

CABLE CONNECTION

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KAREN COLLINS

With all the mergers, buy-outs and acquisitions we read about, it seems the giants are doing a lot of wheeling and dealing without much input from the "little guy."

Just about everyone I talk to has a story of how they lost out when the big guys made their deals:

The woman who had been saving UPC codes for months and finally had enough for a large rebate only to find out the company

was sold and would no longer accept this offer.

The man who couldn't return his defective product because the store's new owners didn't abide by the previous corporation's return policy.

The tenant who now had to get rid of his beloved dog because his new apartment owner adopted different rules on pet ownership.

Well, that's not the case this time around.

Telecommunication powerhouse Time Warner decided to merge with MetroVision, the company that provides our cable services here in the cities of Novi, Farmington and Farmington Hills.

The FCC enables cities who have a contract with cable compa-

nies who face a transfer of ownership, the right to approve that change. That way cities can ensure that the new cable company will fulfill all the obligations of the old.

And that's exactly what we did here at the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission (SWOCC). But it wasn't as simple as you might think. To assist us in this process, we hired a consultant (CTIC Associates) and an attorney specializing in telecommunications from Miller, Canfield, Peddock and Stone's Washington, D.C. office.

Since November, SWOCC has evaluated the transfer request, conducted reviews and audits and drafted a transfer agreement.

We've been successful in transferring all rights, obligations and responsibilities through this agreement from MetroVision to Time Warner Entertainment-Advance/Newhouse (TWEAN). SWOCC has also laid the groundwork for upcoming renewal negotiations since this agreement expires in 1997.

On top of that, we were able to secure several additional items to ensure that each cable subscriber doesn't lose anything in this process:

■ Subscribers will soon have additional channel capacity. TWEAN will fulfill MetroVision's original franchise obligation to enact a shadow cable by

completing a state-of-the-art fiber optic upgrade, allowing for more channels.

■ The upgrade will be secured by a performance bond to ensure its completion.

■ Subscribers will not bear the cost of this upgrade.

■ TWEAN will pay the consultant and attorney expenses that SWOCC incurred in evaluating and negotiating this transfer.

■ Any costs that Time Warner or Advance Newhouse incur in this transfer process will not be borne by the subscribers.

You can't always have a say in the business moves of corporate giants. But thanks to FCC regulations and local enforcement by SWOCC, you can be sure that someone is looking out for your best interest when it comes to cable TV.

Local funeral home manager completes course

Bruce E. Lantto, manager of the Thayer-Rock Funeral Home in Farmington, has completed a series of lectures and visual instruction in the aspects of mortuary science and funeral practice.

The curriculum, presented by the Dodge Institute for Advanced Mortuary Studies of Cambridge, Mass., was highlighted by the inclusion of a crisis intervention expert, Dr. Earl Grollman.

Educational topics studied included the areas of children and grief, suicide and violent deaths, psychology, sociology, multi-cultural funeral rites and customs, psychiatry and traditional values

in contemporary times. More than a dozen experts on death, grief and bereavement shared their insight for the international class of more than 100 students who traveled from as far away as Panama and Japan.



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