

New cable access explained to users

By DOUG JOHNSON
STAFF WRITER

The new cable access setup was explained in detail Thursday night at a meeting with users at the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission building. Karen Collins, executive director of SWOCC, asked for patience as the process of closing Time Warner studio and consolidating their equipment with the commission's is completed. The studio will close about

March 1. These shared resources should get us a state-of-the-art studio," Collins said. "There will be a transition period. I am asking for patience from all of you." The new cable agreement with Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi calls for closing the Time Warner studio which opened in the mid-'80s. Many cable companies are getting out of the access business, but the new local agreement has a 16-

year access provision. More space, newer equipment and added staff are three things Collins cited as benefits of the consolidation. Here are some of the details: SWOCC has created three new positions - a community producer, a video programmer, and a public access coordinator. Melissa Cohn has been hired for the third spot. She attended Central Michigan University and graduated from Specs Howard Broadcasting. "I have a radio background but I am enjoying working in TV," she said.

SWOCC will be talking with the Farmington Hills planning staff and likely with the Zoning Board of Appeals to see if the current facility in Freeway Industrial Park can be expanded.

The commission will soon have a full-service, 24-hour, seven-day-a-week digitized, automated playback system running off of a file server. Cost is set at about \$200,000 and the equipment has been ordered. The playback will be for Channel 8 (Farmington Hills), Channel 12 (INFO TV), and for Channel 16 (Farmington) and the Novi Channel 12.

Bids will be sought on a computerized editing system for access users to edit shows with. It is a tape to computer back to tape system.

Three remote camera pack-

ages for signout, utilizing smaller equipment (one in the mini DV format) will be available.

A refurbished mobile van for taping and editing remote shows will be available; it is not yet refurbished. Access users toured the van after the meeting Thursday.

Eric Angott, video operations manager, told access users they would like the new editing equipment, which uses Adobe Premier software.

Cohn spoke at the meeting and said current users will get first shot at new production classes. "You will not have to be retrained (in fundamentals) if you had training with Time Warner," she said.

A class, SWOCC Studio Training, is being offered Feb. 7, Feb. 28, March 6, March 26, April 9 and April 26. SWOCC Van Workshop is set for April 23, May 9 and June 19. Camcorder training and non-linear editing workshops will occur later.

SWOCC is holding a logo contest to create a symbol for (access) Channel 12. Deadline for entries is April 1. Winner will get a JVC DV camcorder.

Following the meeting many people signed up for the workshops. Collins fielded several questions from Time Warner users, who expressed concerns about their old show tapes, staff, and SWOCC studio usage.

Channel 12 will run a taped version of the access presentation in the near future.

Board OK's revised sponsorship policy for school teams, clubs

By TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

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A policy adopted Tuesday by the Farmington Board of Education enables booster groups and sponsors to raise important revenue and awareness about student activities such as athletics and band.

According to the policy, sponsorships must be "consistent with the district's mission, beliefs and policies," and not interfere with the educational process.

Building administrators will, in cooperation with coaches, activity sponsors and booster groups, have the authority to monitor what does or doesn't go up on sponsor boards, banners or other promotional items.

School board Secretary Gary Sharp, who coaches youth baseball, applauded the final policy, which was unanimously adopted following a second reading.

"It's a workable policy that allows our booster groups to raise money," Sharp said. "But (it) still preserves the integrity of the educational community. I think it's a really good compromise policy."

Sharp noted that, during the two months since the original policy was introduced, the district and boost-

er groups were able to agree on some important changes. One of those is that sponsorship boards can be removed after an event, so that the next team or club using a particular indoor or outdoor facility could display their board.

Signs also may be covered, such as those that might be displayed at a football field.

"For example, at a high school football stadium, there would be a sponsor's sign put up by the high school's football booster's club," he said. "When that stadium was being used for a soccer event, or a track meet, that sign would be covered."

The policy spells out several guidelines for sponsor boards or banners include the following:

An ad-hoc committee will develop guidelines for placement, size and appearance.

They must convey a positive message of support for the team, activity or school.

All activities will have equal opportunity to be represented.

Also, the policy - which will be reviewed no later than December 2002 - will honor existing sponsorships until existing contracts expire.

Meanwhile, no messages promoting political issues or candidates will be permitted.



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The Farmington Area Commission on Aging is seeking nominations for the 2001 Diamond Award. The Diamond Award will be presented during the Annual Volunteer Luncheon on April 10 at the Costick Center.

Nominees must be over 75 years of age and presently active in community service to the Farmington/Farmington Hills community. The community service may be volunteered or paid service. Nominations must be received no later than March 19.

Any questions may be directed to Carl S. Christoph at (248) 474-8400.

Anyone may submit a nomination. Nominations should be mailed to Carl S. Christoph, chairman: Farmington Area Commission on Aging, 33312 Grand River Avenue, Farmington, MI 48335.



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