

# How cable television stacks up in other towns

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All you have to do is make a local telephone call to MetroVision, the cable television company operating in Redford Township. And the staff there will make it all possible through public-access programming.

But the MetroVision telephones are not ringing off the hook with calls for such programming.

In fact, they've been relatively quiet in that area during the 15 months public-access programming has been available. During that time, only 26 programs were aired on public-access station 12.

deo productions can be aired, the volume of such programming appears scarce.

"But Tom Bjorklund, system manager for MetroVision, is content with the amount to date and is confident it will increase.

"Public-access programming in Redford is going over better than I thought it would," said Bjorklund. "In a conservative, bedroom community like Redford, we expected difficulty in getting the public involved in public-access programming.

"Among the hurdles we have to clear with initiation of public-access programming are instruction on the use of equipment and development of ideas people have for their productions," Bjorklund said.

"The more experience people receive through program participation, the more our equipment is used and the quality will continue to improve. Right from the start, the quality of public-access programming in Redford has been good and is improving."

"The Redford Soccer Club has produced five programs of teams in action and club members have become proficient enough to operate the cameras without our assistance. In time, they may acquire the experience to be able to do their own editing," he said.

the volume and diversity of local productions to include more informational and educational programming. But the type of programming aired is strictly up to what the community produces," Bjorklund said.

Most of the programming thus far has been initiated and/or produced by the MetroVision staff.

"WE'VE TAKEN the programming initiative much of the time to help get the word out to the public through our cable television subscribers that public access is available," Bjorklund said.

"We also promote it to our subscribers via a listing that appears on one local cable station of public-access programs to be aired. But I think the most effective publicity method has been by word of mouth.

"There's certainly a great deal of room to grow in the public-access area in Redford with the type of programming limited only by the imagination of the people here. Our staff will continue to encourage public-access programming and we are anxious to help anyone who is interested.

"All anyone has to do is give us a call at 538-1313," said Bjorklund.

The MetroVision staff currently has two cameras, which can be used by Redford residents for filming, he said. Staff members will provide assistance in helping persons to operate the camera equipment and will even

help do the filming for novices until they gain the experience to handle the cameras alone, Bjorklund noted.

For a non-profit production, there is no charge for the use of equipment or staff assistance, he said.

"WE'RE COMMITTED by our contract with Redford Township to provide public-access programming. The

contract calls for our company to spend a minimum of \$50,000 for studio equipment that is available to the public," said Bjorklund.

"We've spent \$150,000 to date and we just spent another \$120,000 for a mobile van complete with camera equipment, which will improve the quality and versatility of public-access programming."

## Metrovision: the cable of 3 cities

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Omnicom cable television, warned that Metrovision may be forced to raise subscribers' rates substantially in coming years if they intend to operate on a 15 percent return on their investment.

Both competing companies were skeptical of Metrovision's promise to bury a second cable which would double the system's 56-channel capacity when 90 percent of the channel space on the first cable is allocated.

HOWEVER, council members in the three cities seemed swayed by the clear endorsement of Metrovision's bid by an independent national cable con-

sulting firm, Cable Television Information Center Associates (CTIC Associates) and the recommendation given Metrovision by a local committee comprised of city managers of the three cities and a councilman from each city.

"I'm disappointed that the councils didn't give the (cable) companies a chance to provide a final response to the (CTIC) evaluation," said Newell of Omnicom. "But that's their choice; they control the process. There are still a number of unanswered questions but apparently those questions were answered to the satisfaction of the three commissions and we abide by their decision."

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