Government (1995).

***The California Channel:*** A satellite-fed, cable television network providing over six million California homes with gavel-to-gavel coverage of the state legislature (1989-1993) (www.CalChannel.com).

# VIDEO VOTER

*"The Center for Governmental Studies has done an outstanding job of recognizing the power of Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) access television stations in the democratic process. This publication provides access producers with critical information and practical tips for launching a Video Voter Project. Video Voter can only result in a more educated voting public and the increase of citizen participation."*

**Bunnie Riedel**
**Executive Director, Alliance for Community Media**

*"Every democracy can only work with an informed citizenry. This publication of the Video Voter report tells **you**, every PEG channel, how to help inform your community about political issues and candidates. Today this is more imperative than ever. PEG channels need community support like never before. The Video Voter report tells you how to help garner that support while performing a real community service. It is the best report and how-to manual on the subject - period."*

**Drew Schaffer**
**Cable TV Administrator, Iowa City TV**

*"Santa Monica's ongoing partnership with the Center for Governmental Studies has produced more than 200 hours of innovative Video Voter coverage of the municipal elections, significantly improving the quality and quantity of electoral information available to local voters. It has been such a success for CityTV that it is now an integral part of our on-air productions and the City's election efforts. Video Voter is a well-written and informative guide. Building upon our experiences, CGS has created a straightforward recipe for producing meaningful election coverage in your community."*

**Robin Gee**
**CityTV Manager, City of Santa Monica**

**CGS**
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