

Countywide cable TV access sought by university committee

By TOM LONERGAN
A recently formed Oakland University cable TV committee wants to check helter-skelter development of cable systems in Oakland County.

The group was appointed in the spring by interim OU President George P. Matthews. It wants cable systems to interconnect between the county's 63 cities, villages and townships. That would allow countywide educational programming and link-ups between local units of government and county government.

The committee is gathering information on cable TV development throughout the county. It will eventually recommend to Matthews how OU can plug credit and non-credit courses, said committee chairperson Audrey Marriner.

Thus far, four of the county's 63 cities, villages and townships have awarded cable franchises. They include the village and township of Holly and the cities of Northville and Madison Heights. Local units of government have sole authority to award cable franchises because cables must utilize city rights-of-way.

THE UNIVERSITY'S cable committee is being advised by a group representing the county executive's office, the county intermediate school district, Oakland Community College, Walsh College, Lawrence Institute of Technology and several private schools.

"This is considered to be one of the most lucrative markets in the country," said Michael T. Niemann, director of

Oakland County's Public Information Office. "They (cable TV companies) are all spending money like crazy. The gold rush is on for sure."

However, it may be two to three years before the county's most populated areas have cable service. "We are not anticipating any system for the major populated areas, like Royal Oak, the Birmingham-Bloomfield area and Southfield, within less than 2 1/2 years from now," said Ms. Marriner.

She added that in some areas of the county, lawsuits have held up cable service for "seven to nine years."

THE OU committee's primary interest in countywide cable — several channels for educational use only — is by no means guaranteed.

Cable companies are not required to provide educational use channels which makes the franchise negotiations with local governments key, said Ms. Marriner. But there will likely be plenty of room on the channel selector.

"It looks like the firms are going to be offering anywhere in the range from 46 to 60 channels," she said.

The six educational institutions participating in the OU committee would like two each. That's an "ideal" situation, Ms. Marriner added.

"There is no place where a half-dozen educational institutions will have their own channel, much less two channels," she said.

THE COMMITTEE will be watching the writing of local government ordi-

nances, she said. It will seek common plans and specifications to allow for:

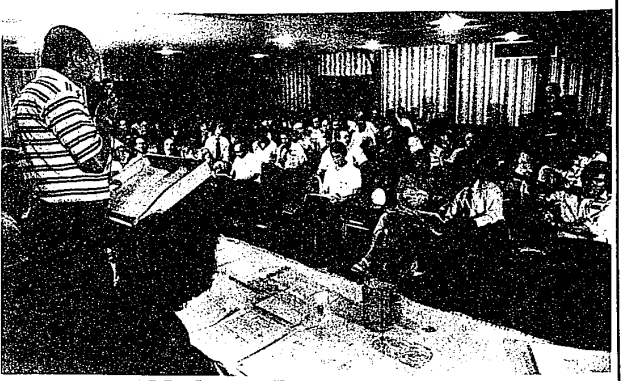
- Inter-connected systems, two-way transmissions and closed systems to allow county government to connect with local governments.
- Connections between the intermediate school district and local K-12 school districts.

The two-way system is important, Ms. Marriner said, to "simulate a classroom situation."

The OU committee has discussed offering both credit and non-credit courses over a cable system, including up to two years of a four-year degree with all courses piped into the home, Ms. Marriner said.

Other course-via-cable possibilities are licensing courses required in the medical, social work and accounting professions, she said.

OU has applied for federal grants to develop a community education program on cable TV development and provide legal information for the public on the cable franchising process.



Michigan Dems in caucus

Michigan is sending 141 delegates — 71 for Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, 70 for President Jimmy Carter — to the Democratic National Convention in New York City next week. Here Stuart E. Hertzberg, Bloomfield Hills attorney, briefs the group about hotel and travel

arrangements in a recent Farmington Hills caucus. Hertzberg is Democratic national committeeman and will be attending his sixth national convention as an at-large delegate. (Staff photo by Bill Bresler)

Invention revolutionized printing

Ottmar Mergenthaler revolutionized the printing industry with his invention of the linotype machine on August 26, 1884. Before his creation all type had to be hand-set, a slow, time-consuming process.

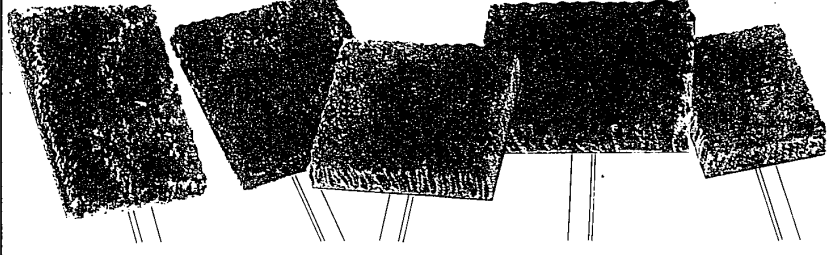
The linotype allowed printers to set whole lines of metal type in seconds.

letting the printed word reach more people at a cheaper cost.

The Communications Collection of Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn has a wide assortment of Mergenthaler's machines on exhibit, as well as other examples of printing machines and presses.

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