

## Deregulation

### Cable TV users still have some rights

Are you frustrated by the high cost of cable television? If so, you are probably not alone.

Since April 1, 1999, the cable industry has been deregulated. Basically, that means that the Federal Communications Commission no longer has the authority to accept or deny complaints about rates for cable channels. They do, however, continue to review appeals of local rate orders involving basic cable service.

So what does all of this mean to you? Although the FCC has stopped resolving rate complaints, there are a few rights all cable consumers have in a deregulated cable marketplace. Here are some things to consider:

■ Consumers should expect a fair deal from their local cable company, with reasonable rates that reflect the costs of doing business.

■ Consumers should expect an explanation from their cable

company whenever rates for the programming service tier are raised due to the costs of obtaining programming.

■ Consumers are entitled to write or call their cable company whenever they have complaints about their cable services. Consumers should expect a speedy response. Time Warner's phone number is (248) 563-7300.

Here is another thing to remember: If your cable service is out, you are entitled to a refund for the time your service was off. However, you must call the cable company to alert them.

Residents of Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi also have the Southwestern Oakland

**CABLE CONNECTION**



CAREN COLLINS

Cable Commission as a resource for their cable concerns. The FCC is still required to respond to complaints about basic tier service and SWOCC will still submit those complaints. In addition, SWOCC can resolve complaints regarding customer service and outages that have been unresolved by the cable company. Our phone number is (248) 473-7266.

Citizens are also encouraged to write to their local governments, state government or federal government with grievances that cannot be resolved by any of the above means. Sometimes it's the law that is the problem.

You may contact the following senators with your concerns: Sen. Carl Levin, Russell Senate Office Building, Room 459, Washington D.C., 20510. Sen.

**SWOCC**

Spencer Abraham can be written to at the Dirksen Senate Building, Room 205, Washington D.C. 20510. Joe Knollenberg can be reached at the U.S. House of Representatives, Washington D.C. 20515.

Caren Collins is the Executive Director of the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission. The next SWOCC meeting is at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 10 at Farmington City Hall. The next CAC meeting is at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 14, at SWOCC. The next Access Forum is at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 3 at SWOCC.

## Check out area's musical servings

The cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills offers musical entertainment throughout the summer:

■ The Downtown Development Authority wraps up its evening concert series "Celebrate the Sounds" at 7:50 p.m. Friday, Aug. 6, under the gazebo in downtown Farmington next to the Village Commons on Grand River. Bob and Carl will perform country, oldies and top 40.

■ The Birmingham Straw Hat Band will perform as part of the Stars in the Park concert series at 8 p.m.

Thursday, Aug. 5, at Heritage Park in Farmington Hills. This musical series is presented by the city's Department of Special Services and features local talent every Thursday night. The Farmington Community Chorus will perform Aug. 12. There is no charge.

■ Deanyne Waldron and Melvin Bookus will perform an evening of spirituals as part of a free concert series at 8 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 4, at Nardin Park United Methodist Church in Farmington Hills. All concerts are free. Call 476-8860.

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**PROVIDENCE**

Livonia: Mission Health Medical Center  
Thursday, August 12th, 6:30-8:30 pm  
37195 Seven Mile Rd. (at Newburgh), Livonia

Novi Park: Providence Medical Center - Providence Park  
Saturday, August 7th, 1-3 pm  
47001 Grand River Avenue (South Road entrance), Novi

Southfield:  
Providence Hospital  
Saturday, August 14th, 1-3 pm  
22250 Providence Dr. Medical Building  
Free parking. Reservations are required. Call 1-800-848-2822

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