

FCC rules put interference in cable rates



CABLE CONNECTION
KAREN COLLINS

Just as local rate regulators and cable operators thought it was time to go back into the zone, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) developed new rules designed to reduce cable rates an additional 7 percent (beyond the 10 percent promised in September 1993, you may recall, when your rates were adjusted the first time).

This 7 percent solution was developed in an attempt to reach a rate structure comparable to what the FCC estimates those rates would be in a typical competitive environment. In fact, FCC Chairman Reed Hundt promised consumers, "If you're buying the same thing in the fall of 1994 as you were in the fall of 1992, you'll be paying less for it."

Well, guess what? There are exceptions to every promise, and it looks like we're one of them. The FCC's own numbers show that the 10 percent reduction enacted in September 1993 translated to about 6 percent in actual consumer bills, and an increase for some of us. It's too soon to tell whether the 7 percent is really 7 percent across the country. One thing is for sure, though, it's not a 7 percent drop in Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi.

Bear with me here, as I attempt to clear up some of the muddy wa-

ters regarding the new rates in our area. This summer all cable systems came under new rate regulations adopted by the FCC. The new regulations require cable operators to reduce rates by 17 percent from their September 1992 level. But there's a catch. This is subject to adjustment upward for inflation, channel additions, deletions and increases in external costs. So it's not going to do you any good to pull out your old MetroVision bills. Our basic cable rates did indeed go up 3.2 percent because of these factors and others.

Actually, the FCC developed a complicated formula — so complicated that it must be executed on a computer because it deals with logarithms and such. But there are nine factors that cable operators must apply:

- The number of channels per tier as of March 31, 1994. (MetroVision has 22 channels on the basic service, and 28 on expanded basic).
- The number of non-broadcast channels per tier as of March 31, 1994.
- The number of subscribers on each tier as of March 31, 1994.
- The number of customers in service tiers in 1993.
- Median household income for the franchise areas.
- Monthly average number of subscriber additional outlets in 1993.
- Monthly average number of remotes rented in 1993.
- Total number of subscribers for the whole system as of March 31, 1994.

In summary, the new FCC rules require cable operators to compute a new "benchmark" or standard rate, using this complex formula.

For systems owned by a multiple system operator, the number of systems as of March 31, 1994. In summary, the new FCC rules require cable operators to compute a new "benchmark" or standard rate, using this complex formula.

If you don't understand all this, don't worry. The two factors that have the greatest impact for our area are the ones dealing with the number of channels per tier, and the median household income. Many fixed-income residents of Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi have balked at factor number five — the one considering median household income — because the income skews upward in these three cities. Here's what you can do. Tell the FCC you're not happy. The FCC has made this determination, and we are forced to live with it right now.

It gets complicated after this. But relief from rate rules is also available to so-called low price systems. A cable system in which its March 31, 1994 rate is below this new benchmark rate qualifies as a low-priced system — and MetroVision qualifies.

The bottom line is that rates did indeed go up in our area. But it's not as bad as you may think. Stay tuned, and next week we'll look into cable rates throughout the entire Metro Detroit area and see how MetroVision stacks up. We'll also let you know what you

can do and what SWOCC is already doing.

Karen Collins is the Executive Director of the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission.

CHANNEL 12

Monday, Aug. 22

- 10 a.m. — Travels with Kay: Turkey and Syria
- 10:30 a.m. — Women on the Move: I Natural
- 11 a.m. — Coffee and conversation
- Noon — Farmington Hills Police Journal
- 12:30 p.m. — Dollars and sense: M-Care
- 1 p.m. — Seniors on the Move: boxing trainer
- 1:30 p.m. — The word of life: Peter's perspectives
- 2 p.m. — Prisoners of wedlock
- 3 p.m. — North American Indian journal
- 4 p.m. — Farmington dance recital: take five
- 6 p.m. — Your money matters: mutual funds
- 6:30 p.m. — Bagels and talk with Tracy and Phil
- 7 p.m. — Farmington Focus: Farmington city services
- 7:30 p.m. — Adventures with Pirate Pete
- 8 p.m. — Impact video
- 8:30 p.m. — Law talk: estate planning
- 9:30 p.m. — Groove session.

Tuesday, Aug. 23

- 10 a.m. — Drawing men to Christ
- 11 a.m. — Happiest people alive
- 11:30 a.m. — Money talks
- Noon — Adventures with Pirate Pete
- 12:30 p.m. — Spontaneous seniors
- 1:30 p.m. — Senior spotlight: services for hearing impaired
- 2 p.m. — Salon glamour and etiquette with Gloria: experience the spa I
- 3 p.m. — Founders Festival parade
- 5 p.m. — Lansing connection
- 5:30 p.m. — Living with your addictions
- 6 p.m. — Jr. Japanese: Lesson 36
- 6:30 p.m. — Business and residential news
- 7 p.m. — Cash talks
- 7:30 p.m. — Farmington Hills Police Journal
- 8 p.m. — Salon glamour and etiquette with Gloria: experience the spa I
- 9 p.m. — Let's talk with Ben Marks.

Wednesday, Aug. 24

- 10 a.m. — Legislative forum
- 10:30 a.m. — The job show
- 11 a.m. — Study in scripture
- 11:30 a.m. — Oakland Press perspective
- Noon — The way the truth and the life
- 12:30 p.m. — Abundant life Arabic ministries
- 1 p.m. — Rising tide
- 2 p.m. — Conflict at the crossroads: Civil War
- 2:30 p.m. — The problem of life
- 3 p.m. — Travel the movie trail
- 4 p.m. — Crisis in the modern

- family: teen concerns
- 5 p.m. — Legally speaking
- 5:30 p.m. — Groove session
- 6 p.m. — Spontaneous seniors
- 7 p.m. — Ice cream social
- 8 p.m. — North American Indian journal
- 9 p.m. — Founders festival pet show.

Thursday, Aug. 25

- 10 a.m. — Senior messenger
- 11 a.m. — Pet pointers
- 11:30 a.m. — Bagels and talk with Tracy and Phil
- Noon — Cash talks
- 12:30 p.m. — Citizens against government waste
- 1 p.m. — Day to remember
- 1:30 p.m. — Restoring the Rouge
- 2 p.m. — My vote counts
- 2:30 p.m. — Chi-aerobics
- 3 p.m. — Business and residential news
- 3:30 p.m. — Viewpoint
- 4 p.m. — Clydesdale horses
- 4:30 p.m. — Performance
- 5 p.m. — Night life
- 6 p.m. — Coffee and conversation
- 7 p.m. — Travels with Kay: Syria and Turkey
- 7:30 p.m. — Dollars and sense with J.R.: M-Care
- 8 p.m. — Novi news week
- 8:30 p.m. — The road: motorcycling
- 9:30 p.m. — Travelin' on: southwest.

Friday, Aug. 26

— Request your favorite community access program to be cablecast on Friday between 3 p.m. and 9 p.m. Call MetroVision at 653-7303.

Blood drive set Aug. 27

Let the red stuff flow... that's what they're asking at Farmington's St. Gerald Catholic Church. An American Red Cross blood drive will be at the church, 21220

Farmington Road, north of Eight Mile, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 27. For a reservation, call Vince Scanio at 474-4541 in the evenings.

In-line skating demo planned

Rollerblade Inc. will sponsor a free in-line skating demonstration at the Farmington Hills Play It Again Sports store, 28946 Orchard Lake Road, from noon to 4 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 21.

Representatives will be on hand to answer questions about Rollerblade products.

In-line skating is the fastest growing recreational activity in

the United States, according to a report issued by the International In-Line Skating Association.

MUSIC FOR YOUNG CHILDREN
A Unique Method of Music Education
"A Unique Method of Music Education" parents, children & teachers involved in creating music. Keyboard, singing, rhythm, ear training & sight reading. Free & ongoing and free instruction.
For more info call:
SHELLY TOROSSIAN
(10 Years Experience)
661-5411



Drop in at our Maternity Open House on August 20.

The completely new Special Delivery Center at Botsford General Hospital has its own private entrance, waiting room/lobby and direct admission. Our specialized Labor/Delivery/Recovery (LDR) rooms are designed so you can stay comfortably in one room during childbirth with easy access to the latest technology.

Throughout the afternoon there will be self-guided tours and speakers will be covering topics such as financial planning, day care options and breast-feeding versus bottle-feeding.

There will also be door prizes and free refreshments! So drop in Saturday, August 20, from 1:00-4:00 and find out what you can expect from our Special Delivery Center. For more information, call (810) 442-7986.

Special Delivery Center

We baby you and your baby, every step of the way.

28050 Grand River Avenue Farmington Hills, MI 48336-5922



botsford general hospital

©1994 Botsford General Hospital

LAIR Lanes
24001 Orchard Lake Road • Farmington • 476-1550
Good Old Days of Bowling
50¢ Bowling & Hot Dogs
August 12-21st
Rent Out M-J's Place • For All Occasions

GRAND OPENING!
August 27!*
Dance & Fitness Wear
The Hottest Dance & Fitness Fashions
A Complete Line of Pointe, Tap, Jazz & Ballet Shoes
10% Off Your Total Purchase With Ad
In Novi Town Center of Grand River & Novi Rds.
(Next to Sony) • Hours: Mon.-Fri. 10-7; Sat. 10-5 (open 10-10)
810-305-5590

Barbara Hatch School of Dance
Ballet • Pointe • Tap
Jazz
Preschool Through Adult
Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced Levels
Morning Preschool & Adult Classes
Farmington Dance Theatre
"Junior Company"
NOW ACCEPTING FALL ENROLLMENT
REGISTRATION: AUGUST 30 & SEPT. 1 5-7 P.M.
Farmington Dance Theatre
Barbara Hatch, Director • Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance
31101 Grand River • Downtown Farmington
16 Block East of Farmington Rd. behind The Art Alcove
(810) 476-7074 • (810) 248-3310