



AGENDA
CABLE COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
May 6, 2015
Meridian Township Municipal Building
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI
Administrative Conference Room

- A. Call Meeting to Order at 6:00 p.m.
- B. Public Remarks
- C. Approval of Agenda
- D. Approval of Minutes
 April 1, 2015 Regular Meeting
- E. Communications/Announcements
- F. Old Business
 - 1. AT&T Audit Updates
 - 2. Comcast
 - a. Time Warner/Charter Transaction Terminated
 - b. Franchise Renewal
- G. New Business
 - 1. Website Redesign - RFP Draft document (to be provided at meeting)
- H. Reports
 - 1. Complaints/Compliments: Deborah Guthrie
 - 2. Video Service Provider(s):
 - 3. Communications Director Report: Deborah Guthrie
 - a. Communications Dept. Quarterly Report
 - b. Communications Dept. Goals Update
 - 4. Chair's Report: Walter Benenson
 - 5. Township Information: Ron Styka
 - 6. Programming: Deborah Guthrie
 - 7. Viewership/Promotions: Deborah Guthrie
 - 8. Finance: Deborah Guthrie
- I. Other Business & Announcements
- J. Public Remarks
- K. Adjournment

Cable Communications Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

Administrative Conference Room
Meridian Municipal Building, Okemos, MI

April 1, 2015

Draft

Present: Commissioners: Chair, Walter Benenson, Brian Seipel, Andrew Lathrop and Ron Styka
Staff: Deborah Guthrie, Communications Director; Andrea Smiley, Administrative Assistant
Township: None
Comcast: None
AT&T: None
Haslett Schools: None
Okemos Schools: None

Call to Order: Commissioner Benenson called the meeting to order at **6:10 pm**.

Public Remarks: No Public Present

Introductions: None

Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner Benenson moved TO APPROVE AGENDA AS SUBMITTED. Seconded by Commissioner Seipel.

Voice vote: Unanimous

Approval of Minutes:

Township Board Liaison & Trustee, Ron Styka began the discussion by asking who requested the transcribed minutes. Director, Guthrie responded that because of some concerned emails about the meeting, it was decided best to transcribe the minutes and include in the packet.

Commissioner Benenson moved TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF January 14, 2015. Seconded by Commissioner Lathrop.

Voice vote: Unanimous

Director, Guthrie asked if the January 26th minutes were the minutes that Commissioner Kiyak had emailed about some discrepancies. Director Guthrie asked Trustee Ron Styka if that is the way the Township Board would handle a similar situation. Styka responded that since the concerns were in writing, the Commissioners could vote on any changes to the minutes.

Commissioner Benenson moved TO TABLE THE MINUTES OF January 26, 2015.
Seconded by Commissioner Lathrop.

Voice vote: Unanimous

Commissioner Seipel requested to comment on the transcribed minutes stating that it appeared a lot of people to be talking over each other and the challenge involved to transcribe, so he was commending whoever was responsible for the transcription. Trustee Styka commented that the transcribed minutes are not the true minutes; they are only used to vote on changes to the original minutes. Commissioner Seipel asked if they could be revisited at a later date.

Director, Guthrie clarified the motion and vote.

Commissioner Lathrop moved TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF February 3, 2015.
Seconded by Commissioner Benenson.

Voice Vote: Unanimous

Communications/Announcements:

Director, Guthrie started discussion by announcing the new Township Asset Brochure that was printed as a result of a request by the Township Treasurer, Julie Brixie. Graphic Designer, Lynn Meikle helped design and put together the brochure. Commissioner Benenson moved TO MAKE A MOTION to commend the department on its efforts. Seconded by Commissioner Seipel.

Director, Guthrie continued the discussion by stating that currently these print materials are being charged to the Communications Department; however, moving forward she would like to see more of a Township General Fund for these items. While print materials, like the Asset Brochure, are good for the Department and the Township, each amount adds up. Director, Guthrie would like to have more discussion during the budget review to include a Communications/Marketing line.

Trustee Styka asked if there was something Director Guthrie needed him to take to the Board. He also asked if she had discussed with the Township Manager. Director Guthrie stated that she will discuss moving forward, she just wanted the Cable Commission to be aware and to start thinking about.

Old Business:

1. Audit Updates

Commissioner Benenson asked for discussion on the updates. Director, Guthrie began by stating that the deadline for AT&T to pay the communities involved in the audit is the middle of May. Currently the auditor, Garth Ashpaugh, is negotiating the amount that each community will receive;

however, AT&T is giving push back on some items that show money owed. The main discussion is about where customer service money credits go; to cable, to AT&T, etc. Meridian Township organized and have been collecting the fees from the other communities and paying the attorney fees.

Commissioner Benenson asked the attitude of AT&T; have they been hard to deal with? Director Guthrie responded that AT&T is willing to pay the communities for some of the items on the audit, but not all items. So, the communities, in the future, will need to decide if an audit every two years is worth the time. AT&T has admitted that their calculations are off, but will not redo. Commissioner Seipel asked if a cost benefit analysis had been done in order to see the extent the audit would be worth. Director Guthrie stated that no community would pay for an analysis. Trustee Styka asked what the preliminary numbers show. Director Guthrie commented that AT&T owes Meridian Township approximately \$14,000; however, total costs are approximately \$5,500 plus staff time, coordinating meetings, correspondences, conference calls, etc. Bottom line is that it is beneficial to perform an audit, but not all the time and you can only request to go back two years.

2. Comcast Transfer of Control

Director Guthrie started the discussion stating she received a list from Attorneys, Mike Watzka and Joseph VanEaton to send out via snail mail, the signed transfer agreement. Discussion about whether the commissioners received; the signed agreement is in the packet. Commissioner Benenson asked Director Guthrie if she thought the transfer process went well. Director Guthrie stated that she was concerned, now, about the franchise agreement negotiation process. Meeting dates have been proposed and Director Guthrie feels a meeting will be arranged by the end of April.

New Business:

1. Franchise Renewal
2. Internet Service in Meridian Township

Director Guthrie led the discussion by commenting about a resident, Wayne Beyea, who needs service at his home located on Meridian Road. His area does not have access to high speed internet. Director Guthrie communicated the concerns to John Gardner, Comcast Representative, who will have a survey done to determine costs in extending services down that part of Meridian Road. The Commission is concerned with Internet service to the residents in the Township. Commissioner Seipel proposed that Director Guthrie ask Comcast, even though they aren't required, to provide a map and look for the holes in service for Meridian Township. Commissioner Benenson asked about other options for those residents without Comcast service.

Director Guthrie stated that she will follow up and ask for a map, as well as areas that Comcast doesn't service. This will be helpful for the Communications Needs Assessment, as well.

Commissioner Benenson asked about Doris Swartz and whether she ever submitted her application for At-Large Commissioner. Trustee Styka stated that she attends Township Board meetings periodically and he would discuss with her next time she attends.

Director Guthrie received text message from John Gardner stating that he will not be able to attend April or May's meeting because he is and will be chaperoning 4th grade camps. Director Guthrie stated that she will ask if he would like the May meeting changed.

Reports:

1. Cable Compliments/Complaints: Commissioner Benenson began the discussion asking about a complaint involving cable running above ground across a customer's back yard. Director Guthrie explained that a resident posted a photo on Facebook showing the cable extending across their yards near children play areas. John Gardner was contacted and the issue was resolved. However, there is a continued concern about Comcast customer service now that the transfer is signed; making sure the residents continue to receive good service.
2. Video Service Provider(s): No discussion.
3. Communications Director's Report: Director Guthrie discussed Meridian Township's goals for the Communications Department; increasing engagement with staff and public and making a connection. The report is due by April 15 and the department staff began collecting information. The department staff will take a look at analytics to compare and contrast from month to month and year to year. Director Guthrie provided examples of how the department is working to increase engagement such as employee milestones, social news hour, pet of the week, showcasing Interns, feature stories on employees (based on Humans of New York story) and renewed programming.
4. Chair's Report: No discussion or report.
5. Township Information: Commissioner Styka discussed developments and events within the Township; Jimmy Johns/Mattress Store, Apartment Complex at Jolly and Okemos Roads, Fire Station Groundbreaking, Police awards/Citizen awards, property in downtown Okemos going up for sale and the Pedestrian Bridge. The Township continues to look for development areas in Haslett. The Township Board is concerned about developing in a sensible way. Biggby Coffee will be coming to Haslett with a drive-thru.

With all the developments the Township needs to make sure that good cable service is provided to the businesses. All new apartment complexes need cable service.

Commissioner Lathrop asked if HOMTV has an app. Director Guthrie responded that is something in the works, possibly next year.

6. Programming: Director Guthrie discussed how programming is down but with higher quality.
7. Viewership/Promotions: No discussion
8. Finance: Director Guthrie referred back to adding a Communications/Marketing line to the budget so that all communications, events and print materials for the Township aren't charged to the department. The budget will be submitted in June for approval.

Other Business & Announcements:

Director Guthrie restated the success of the Fire Station Groundbreaking Ceremony. She also spoke about the Media Central Conference that HOMTV sponsored and Trustee Styka commented that he attended and thought it provided great information and was very well attended. Director Guthrie stated that the conference netted \$4,000, split between MI NATOA and ACM.

Commissioner Lathrop asked a question about the progress with the new website; he recommended 3m company for branding and website redesign, stating that he would forward the proposal that his company received.

Public Remarks: No Discussion

Commissioner Seipel moved TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. Seconded by Commissioner Lathrop.

Hearing no objections, Chair Benenson ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT **7:25 p.m.**

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting is scheduled for the **May 6, 2015 in the Administrative Conference Room.**

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN

**CABLE COMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION**

COMMUNICATIONS

March 16, 2015

Dear Deborah, Brandie and Andrea,

Thank you for inviting us to speak on branding best practices at the Media Central conference. This was a great opportunity for us to help educate local communications professionals not only about the history and importance of branding, but also how to implement it. We found our time there to be very worthwhile, and met many attendees interested in learning more about how to brand their own organizations. It was a privilege to attend the conference and we look forward to working with you on future branding initiatives.

Sincerely,

The King Media Team

Deborah Guthrie

From: members-bounces@lists.natoa.org on behalf of Steve Traylor <STraylor@natoa.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 09, 2015 8:50 AM
To: members@lists.natoa.org; policy@lists.natoa.org
Subject: [Members] FCC to Hold Workshop on E-Rate Funded Fiber Build Projects
Attachments: ATT00001.txt

WIRELINE COMPETITION BUREAU AND OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & POLICY ANALYSIS ANNOUNCE PUBLIC WORKSHOP ON E-RATE FUNDED FIBER BUILD PROJECTS

The Wireline Competition Bureau and the Office of Strategic Planning & Policy Analysis announce that a public workshop will be held to provide schools, libraries, providers, and state and local policy makers with information and tools for planning fiber build projects under the new E-rate rules. The workshop will be held on May 20, 2015 starting at 1 p.m., at FCC headquarters in Washington, DC.

The December 2014 *Second E-rate Modernization Order* provided schools and libraries, particularly those in rural areas, with additional flexibility and options for purchasing affordable high-speed broadband connectivity. The *Order* took several actions to close the rural connectivity gap, including suspending USAC's multi-year amortization policy for non-recurring construction costs, allowing applicants to pay the non-discounted portion of non-recurring construction costs over multiple years, encouraging state matching funds for special construction, equalizing the E-rate program's treatment of lit and dark fiber, and permitting self-construction of high-speed broadband networks when that is the most cost-effective option. As a result of these efforts, we expect there to be an increasing number of E-rate applicants seeking E-rate funding to build fiber to schools and libraries beginning in Funding Year 2016.

The workshop will provide an overview of the new E-rate rules governing installment payments, state matching for fiber builds, leasing and management of dark fiber, and self-construction. It will explore best practices for fiber builds and practical challenges to aligning fiber builds with the E-rate application process and other E-rate rules, and will focus particular attention on the issues applicants need to consider in order to choose the most cost-effective option for deploying fiber. Participants will have the opportunity to hear from a number of school districts, library systems, and providers about fiber build projects that have been completed, that are in progress, or that are being contemplated. The fiber project discussions will include lessons learned from past projects, and questions and issues anticipated for future projects.

What: Workshop on Fiber Build Projects

Date: May 20, 2015

Start Time: 1 p.m.

Location: Commission Meeting Room, FCC Headquarters, 445 12th Street SW, Washington, DC 20554

Members of the public are invited to attend. The Commission will also provide audio and video coverage of the discussion on the FCC's Web page at www.fcc.gov/live.

Open captioning will be provided for this event. Other reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities are available upon request. Please include a description of the accommodation needed. Individuals making such requests must include their contact information should FCC staff need to contact them for more information. Requests should be made as early as possible; last-minute requests will be accepted, but may be impossible to fulfill. Please send an email to fcc504@fcc.gov or call the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau at 202-418-0530 (voice), 202-418-0432 (TTY), or 844-432-2275 (ASL videophone).

For more information, please contact Charles Eberle at 202-418-2248 or Charles.Eberle@fcc.gov, or Sibö McNally at 202-418-1372 or Sibo.McNally@fcc.gov.

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN

**CABLE COMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION**

**OLD
BUSINESS**



One Comcast Center
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103

April 27, 2015

Deborah Guthrie
Cable Coordinator
Township of Meridian Charter
5151 Marsh Road
Okemos, MI 48864

Re: Comcast/Time Warner Cable/Charter Transactions Terminated and
The Formation of GreatLand Connections Will Not Proceed

Dear Ms. Guthrie:

More than a year ago, Comcast Corporation ("Comcast"), the ultimate parent of the entity that holds the cable franchise in your community, entered into a merger agreement with Time Warner Cable, Inc. ("Time Warner Cable"). In addition to acquiring cable systems currently served by Time Warner Cable, certain existing Comcast-served cable systems were to be spun off to a new cable company called GreatLand Connections, Inc. We appreciate the careful consideration that was given to this transaction on a local level, and we are gratified that every one of the hundreds of local communities that were required to consent to the transaction did grant their consent.

However, at this time we have made a determination to terminate our merger agreement with Time Warner Cable and our transactions agreement with Charter Communications, Inc. And, since the formation of GreatLand Connections was always contingent upon the closing of our transaction with Time Warner Cable, the formation of GreatLand will not proceed.

Accordingly, by this letter, Comcast provides formal notice that the GreatLand Connections transaction will not proceed and withdraws the FCC Form 394 filing. It is not necessary for you to take any further action at this time. We look forward to continuing to serve your community.

If you have any immediate questions, you are welcome to contact me at (215) 286-7899 or send an email to klayton_fennell@comcast.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Klayton F. Fennell".

Klayton F. Fennell
Senior Vice President, Government Affairs

cc: Emmett Coleman, RVP of Government Affairs, Comcast Twin Cities Region
Lisa Birmingham, RVP of Government Affairs, Comcast Heartland Region
Andy Macke, RVP of Government Affairs, Comcast Big South Region
Derek Cooper, RVP of Government Affairs, Comcast Florida and SE AL Region

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN

**CABLE COMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION**

**COMPLAINTS/
COMPLIMENTS**

Individual Video Provider Customer Intakes

Complaint Number 2015-007

Date 3/4/2015

Name Linda Wells

Street Address 1183 Haslett Rd.

City / Zip Haslett 48840-

Work Phone **Ext**

Cell Phone

Home Phone (517) 974-4582

Email

Best Time to Call

Best Time to Service

Service Provider Comcast

Reason for Calling Complaint

Unburied Cable **Waiting for Service** **Missed Service Call** **Cable Box**

Bad Reception **Cable Out** **Cannot Phone** **Other**

Bad Treatment **Bad Information** **No Response to Request**

Problem Description Needs service checked; she believes someone has tapped into her service, there is new cable on outside of her house that she didn't authorize. She has Internet and cable but has not been able to use the Internet for almost 2 years because someone has taken over her network id and changed the password. She stated that while she is watching TV she can see settings being changed on the TV menus without her control.

Problem Before? Yes **Ongoing** **MPSC Information**

Assigned Staff Deborah Guthrie and Andrea Smiley **Given**

Staff Response Communicated concerns to Comcast representative, John Gardner, via phone.

Resolution

Individual Video Provider Customer Intakes

Complaint Number 2015-008

Date 2/20/2015

Name Wayne Beyea

Street Address 5273 Meridian Rd.

City / Zip Okemos 48864-

Work Phone **Ext**

Cell Phone 5172824418

Home Phone (517) 927-2267

Email beyea@msu.edu

Best Time to Call

Best Time to Service

Service Provider Comcast

Reason for Calling Complaint

Unburied Cable **Waiting for Service** **Missed Service Call** **Cable Box**
Bad Reception **Cable Out** **Cannot Phone** **Other**
Bad Treatment **Bad Information** **No Response to Request**

Problem Description He is unable to receive service from Comcast. He lives between Piper Rd. and North Meridian Road Park. Several years ago he tried to get service but hasn't been able to. He is willing to pay a monthly service fee.

Problem Before? Yes **Ongoing** **MPSC Information**

Assigned Staff Deborah Guthrie, Communications Director **Given**

Staff Response John Wagner, Comcast Representative and Deborah Guthrie, Communications Director have had several conversations/discussions about service along this stretch of Meridian Rd. John Wagner stated that Comcast would be conducting a site survey of the area to find out how much the cost would be to extend services.

Resolution

Individual Video Provider Customer Intakes

Complaint Number 2015-009

Date 4/22/2015

Name John Ruh

Street Address 1808 Birchwood Dr

City / Zip Okemos 48864-

Work Phone **Ext**

Cell Phone

Home Phone (517) 349-2955

Email

Best Time to Call

Best Time to Service

Service Provider Comcast

Reason for Calling Complaint

Unburied Cable **Waiting for Service** **Missed Service Call** **Cable Box**
Bad Reception **Cable Out** **Cannot Phone** **Other**
Bad Treatment **Bad Information** **No Response to Request**

Problem Description Unable to connect with customer service at Comcast; on hold for 45-50 minutes each time
Unhappy with the increases in fees over and over again. He feels that Comcast is burying programming costs in fees so that subscribers can't eliminate or change their expenses. He feels the most inexcusable costs are labeled Broadcast TV fee for retransmitting and now Regional Sports fees for transmitting sports networks. He would like to be able to

Problem Before? Yes **Ongoing** **MPSC Information**
Assigned Staff Andrea Smiley/Deborah Guthrie **Given**

Staff Response Stated that I would take down all of the customers information and concern and forward to John Gardner, Comcast Representative for resolution.
4.29.15 Follow up call to Mr. Ruh. He stated that he received a call from a Comcast Representative but needed to call them back.
5.1.15 Mr. Ruh stated that he spoke with a representative from Comcast and all of his questions were answered; however, he was not happy the the gentlemens attitude, stating that he was receiving pricing as if he was a new customer and when that ended he would not have that same pricing. Also, the fees will remain as the fees are. He felt that his only option, per the representative, was to purchase a bundle deal in order to say money. His is a long time customer of Comcast, 15-20 years, and feels the cost/fees are excessive.

Resolution

Individual Video Provider Customer Intakes

Complaint Number 2015-010

Date 4/29/2015

Name John Munn

Street Address

City / Zip

Work Phone **Ext**

Cell Phone 5178816623

Home Phone

Email

Best Time to Call

Best Time to Service

Service Provider Comcast

Reason for Calling Complaint

Unburied Cable **Waiting for Service** **Missed Service Call** **Cable Box**

Bad Reception **Cable Out** **Cannot Phone** **Other**

Bad Treatment **Bad Information** **No Response to Request**

Problem Description The resident is actually a realtor and his client was looking at homes, no specific addresses, in Shoals subdivision located near Dobie and Cornell Roads in Okemos, MI 48864. He needed to make sure that Comcast Internet was available. He was having trouble maneuvering through the Comcast website.

Problem Before? No **Ongoing** **MPSC Information Given**

Assigned Staff

Staff Response email was sent to John Gardner, Comcast representative.

Resolution Response email received the same day from John Gardner. Realtor was also able to connect with a Comcast representative that helped him out.

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN

**CABLE COMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION**

**COMMUNICATIONS
DIRECTOR
REPORT**

**Communications Department/HOMTV
Quarterly Report
January – March, 2015**

Director's Statement:

Cable Communications Commission

Signed a Comcast Transfer of Control Agreement with Conditions; including keeping status quo for the current franchise agreement, no rate increase for Meridian subscribers, Comcast provided services will continue for free to the schools and the Township and \$12,500 in recovery costs for legal fees.

The Cable Commission has an opening for an At-large position on the commission and is seeking applications to serve. <http://tinyurl.com/nukj6rh>

New Township Website

Yates, Gebes and Guthrie have met with a handful of companies to discuss the needs of the Township for a new Township website. These discussions have aided the team as they investigate and create the RFP for a new site. The team has been able to see different approaches, applications, and avenues in which to move forward and create the RFP by mid-April. Once proposals are received, the team will narrow the field to 3-5 submissions.

AT&T Audit

The auditors are working with AT&T on the audit report, with additional information that has been provided by AT&T. The township led an audit on AT&T with 13 other communities after AT&T claimed they overpaid franchise fees due to the communities. The Statue of Limitation on the first quarter 2012 expires on or around May 10, 2015. AT&T will receive a letter for any amounts due before that time.

Central Fire Station Groundbreaking

The Communications team created a media campaign for the new Central Fire Station Groundbreaking Ceremony event. Over 100 people attended the event, including media and presenters. Staff created a social media digital campaign, press release notifications, media kit for attendees, formal and informal invites, and additional campaign materials. Photos of the event can be found on the Meridian Township Flickr account <http://tinyurl.com/kzb9kkc>. Any photos you would like added to the account can be sent to Brandon Wirth; wirth@meridian.mi.us.

Media Central Conference

HOMTV was the host of this year's Media Central Conference. The Communications team created a 3 day conference at the Lansing Center and Lansing Radisson. Over 60 people attended the event and over \$8,500 were raised in sponsorship revenue for Michigan ACM and Michigan NATOA. Presentations were given by local business owners, national and state wide leaders, as well as public service representatives. Presentations varied from emergency communications to local broadband, digital media and on air tips.

**Communications Department/HOMTV
Quarterly Report
January – March, 2015**

Programming on HOMTV:

January

- 7 Meetings Televised live – Township Board, Planning Commission, Environmental Commission, ZBA and Park Commission
- 7 Programs – All Access, Meridian News Now; Meridian News Now and All Access Promos; and a Special Feature, Sustaining the Future

February

- 7 Meetings Televised live – Township Board, Planning Commission, Environmental Commission, ZBA and Park Commission
- 30 Programs – All Access, Beyond the Badge, Meridian News Now, Meridian News Now Update; Meridian News Now, All Access and Beyond the Badge Promos; and Ice Fishing Derby, Snow Removal, Chinese New Year, How to Ski & Snowshoe, Winter Fun and Drug Drop Off PSA's

March

- 7 Meetings Televised live – Township Board, Planning Commission, Environmental Commission, ZBA and Park Commission
- 31 Programs – All Access, Beyond the Badge, Meridian News Now, Meridian News Now Update; Meridian News Now, All Access and Beyond the Badge Promos; Police Vacation Checks, Register for Recreational Sports, Germs All Around, Blood Drive, Bowling Fundraiser, Celebrate Downtown Okemos, Healthy Trails, Spring Farmers Market and Spring Recycling Event PSA's; and a Special Feature, new Central Fire Station Groundbreaking
- Introduced on March 16, a new Social Media graphic to our news programs and live meetings; SocialNewsDesk On-Air feature showing social media posts from Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram during the shows

Programming on CAMTV:

January

- 16 Programs – Battle of Ideas, Democracy Now, Inspirational Corner, Poetree-n-Motion and Novella

February

- 16 Programs – Battle of Ideas, Democracy Now, Inspirational Corner, Poetree-n-Motion, UM Wolverine Caucus and Novella

March

- 24 Programs – Battle of Ideas, Democracy Now, Inspirational Corner, Poetree-n-Motion, In the Fight and Novella

Social Media Performance Summary (12/14/14 - 3/31/15):

January

Twitter	1/1/2015 Followers	2/2/2015 Followers	Change
Meridian Twp.	1036	1084	48
HOMTV	981	1003	22
Meridian Twp. Fire Dept.	241	240	-1
Parks and Recreation		395	0
Green Meridian/Meridian Recycle	202	202	0
CAMTV	203	208	5
Harris Nature Center	383	385	2

**Communications Department/HOMTV
Quarterly Report
January – March, 2015**

Facebook Page:	1/1/15 Likes	2/2/15 Likes	Change	January Reach
Meridian Township	1326	1418	92	68213
HOMTV	946	955	9	1662
Meridian Twp. Fire Dept.	487	507	20	9448
Downtown Okemos	426	463	37	11424
Parks and Recreation	427	451	24	6162
Meridian Senior Center	154	236	82	5351
Green Meridian	229	234	5	1689
CAMTV	215	215	0	80
Total	4210	4479	269	104029

February

Twitter	2/2/2015 Followers	3/2/2015 Followers	Change
Meridian Twp.	1084	1132	48
HOMTV	1003	1023	20
Meridian Twp. Fire Dept.	240	252	12
Parks and Recreation	395	410	15
Green Meridian/Meridian Recycle	202	205	3
CAMTV	208	208	0
Harris Nature Center	385	393	8

Facebook Page:	2/2/15 Likes	3/2/15 Likes	Change	February Reach
Meridian Township	1418	1493	75	66959
HOMTV	955	955	0	9742
Meridian Twp. Fire Dept.	507	512	5	6849
Downtown Okemos	463	466	3	8723
Parks and Recreation	451	458	7	3824
Meridian Senior Center	236	446	210	23637
Green Meridian	234	234	0	479
CAMTV	215	215	0	176
Total	4479	4779	300	120389

Pinterest	2/2/2015 Followers	3/2/2015 Followers	Change
Meridian Twp.	31	35	4

Instagram	2/2/2015 Followers	3/2/2015 Followers	Change
HOMTV	92	98	6

YouTube	2/2/2015 Followers	3/2/2015 Followers	Change
Meridian Twp.	21	24	3
HOMTV	19	22	3

LinkedIn	2/2/2015 Followers	3/2/2015 Followers	Change
Meridian Twp.	138	158	20
HOMTV	496	571	75

Word Press - Blogs	2/2/2015 Followers	3/2/2015 Followers	Change
Manager's Perspective	4	4	0
Deborah's Blog	1	1	0

**Communications Department/HOMTV
Quarterly Report
January – March, 2015**

March

Twitter	3/2/2015 Followers	4/1/2015 Followers	Change
Meridian Twp.	1132	1161	29
HOMTV	1023	1034	11
Meridian Twp. Fire Dept.	252	266	14
Parks and Recreation	410	422	12
Green Meridian/Meridian Recycle	205	205	0
CAMTV	208	210	2
Harris Nature Center	393	403	10

Facebook Page:	3/2/15 Likes	4/1/15 Likes	Change	March Reach
Meridian Township	1493	1532	39	34337
HOMTV	955	930	-25	9772
Meridian Twp. Fire Dept.	512	513	1	3184
Downtown Okemos	466	466	0	324
Parks and Recreation	458	462	4	2945
Meridian Senior Center	446	468	22	991
Green Meridian	234	233	-1	3277
CAMTV	215	211	-4	161
Total	4779	4815	36	54991

Pinterest	3/2/2015 Followers	4/1/2015 Followers	Change
Meridian Twp.	35	57	22

Instagram	3/2/2015 Followers	4/1/2015 Followers	Change
HOMTV	98	100	2

YouTube	3/2/2015 Followers	4/1/2015 Followers	Change
Meridian Twp.	24	25	1
HOMTV	22	23	1

LinkedIn	3/2/2015 Followers	4/1/2015 Followers	Change
Meridian Twp.	158	159	1
HOMTV	571	591	20

Word Press - Blogs	3/2/2015 Followers	4/1/2015 Followers	Change
Manager's Perspective	4	4	0
Deborah's Blog	1	1	0

Social Media Top Posts for Meridian Township:**January**

Shared link; Best Public Elementary Schools in Michigan - Niche
14,016 People Reached, **309** Likes, Comments, Shares, **1,199** Post Clicks
 New Projects in 2015: Blog post from Township Manager Frank Walsh
2,076 People Reached, **33** Likes, Comments, Shares, **214** Post Clicks

February

Snow Emergency
2,231 People Reached, **52** Likes, Comments, Shares, **118** Post Clicks
 Shared link; Okemos and Haslett schools ranking
7,064 People Reached **209** Likes, Comments & Shares **420** Post Clicks

**Communications Department/HOMTV
Quarterly Report
January – March, 2015**

March

Police Building Craigslist Safe Site

2,316 People Reached **295** Likes, Comments & Shares **43** Post Clicks

Excavator Video; Central Fire Station

3,318 People Reached **2,374** Video Views **68** Likes, **3,380** Post Clicks

Website Updates:

Meeting & Holidays

- At the beginning of 2015, Coty Kenneth, Communications Assistant added the board meetings for the year to the calendar on the Township website. In addition to the meetings, she added the closed holidays for the Township.

Parks & Recreation Events/ HNC events

- Each month, the events featured in the Parks & Recreation Family Fun Guide have been added to the events calendar on the Township website. Event postings are complete with event description, photo, location and contact information.

Social News Desk Training

- Coty spent a couple hours training Kit Rich and Cherie Wisdom on how to use Social News Desk. This training session was important in order to capture and maintain all analytics from those who manage and/or have access to our social media accounts.

Flickr

- Analytics for Flickr, along with most photo storage websites is not available. However, since January 2015, there have been **8 albums** uploaded to the Meridian Township Flickr account, with a total of **170 photos**.

Celebrate Downtown Okemos Site

- Each week, the Celebrate Downtown Okemos website is updated; receiving 129 views in March alone. The updates have included changing and editing photos, imputing the correct information, updating sponsors and their logos and uploading various forms.

Press Releases:

January

- Help Keep Sidewalks and Pathways Safe (1/5/15)
- Calling All Polar Bears (1/5/15)
- Meridian Township Deer Management Reports Success (1/12/15)
- Meridian Township Seeks to Fill Leadership Positions (1/12/15)
- New Pedestrian Bridge Underway (1/12/15)
- Calling All Kickball Teams (1/12/15)
- Meridian Township Offers Family Winter Sports Weekends (1/12/15)
- Meridian Township Seeks a Team Leader for Twp. Engineer Position (1/14/15)
- Assistant Township Manager Director of Public Works Opportunity in Meridian Twp. (1/14/15)

**Communications Department/HOMTV
Quarterly Report
January – March, 2015**

- Family Winter Sports Weekends in Meridian Twp. (1/20/15)
- Calling All Kickball Teams (1/20/15)
- Exciting Family Winter Sports Fun in Meridian Township (1/26/15)
- Winter kickball Tournament Registration Deadline Approaching (1/26/15)
- Family Winter Sports Weekends Announcement (1/26/15)

February

- Meridian Twp. Declaration of Snow Emergency (2/3/15)
- Meridian Twp. Snow Emergency Has Been Lifted (2/3/15)
- Ice Fishing Derby for Youth in Meridian Twp. (2/3/15)
- Come on Out and Play – Winter Sports Fun in Meridian Twp. (2/3/15)
- Chinese New Year Celebration (2/3/15)
- Try Something New with Meridian Twp. Family Winter Sports Weekends (2/9/15)
- This Weekend – Meridian Twp. Ice Fishing Derby (2/9/15)
- Build a Snowman – Snow Sculpture and Enter to Win (2/9/15)
- Chinese New Year Celebration at Meridian Mall (2/9/15)
- Try Something New with Meridian Twp. Family Winter Sports Weekends – Revised (2/11/15)
- Meridian Assistant Twp. Manager – Director of Public Works Selected (2/12/15)
- Chinese New Year Celebration at Meridian Mall (2/16/15)
- Freezing Pipe Prevention (2/16/15)
- Meridian Twp. Offers Assessor's Review (2/20/15)
- Meridian Twp. Offers Assessor's Review - Revised (2/23/15)
- Selected Faulty Water Meter Bodies to be Replaced in Meridian Twp. (2/23/15)
- Meridian Twp. Looking to Fill Positions (2/23/15)
- Build a Snowman – Snow Sculpture and Enter to Win (2/23/15)

March

- Police Department Offers Safe Place to Make Craigslist Transactions (3/5/15)
- Construction of New Fire Station Moves to Final Stages (3/5/15)
- Okemos Road Pedestrian Bridge Nearing Completion (3/23/15)
- Strike Out for a Cause (3/23/15)
- New Center Fire Station Groundbreaking (3/23/15)
- Adult Softball Registration Open in Meridian Twp. (3/23/15)
- Close of Voter Registration (3/23/15)
- Paint Recycling Day (3/23/15)
- New Central Fire Station Groundbreaking (3/30/15)
- Central Fire Station Fact Sheet (3/30/15)
- Groundbreaking Flyer Invitation (3/30/15)
- Meridian Recycling Event (3/30/15)
- Meridian Recycling Event Flyer (3/30/15)
- Earth Week Cleanup (3/30/15)
- HOMTV Sponsor Local Events (3/30/15)
- Close of Voter Registration (3/30/15)

**Communications Department/HOMTV
Quarterly Report
January – March, 2015**

HOMTV Internship Program:

- HOMTV Interns contributed approximately **2,640 hours**.
- Staff completed **49** Intern examinations.
- Received **72 new** internship applications and resumes.
- Staff conducted 14 Intern training workshops
- Staff attended the following Intern Recruitment career fairs
 - Michigan State University Diversity Career Fair 1/29/15
 - Michigan State University Summer Job & Internship Fair 2/11/15
 - Michigan State University CAS Connect Career Fair 2/20/15
 - Lansing Community College Job & Internship Fair 2/24/15
 - Michigan Association of Broadcasters GLBC Career Fair 3/11/15
 - Central Michigan University BCA Career Fair 3/21/15
- Media sponsorship agreements have been created for the following upcoming events:
 - MSU Safe Place "Race for the Place" on April 12, 2015
 - MSU Science Festival April 15-18, 2015

*Sponsorship agreements include in-kind donation of pre-event promotion across multiple platforms as well as story coverage at the event.

Updates January – March:

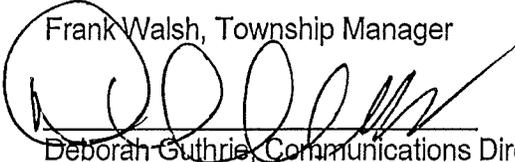
- Communications Department created and distributed **45 new** press releases.
- Completed **five of five** Cable Complaints/Cable Inquiries.
- Staff conducted **seven** interviews for the Communications Assistant/Marketing Coordinator position.

Staffing Changes

- Andrea Smiley joined the Communications Department as the Administrative Assistant II on January 14, 2015.
- Linda Toomey left the Communications Department on March 6, 2015.
- Coty Kenneth was promoted to Communications Assistant on March 26, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Frank Walsh, Township Manager

FROM: 
Deborah Guthrie, Communications Director/PIO

DATE: April 15, 2015

RE: Goals and Objectives Update

Please let this memorandum serve to provide an update on the progress of the Communications Department in meeting the Township goals and objectives established for 2015.

Goal #2a: Increase information shared with the public through social media regarding public safety tips, PSAs (Public Service Announcements), emergency communications and police and fire services.

Progress:

- The Communications department has increased awareness efforts of emergency information as it relates to the region, i.e. fire, roads and snow, through social media, press releases and the Township website.
- Info-graphics promoted on Pinterest about public safety, including safe driving, in-home fire safety with pets and safe grilling tips.
- The Communications department continues to support police by sharing press releases regarding on-going investigations.
- The department created a media campaign for the Township's New Central Fire Station Groundbreaking ceremony; over 100 people attended the event. A social media digital campaign, press release notifications and media kits were all created to increase awareness of the fire station.

Goal #2b: Provide Beyond the Badge police and fire programs and stories.

Progress:

- New episodes of Beyond the Badge programming is aired monthly, with repeat episodes airing weekly. These episodes feature public safety information, including in-home safety and severe weather updates.
- The Beyond the Badge programming also includes public safety PSAs, including the Drug Drop Off, Police Vacation Checks and the Siren Test Continuation.

Goal #2c: Strengthen communication and educate developers/builders, business owners and neighborhood associations regarding the planning process in an effort to minimize violations and negative impacts.

Progress:

- The Communications department began promoting new businesses, i.e. grand openings, menus and daily specials on social media, while new development, including site plans and rendering plans are shown on the Township website, during programs on HOMTV and shared on social media outlets.
- The Planning Commission meetings are also aired on HOMTV.
- Township property for sale is listed on the website.

Goal #4b: Finalize the Comcast franchise agreement to include high definition (HD) PEG (Public, Education & Government) channels, VOD (Video on Demand) and PEG on the program guide system.

Progress:

- The Comcast franchise agreement is currently in negotiations.
- Expires July 31, 2015.

Goal #4c: Develop a 5 year equipment purchase plan to be adopted by the Cable Communications Commission (CCC) that includes HD studio cameras and playback.

Progress:

- A 5 year equipment plan draft has been created for the Cable Commission to review during the June, 2015 meeting.

Goal #4m: Update the patrol car graphic design.

Progress:

- Communications Director, Deborah Guthrie; Graphic Designer, Lynn Meikle; and Chief of Police, Dave Hall met regarding the redesign of the police department.
- Elements needed for the redesign have been narrowed down.

Goal #4aa: Investigate options for establishing Meridian Township as a smart community and explore viable plans for expanding municipal fiber, broadband, and public Wi-Fi in Meridian Township.

Progress:

- Staff is investigating areas in the Township deficient in high speed Internet access.
- We are working with Comcast on a site survey in one area of the Township that

doesn't currently have access to see the potential costs.

- Connections have been made with Sebawaing, an area that recently completed a fiber/high speed Internet project for the businesses and residents.
- Staff is looking at the project to see about incorporating any best practices.

Goal #5b: Develop a branding campaign and marketing strategy and propose a 2016 budget to the Township Board to include branding campaign, imaging, print, design, and marketing.

Progress:

- A marketing strategy has been created and developed for major Township events and will be part of the overall marketing campaign to be implemented.
- The Communications department is addressing inconsistency issues with the current Township logo and formatting for future documents and press releases.

Goal #5o: Sustain and enhance our positive working relationship with Michigan State University.

Progress:

- Staff continues to attend MSU career fairs.
- Internship Coordinator, Brandie Yates, reached out to the MSU Department of Theatre for actors to star in On-Air PSAs and Promos.
- Provided 1000 copies of the Meridian Township Asset brochure to the Office for International Students and Scholars at MSU.
- Provided 35 copies of the Meridian Township Asset brochure to The Facility for Rare Isotope Beams (FRIB).
- HOMTV provided in-kind media sponsorship agreements for MSU Safe Place "Race for the Place" and the MSU Science Festival. The in-kind sponsorships included pre-event promotion across multiple media platforms, as well as story coverage of the event.

Goal #6a: Promote cultural diversity with our community programs and celebrations.

Progress:

- Through social media platforms and press releases, the department continues to promote events such as the Chinese New Year, Women's History Month, Black History Month, etc.

Goal #6b: Explore closed captioning costs for HOMTV programs.

Progress:

- Discussions have been held regarding the software and hardware that is needed to provide closed captioning services. A list will be provided in the 5 year equipment plan during the June, 2015 Cable Commission meeting.
- Compatibility with our current system is desired.

Goal #6c: Investigate and possibly launch a Chinese version of HOMTV news programs.

Progress:

- The department continues to position itself to be able to launch this type of programming and is currently collaborating with MSU.

Goal #6g: Strengthen community pride through such activities as downtown events and expanded outdoor sculpture displays.

Progress:

- We continue our efforts to support, attend, promote and lead major events; both types of activities are aired on HOMTV live, as well as on-demand.
- The Communications department continues to promote downtown events & outdoor sculpture displays; ribbon cuttings, press conferences, Celebrate Downtown Okemos and the Meridian Cares Fundraiser on social media, the Township website, www.homtv.net, and on HOMTV programs.
- Deborah currently sits on the committee for Celebrate Downtown Okemos, as well as the Art Sculpture Committee.

Goal #6h: Seek diversity in hiring and promoting.

Progress:

- Attended the MSU Diversity Job Fair, specifically seeking out a diverse pool of applicants for the HOMTV Internship program.

Goal #6k: Promote Nokomis Learning Center activities.

Progress:

- At the end of 2014, began sharing events across all social media platforms.

Goal #6m: Utilize additional recruiting outlets and resources such as on-line job boards, advertisements and professional organizations to attract qualified minorities to apply for job openings.

Progress:

- The HOMTV Internship program is promoted at the MSU Diversity Job Fair and within the International Office at MSU.

Goal #6n: Provide professional training and development to staff.

Progress:

- Staff continues to attend appropriate workshops, conferences, and seminars to stay abreast of new ways of communicating and engaging residents in community on-goings.

- Staff also has interdepartmental training meetings regarding software usage and organizational practices.
- Staff provides professional training to the interns through workshops, critiques and hands-on field and studio experience.

Goal #8a: Continue to respond to all citizen inquiries in a timely, professional and efficient manner.

Progress:

- All customer issues relating to cable service are documented and forwarded for a resolution. All initial complaints and resolutions are included in the monthly Cable Commissions packet for discussion.
- Inquiries from followers on social media have been and will continue to be answered in a timely, efficient and friendly manner.

Goal #8c: Replace the Town Hall microphones and bases.

Progress:

- Bids are being assembled for the purchase of 12 new gooseneck XLR microphones and 12 new phantom power XLR microphone bases.
- One malfunctioning Town Hall microphone was replaced in January.

Goal #8d: Investigate replacement of Township hall video imager.

Progress:

- A 5 year equipment plan draft has been created for the Cable Commission to review during the June, 2015 meeting.

Goal #8e: Increase encouragement of public engagement and participation through multi-media and other ways to connect.

Progress:

- HOMTV recently launched “The Social Hour,” a new program that offers visual and written updates via Social News Desk about Township news and events, as well as the behind-the-scenes happenings in the HOMTV environment.
- HOMTV features a new social media graphic to the news programs and live meetings; Social News Desk On-Air feature showing social media posts from Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram during the shows.
- “Throwback Thursday” posts have been incorporated on social media in an effort to engage and interact with the community.
- The HOMTV Internship program features an Intern of the Week and shares with the community through social media.
- HOMTV continues to provide On-Air stories and updates regarding the Police department investigations, as well as offer contact resources to create public involvement.

- Implemented a new on-line avenue, Volunteer Spot; to encourage community and staff volunteers.
- Increased usage of hashtags (#) on social media posts to encourage community engagement and increase two-way communication.
- Video stories are embedded on the HOMTV website with greater Internet search ability.

Goal #8f: Create a monthly Township Manager blog and increase its outreach.

Progress:

- The Township Manager's blog was created and has included the following topics: New Meridian Projects for 2015, Comcast & Meridian Come Together to Benefit the Community and Groundbreaking; the Next Phase for the Meridian Central Fire Station.
- The blog, New Meridian Projects for 2015, was the top post for January, reaching 2,076 people and 214 post clicks.
- The blog will continue to be shared on social media; LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, and a link will be provided on the Township website home page to promote community engagement.

Goal #8g: Conduct a communications needs assessment.

Progress:

- This is part of the refranchising process and is currently in negotiations.

Goal #8h: Investigate costs of new Township website.

Progress:

- Communications Director, Deborah Guthrie; Director of IT, Stephen Gebes; and Internship Coordinator/Communications Specialist, Brandie Yates met with a handful of companies to discuss the needs of the Township for a new website.
- A RFP will be created by mid-April.
- Once proposals are received, the team will narrow the field to 3-5 submissions.

Goal #8i: Audit social media outlets and develop a social media strategy campaign.

Progress:

- The Communications department has developed a basis for tracking public participation and engagement with the introduction of new technology and features.
- Social News Desk application allows us to schedule, track content and bring-up-to-the-minute news and updates straight from online to on-air.
- In order to properly track the social media progress, the strategy needed to be simplified in order to remain consistent and accurate. Originally social media consisted of 32 different accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram,

YouTube and Flickr. To date, we have consolidated the social media accounts to 20 accounts across all platforms.

- The department will continue to track social media progress through likes, reaches and community engagement from month to month and analyze the various posts with the most success.
- Coty Kenneth, Communications Assistant, has worked diligently on refreshing the information posted on social media by creating and sharing more organized and community driven content.

Goal #8j: Upload packet information on the Township website that is in a searchable format for ease of use by the public.

Progress:

- We are analyzing the needs of staff to be able to upload packet documents in a scan able format; public to access large format documents on current website, while new website will offer standardized forms for agendas, packets and minutes.

Goal #8k: Publish the Meridian Monitor twice yearly to all residents.

Progress:

- First issue is released in June and the second issue is released in December.

Goal #8p: Print and distribute one issue of the Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Family Fun Guide (distribution in January).

Progress:

- This goal has been completed and promoted. It is available on the Township website and in print.

Goal #8q: Increase communication with constituents through email and multi-media sources.

Progress:

- State Representative Sam Singh contributed programming to CAMTV. The program will begin airing in April.

Goal #8t: Begin the process of overhauling the Township website and branding up to an amount of \$30,000.

Progress:

- Refer back to Goal #8h

Goal #9a: Create DAS (Distributed Antenna System) ordinance with the Public Works & Engineering and Planning Departments.

Progress:

- Meetings have been held with appropriate stakeholders to begin the process of developing language for the DAS.

Goal #9b: Promote Neighborhood Watch.

Progress:

- HOMTV created a PSA regarding the neighborhood watch and will do so again in the near future.

Goal #9c: Develop a method to increase compliance of communications companies using the rights of way in the Township.

Progress:

- Currently undergoing a technical audit of systems in the rights of way.
- Developing an outline to determine how audits will be measured and the frequency of the audits.
- Working with the Engineering department to determine the process on how companies will obtain permits.

Goal #9e: Promote and encourage the preservation of older neighborhoods.

Progress:

- The June issue of the Meridian Monitor will feature the Heritage Neighborhoods.
- A social media campaign will be developed around this topic once published.

If you have any questions regarding this information or if you need additional information please let me know.

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN

**CABLE COMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION**

PROGRAMMING

HOMTV and CAMTV PRODUCTION TOTALS - 2015

Updated: 5/1/15 DB

NUMBER OF NEW HOMTV PROGRAMS AIRED DURING THE MONTH

Show	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Show Totals	Hours
All Access	1	4	3	5									13	
Beyond the Badge	0	1	1	1									3	
Community Connection	0	0	0	0									0	
InnerView	0	0	0	0									0	
Meridian Magazine	0	0	0	0									0	
Meridian News Now	2	4	5	4									15	
Meridian News Now (Thursday)	0	3	3	3									9	
Open Line	0	0	0	0									0	
HOMTV Promos/PSA	3	18	20	15									56	
Downloaded Promo/PSA	-	-	11	0									11	
Topical Promos	3	12	9	3									27	
Senior Living	0	0	0	0									0	
Elections	0	0	0	0									0	
Special Features	1	0	1	0									2	
Monthly Totals	10	42	53	31	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Year Total	136													

NUMBER OF NEW HOMTV MEETINGS AIRED DURING THE MONTH

Meridian Live	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	Hours
Township Board	2	2	2	2									8	
Planning Commission	2	1	2	2									7	
Environmental Commission	1	1	1	1									4	
Zoning Board of Appeals	1	2	1	2									6	
Park Commission	1	1	1	1									4	
Monthly Totals	7	7	7	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Yearly Total	29													

HOMTV Total	165
-------------	-----

NUMBER OF NEW CAMTV PROGRAMS AIRED DURING THE MONTH

Show	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	Hours	
Battle of Ideas	4	2	4	4									14		
City Pulse Newsmakers	0	0	0										0		
Cooking with Cathy	0	0	0	Cancelled										0	
Democracy Now	4	4	5	4									17		
Event Coverage	0	0	0										0		
Inspirational Corner	3	3	5	3									14		
Novella	1	4	4	4									13		
One Hit Wonders	0	0	0	0									0		
Postree-n-Motion	4	2	5	2									13		
Promos/PSA's	2	-	-										2		
In the Fight	0	0	1	1									2		
UM Wolverine Caucus	0	1	0	0									1		
Teen LOL TV	0	0	0	0									0		
Monthly Totals	18	16	24	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Yearly Total	76														

CAMTV Total	76
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Grand Total	241
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CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN

CABLE COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

FYI

The following materials are "for your information"
and do not necessarily relate to an agenda item

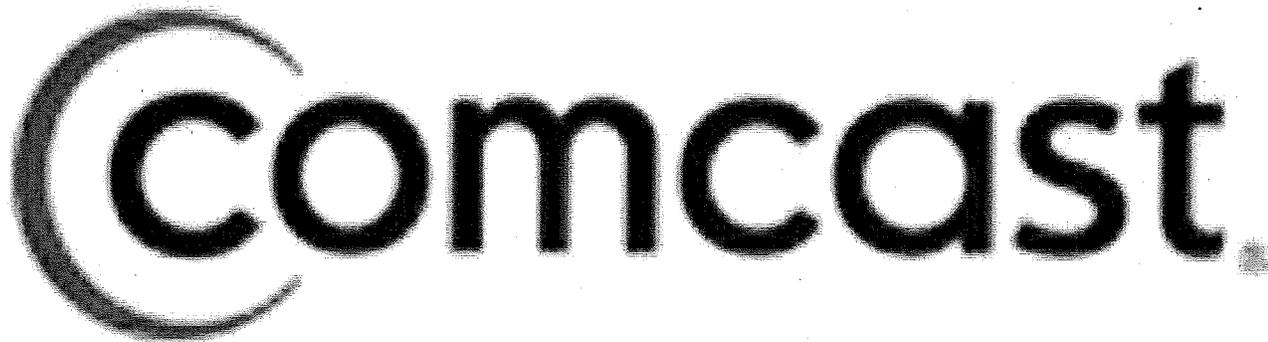


Comcast to take more complaints via Facebook and Twitter

Company hiring 'social care specialists'

Author: By Katie Lobosco

Published On: Mar 23 2015 04:57:47 PM EDT Updated On: Mar 23 2015 05:13:01 PM EDT



NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -

Comcast is bulking up its presence on Twitter and Facebook as it tries to repair the damage done by a string of very public customer service catastrophes.

The company is now hiring 40 new "social care specialists" to respond to customers over social media, adding to its existing social staff of 20. They'll be able to help with everything from scheduling appointments to troubleshooting Internet problems and setting up DVRs.

The cable giant is notorious for poor customer service.

In one of the more embarrassing incidents, a Comcast customer posted a recording of a frustrating eight-minute phone call in which a rep refused to cancel the caller's service.

And Comcast landed in hot water earlier this year after someone at the company changed the name of customer Ricardo Brown to A--hole Brown, on a bill after he canceled the cable service. A 63 year-old from Illinois got a bill in the mail addressed to Super B---- Bauer.

The hiring push is just one way the company is addressing its customer service problem.

"We have thousands of people answering service calls on the phone, and for many customers that's great. But some people would rather go online, and we want to make sure to give them that choice," said Comcast spokeswoman Jennifer Khoury.

The company has more than 73,000 followers on Twitter, while its Xfinity Internet service has 5.9 million likes on Facebook.

And the number of customers reaching out through social media keeps growing, Khoury said.

In September, a Comcast executive vowed to improve things, but admitted that it would take years before he could honestly say the company is known for great customer service.

He may be right.

Meanwhile, Comcast is planning to merge with Time Warner Cable. The deal was struck last year, but still needs federal approval.

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"ILING TECH SUITE" "SOFTBANK, PERTINO LAUNCH SDN CLOUD CHANNEL IN JAPAN" "EDGEWARE, CSI PARTNER ON HOSTED IP SOLUTIONS" "TWC EXTENDS TV EVERY"

► SERVICES / BROADBAND SERVICES

Cable Extends US Broadband Dominance



NEWS ANALYSIS
ALAN BREZNICK,
Cable/Video
Practice Leader
3/6/2015

Even though rival data providers may be grabbing the headlines with gigabit-speed rollouts, cable operators keep steadily increasing their control of the huge US broadband market.

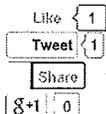
In the latest proof of that trend, the ten largest US cable operators collectively netted close to 2.7 million high-speed data subscribers last year, besting their gains of a year earlier by a healthy 23%, according to fresh figures from the nation's 17 leading broadband providers compiled by the Leichtman Research Group Inc. (LRG). With this sizable increase, the ten big MSOs boosted their total broadband sub count to about 52 million, giving them a commanding 59.6% share of the overall US broadband market.

COMMENT (1)

Login



50% 50%



Moreover, the top MSOs accounted for a whopping 89% of the broadband subscriber gains in the US market last year, up from an already impressive 82% of the broadband sub gains in 2013, as they widened their lead by 2.3 million customers. The nation's seven biggest telcos accounted for the rest of broadband sub gains as they added more data customers, but saw their combined market share fall further behind cable's share.

The cable industry's continuing broadband successes stand in stark contrast to the industry's lagging performance in the pay-TV arena, where it keeps coughing up market share to the aggressive large telcos and satellite TV operators. In that parallel market, cable's overwhelming market share has now slipped to 51.8%, while the satellite TV providers have boosted their share to a competitive 36.0% and the telcos have raised their share to a respectable 12.2%. (See US Pay-TV Providers Pile Up New Losses.)

For more of Light Reading's coverage of broadband market trends, visit our broadband services content channel.

As has become customary, giant Comcast Corp. (Nasdaq: CMCSA, CMCSK) easily led the way with an impressive pickup of almost 1.3 million high-speed data customers for the year, followed by strong gains of 657,000 subs for Time Warner Cable Inc. (NYSE: TWC) and 432,000 subs for Charter Communications Inc. Among the top ten MSOs, only Cablevision Systems Corp. (NYSE: CVC) suffered a loss of broadband subscribers for the year, shedding 20,000 data customers in the fiercely competitive New York metro market where it faces off against Verizon Communications Inc. (NYSE: VZ)'s FIOS service.

While they continued to pad their broadband subscriber totals as well, the seven largest US phone companies fared worse than they did a year ago. The big telcos collectively picked up 345,000 data customers in 2014, down more than 25% from their take in 2013, as they continued to cope with heavy losses of DSL subs.

Five of the top seven phone providers registered broadband sub gains last year, with Windstream Communications Inc. (NYSE: WIN) and FairPoint Communications Inc. both failing to make the grade. Verizon led the group with an increase of 190,000 subscribers, followed by Frontier Communications Corp. (NYSE: FTR) and CenturyLink Inc. (NYSE: CTL) with increases of 108,500 and 91,000, respectively.

Taken together, the 17 service providers now have more than 87.3 million broadband customers. These 17 providers represent about 94% of the nation's broadband market, which includes more than 92 million homes.

— Alan Breznick, Cable/Video Practice Leader, Light Reading

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FLASH POLL

What will be the hottest topic at Mobile World Congress 2015?

- Analytics
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- LTE-Unlicensed
- 5G
- Small Cells
- C-RAN
- NFV/SDN
- IoT
- Network security
- Tapas
- Other (please specify in the comments section)

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ALL POLLS

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US Pay-TV Providers Pile Up New Losses



NEWS ANALYSIS
ALAN BREZNICK,
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Practice Leader
3/5/2015

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Despite notable improvements in the critical cable sector, the US pay-TV industry lost video subscribers for the second straight year in 2014 as its customer base continues to erode slowly but surely.

In its latest report, Leichtman Research Group Inc. (LRG) found that the 13 largest US pay-TV providers, representing 95% of the nation's total multichannel video market, collectively lost another 125,000 video subscribers in 2014. That comes on top of a loss of 95,000 video subs in 2013.

As a result, the top 13 providers closed last year with a total of 95.2 million video customers, off more than 200,000 from their peak at the end of 2012: The US pay-TV market has clearly hit the saturation point after more than 60 years of consistent, often strong, growth.

But Bruce Leichtman, president and principal analyst of LRG, doesn't see any big red flags in the numbers yet because the subscriber losses have been quite "modest" so far. "Despite a relatively saturated market and increasing alternatives for consumers to watch video, the top pay-TV providers have only lost about 0.2% of all subscribers over the past two years," he said.

Notably, US cable operators enjoyed their strongest year since 2008, cutting their subscriber losses substantially from 2013. Still, the nation's top nine MSOs collectively shed nearly 1.2 million video customers last year. While that was an improvement over the 1.7 million video subs they shed the previous year, the performance was still not exactly something to write home about.

As in 2013, Time Warner Cable Inc. (NYSE: TWC) led the way down, losing slightly more than 400,000 video subscribers last year. None of the other large MSOs lost even half as much. Although about twice as big as TWC, Comcast Corp. (Nasdaq: CMCSA, CMCSK) lost "only" 194,000 video subs last year as it continues to roll out its popular X1 IP video platform and such advanced video services as cloud DVR. (See Comcast Weighs WiFi Plans.)

Want to learn more about pay-TV industry trends and next-gen technologies? Then check out the agenda for our upcoming Cable Next-Gen Technologies & Strategies event, Tuesday, March 17, 2015, at The Cable Center in Denver.

The nation's two biggest telcos, AT&T Inc. (NYSE: T) and Verizon Communications Inc. (NYSE: VZ), continued to gain ground on the video front last year, albeit at a slower pace. Between them, they picked up almost 1.1 million video subs for their respective U-verse and FiOS fiber-fed services in 2014, down from more than 1.4 million subs a year earlier.

In contrast, the two big US satellite TV providers, DirecTV Group Inc. (NYSE: DTV) and Dish Network LLC (Nasdaq: DISH), appear to have maxed out on customer growth. They added a mere 20,000 video subscribers between them last year, as a 79,000-sub loss by Dish nearly offset a 99,000-sub gain by DirecTV.

With the various shifts by the main players, cable's leading share of the pay-TV market continued to decline, dropping to just over 50%. The nine biggest cable operators ended the year with 49.3 million video subscribers, followed by the two satellite providers with 34.3 million and the two telcos with 11.6 million.

— Alan Breznick, Cable/Video Practice Leader, Light Reading

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FROM THE FOUNDER

It's over: Comcast officially ends \$45B pursuit of TWC

Apr 24 2015, 08:34 ET | About: [Comcast Corporation \(CMCSA\)](#) | By: [Jason Aycock](#), SA News Editor 

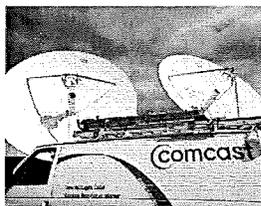
- After a late Thursday board meeting, Comcast (NASDAQ:[CMCSA](#)) has confirmed it's dropping its \$45B plan to acquire Time Warner Cable (NYSE:[TWC](#)) -- a stunning reversal of a 15-month plan, which got less stunning as hurdles began to mount in recent weeks.
- "Today, we move on," says Comcast CEO Brian Roberts. "Of course, we would have liked to bring our great products to new cities, but we structured this deal so that if the government didn't agree, we could walk away." It's a cheap walk-away for Comcast, which had no breakup fee in the deal.

- What next? Consolidation is still likely in a deeply uncompetitive industry. Other companies are now officially front and center in pursuit of TWC, notably John Malone's Charter Communications (NASDAQ:[CHTR](#)), which could re-launch its own failed effort. CHTR-TWC would have 16.5M broadband subscribers together, less than Comcast's 22M.
- Charter's deal with Comcast aimed at divestment and easing the Comcast-TWC transaction also blows up. What about Charter's deal to acquire Bright House?
- As for Comcast, it could take its stored-up momentum outside of cable -- to someone like Netflix (NASDAQ:[NFLX](#)), as BTIG's Rich Greenfield hints? Or to a telecom like T-Mobile (NYSE:[TMUS](#))?
- **Updated:** Time Warner Cable statement. "We have always believed that Time Warner Cable is a one-of-a-kind asset," says Chairman and CEO Robert D. Marcus. "We are strong and getting stronger."

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Comcast, Time Warner Cable nix \$45B merger deal

 **Roger Yu, USA TODAY** 5:41 p.m. EDT April 24, 2015



(Photo: Joe Raedle, Getty Images)

Comcast Corp. said Friday that it's ending its \$45.2 billion merger agreement with Time Warner Cable, scrapping a giant deal that ran into stiff opposition from consumers and a likely veto from federal regulators.

Comcast is also calling off a related transaction with Charter Communications.

"Today, we move on," Comcast CEO Brian Roberts said. "Of course, we would have liked to bring our great products to new cities, but we structured this deal so that if the government didn't agree, we could walk away."



USA TODAY

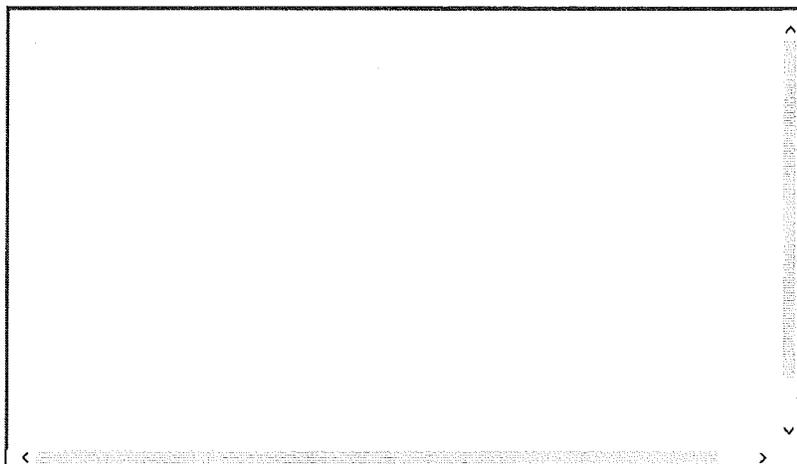
Net neutrality and Netflix help quash Comcast merger bid

[\(http://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2015/04/24/comcast-time-warner-cable-bid-off/26299809/\)](http://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2015/04/24/comcast-time-warner-cable-bid-off/26299809/)

In a statement, Time Warner Cable said the decision was "mutual." The agreement included no breakup fee if the merger wasn't approved or either side abandoned the effort.

INVESTOR IMPACT: Odds of Comcast stock buyback rise (<http://americasmarkets.usatoday.com/2015/04/24/its-official-comcast-calls-off-deal-to-buy-time-warner-cable/>)

"We have always believed that Time Warner Cable is a one-of-a-kind asset," said TWC CEO Robert Marcus, in a statement. "We are strong and getting stronger. Throughout this process, we've been laser focused on executing our operating plan and investing in our plant, products and people to deliver great experiences to our customers."



If the deal had been completed, Comcast planned to move 3.9 million of its TV customers to Charter Communications. Charter also recently agreed to buy Bright House Networks, which has had distribution and negotiating deals with Time Warner Cable for years. Given today's development, the Bright House deal may not proceed given that Time Warner Cable has the right to block it.

In February, 2014, Philadelphia-based Comcast agreed to pay \$45.2 billion to buy Time Warner Cable, a move that would consolidate the nation's two largest cable companies. The deal would have given Comcast a quick means to gain customers in key markets, including New York and Los Angeles, and broaden its reach nationally. If Comcast had completed the deal, the post-merger company would have gained access to nearly half of the Internet market nationwide and heightened its bargaining leverage against content creators and cable networks.



USA TODAY

Comcast, Time Warner Cable reach \$45B deal

As soon as the bid was announced, consumers and advocacy groups launched massive campaigns online and in Washington, D.C., to urge regulators to nix a proposal that they claim would give one company too much clout in pay-TV and Internet services.

Time Warner Cable shares rose 4.4% Friday to \$155.26. Comcast rose 0.69% to \$59.64.

"This is a major victory for consumers who stood up against a media Goliath and won, and a major victory for everyone who wants a fair and competitive marketplace," Marta Tellado, CEO of Consumer Reports, said in a statement. "Comcast never was able to make a convincing case for why the merger would benefit anyone other than Comcast."

Analysts and traders have anticipated the deal termination for some time, given reports that regulators were concerned about its ramifications. Comcast on Wednesday held a series of meetings with the Justice Department and the Federal Communications Commission, the government entities that were reviewing the deal.

Bloomberg News first reported last week that the Justice Department was leaning against the merger. Officials at the FCC have also recommended issuing a "hearing designation order" for the deal, which would let an administrative judge decide on its merits. That is often fatal for such transactions.

With the post-merger Comcast controlling a large chunk of the broadband market, it would have been in position to impose its will on new video streaming services and possibly insert anti-competitive measures in the fledgling market, analysts say. For example, Comcast could have insisted on a cable network forgoing an app on other smart-TV devices, such as Apple TV or Sling TV, if it wanted its content distributed to Comcast customers.

"The main issue is the development of new video services and new video companies," says John Bergmayer, an attorney at consumer technology advocacy group Public Knowledge, which has argued against the deal. "We are just seeing (this video) market starting to evolve. You get Comcast and (TWC) together, they're going to be able to fight that change effectively."

In the wake of those developments, a number of Wall Street analysts proclaimed the deal dead.

"Comcast and Time Warner Cable's decision to end Comcast's proposed acquisition of Time Warner Cable is in the best interests of consumers," FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler said in a statement. "The proposed transaction would have created a company with the most broadband and the video subscribers in the nation alongside the ownership of significant programming interests."

With more streaming video options, like Netflix, proliferating and cable networks willing to experiment with new ways to stream directly to consumers, the proposed merger "would have posed an unacceptable risk to competition and innovation," he said.

In a statement, the Department of Justice said it informed the companies that it had "significant concerns that the merger would make Comcast an unavoidable gatekeeper for Internet-based services that rely on a broadband connection to reach consumers."

"The companies' decision to abandon this deal is the best outcome for American consumers," said Attorney General Eric Holder. "This is a victory not only for the Department of Justice, but also for providers of content and streaming services who work to bring innovative products to consumers across America and around the world."

Wall Street is now looking for Comcast to return more cash to investors in the form of stock buybacks, which reduce the number of shares outstanding and boost the companies' earnings per share. In an interview with CNBC this morning Comcast's CEO Roberts said "there's no looking back," and acknowledged that the failed merger deal does, in fact, "open up room for more buybacks."

Analysts also will begin to speculate what happens to TWC, which has about 11.4 million pay-TV subscribers and is still considered a takeover target. As Marcus points out, the New York-based company has tightened its operations to get ready for integration with Comcast. And at least one party, legendary cable executive John Malone, already has expressed interest in TWC.

Charter Communications, which is controlled by Malone's Liberty Media Corp., bid about \$37 billion for TWC last year prior to Comcast's higher bid. But in November, Malone replied "Hell, yes" when he was asked at an investor conference if he would consider buying TWC if Comcast's bid was not approved.

With so many business and technological challenges ahead, an industry consolidation of smaller cable companies -- such as Cox Communications, Cablevision Systems Corp., Charter and Bright House -- may be inevitable, analysts say.

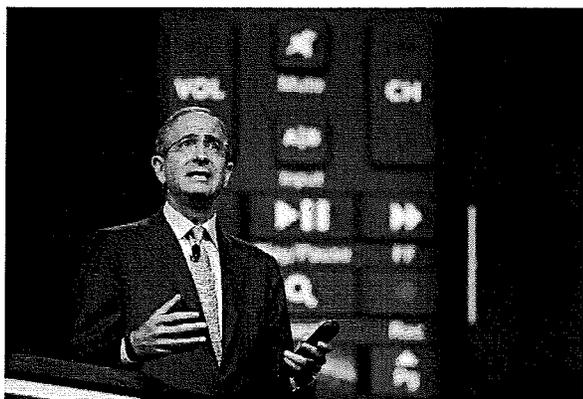
Contributing: Adam Shell

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BloombergBusiness

Comcast's Roberts Faces Rare Defeat After Trying to Go It Alone

by Alex Sherman
3:49 PM EDT April 23, 2015



Brian Roberts, chairman and chief executive officer of Comcast Corp.
Photographer: Andrew Harrer/Bloomberg

In hindsight, maybe Comcast Corp. Chief Executive Officer Brian Roberts should have just played nice.

More than a year after Roberts unexpectedly backed out of talks with Charter Communications Inc. to divvy up Time Warner Cable Inc. between the two of them -- opting instead to make a bid to buy it all himself -- it seems he will end up with nothing.

Comcast withdrew its bid for Time Warner Cable Friday after concluding the merger would be rejected by regulators. The Federal Communications Commission and the Department of Justice were both in favor of blocking the deal, Bloomberg reported Wednesday.

“Comcast rolled the dice on what was from the beginning a high-risk regulatory strategy,” said Craig Moffett, an analyst at MoffettNathanson LLC in New York. “It clearly would have been safer to take a back seat to a Charter-led deal. But they ultimately decided that the rewards of control were high enough to warrant the risk.”

The deal would have positioned Roberts to challenge John Malone for a distinction coined by pundits as the “king of cable.” Malone, who owns media assets including Sirius XM Holdings Inc. and more than a

quarter of Charter, now has a chance to retain the title if Charter can hammer out a deal for Time Warner Cable.

When asked in November if Charter would attempt to buy Time Warner Cable if the Comcast deal failed, Malone responded, "Hell yes."

Hostile Offer

The tangled negotiations began when Charter made a hostile offer in January of \$132.50 to acquire Time Warner Cable. Behind the scenes, Charter and Comcast were already discussing how they would carve up Time Warner Cable once the deal was done. Comcast would get subscribers in regions including New York City, North Carolina, New England and potentially Los Angeles, while Charter would get the rest.

Roberts soon soured on the idea, and instead blindsided Charter by making a bid to buy all of Time Warner Cable. One reason was that he wasn't happy with how Charter and Malone's Liberty Media Corp. were badmouthing Time Warner Cable, unusual in a traditionally collegial industry, people familiar with the matter said at the time.

Breakup Fee

Charter Chief Operating Officer John Bickham had publicly criticized the strategy and management of Time Warner Cable to convince investors that Time Warner Cable would be better run by Charter.

Roberts had another reason to act. Time Warner Cable CEO Rob Marcus preferred to do a deal with Roberts rather than with Greg Maffei, Malone's principal deal negotiator and CEO of Liberty Media, according to people familiar with the matter. To entice Roberts, Time Warner Cable didn't insist on Comcast paying a breakup fee if regulators turned against the deal.

Comcast and Charter ended up reaching a side pact after Comcast's bid for Time Warner Cable was accepted. Comcast agreed to shed four million subscribers to Charter and a new entity Charter would control. Still, the acquisition was framed as Comcast buying Time Warner Cable, rather than Charter as the acquirer.

Consumer Groups

That proved to be politically sensitive, as the proposed merger of the two big cable operators drew complaints from consumer groups and some lawmakers.

This is Roberts's second failed attempt at a huge media acquisition. Comcast made a \$54 billion hostile bid for Walt Disney Co. in 2004, which was rejected by Disney's board and subsequently withdrawn.

“The failed acquisition of Time Warner Cable has to be viewed as a major disappointment for Brian Roberts and the Comcast management team,” said Paul Sweeney, an analyst at Bloomberg Intelligence. “While the prospects for Comcast remain bright, the company put a lot of resources into getting this deal done.”

Working with Charter to acquire prized pieces of Time Warner Cable, including New York and Los Angeles, would have drawn less regulatory scrutiny than the merger of the nation's two biggest cable operators, Sweeney said.

Charter has only about 4.3 million video subscribers, while Comcast has more than 22 million customers and Time Warner Cable has about 11 million. Comcast also owns NBC Universal, giving the company significant media power that Charter doesn't have.

High Risk

Charter now has no incentive to work with Comcast if it makes another run at acquiring Time Warner Cable, as Comcast is no longer a threat to bid.

Comcast may be better off in the long run focusing its efforts on buying a wireless company or more content, Rich Greenfield, an analyst at BTIG in New York, said Thursday on Bloomberg TV. Still, it's hard not to see this as a failed gambit for Roberts, he suggested.

“He doesn't lose ever,” Greenfield said of Roberts's deal history and clout in Washington. “This is obviously kind of an ego blow.”



The New York Times | <http://nyti.ms/1HtUTzM>

BUSINESS DAY | NEWS ANALYSIS

Once Comcast's Deal Shifted to a Focus on Broadband, Its Ambitions Were Sunk

By JONATHAN MAHLER APRIL 23, 2015

When it was announced a little more than a year ago, it felt to many like a sure thing.

After all, government regulators had approved Comcast's acquisition of NBCUniversal in 2011. Comcast had an army of registered lobbyists, more than 100 strong, in Washington alone. The company's chief executive, Brian L. Roberts, golfed on Martha's Vineyard with President Obama. Its executive vice president, David L. Cohen, hosted three fund-raisers for Mr. Obama, two at his home in Philadelphia, raising a total of more than \$10 million.

But now the \$45 billion Comcast-Time Warner Cable merger is dead. Comcast is folding, in anticipation of regulators rejecting the deal.

The news, which broke on Thursday afternoon, was certainly dramatic. But the air of inevitability that once hung over the deal had been dissipating for months, as the debate over net neutrality — in short, the question of whether Internet providers should be allowed to charge content providers for speedier service — played out in Washington. And a merger that had at first seemed to be primarily about cable television turned into something much different.

The government's verdict on the merger and its stance on net neutrality were separate issues, but they were very much intertwined. At the end of the day, the government's commitment to maintaining a free and open Internet did not square with the prospect of a single company controlling as much as 40 percent of the public's access to it. All the more so given the accelerating shift in viewing habits, with increasing numbers of consumers choosing streaming services like Netflix over

traditional TV. In this sense, it didn't really matter if Comcast and Time Warner's cable markets overlapped. The real issue was broadband.

"The simple way to think about the problem with the Comcast merger is that once they get that big, they're pretty much too big to regulate," said Marvin Ammori, a lawyer who helped lead the campaign for net neutrality.

If there was a single moment when the winds seemed to shift against Comcast, it came in November, when President Obama released a video on the White House website in which he spoke about the future of the Internet. For the first time, Mr. Obama, who had long offered support for the idea of net neutrality but had always stopped short of suggesting how it might be achieved, was unambiguously clear about what he wanted. He called on the Federal Communications Commission to adopt "the strongest possible rules" to regulate the Internet.

"For almost a century, our law has recognized that companies who connect you to the world have special obligations not to exploit the monopoly they enjoy over access into and out of your home or business," he said. "It is common sense that the same philosophy should guide any service that is based on the transmission of information — whether a phone call or a packet of data."

The president may have been speaking about net neutrality, but the implications for the merger were clear.

"That was just huge," said Susan Crawford, a co-director of the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University. "It signaled that the cable industry was no longer calling the shots."

Not long after the president's video, the F.C.C. made good on his promise to regulate Internet service providers more rigorously when it voted to raise the speed required for broadband Internet connections. The decision was a nod to the fact that more than one person is often online at the same time in many of today's households.

It was another move that may not have been explicitly aimed at the proposed merger, but it was ominous all the same. It meant that a lot of Americans living in rural areas no longer had what qualified as high-speed Internet access — making Comcast's already large share of the broadband market considerably larger.

Then, in February, the chairman of the F.C.C., Tom Wheeler, formally proposed new rules treating Internet service as a public utility. It was a significant policy shift,

and the clearest demonstration to date that the government intended to police the Internet beat with a new vigilance. And it was more bad news for Comcast.

For opponents of the merger, it helped that net neutrality was no longer such an esoteric concept to the American public. In June, an unlikely individual, John Oliver of HBO, devoted a lengthy segment to the subject that quickly lit up the Internet, attracting more than eight million views. ("The only two words that promise more boredom in the English language are 'featuring Sting,' " he said of net neutrality.)

One of Mr. Oliver's primary targets of ridicule was Comcast. He showed a graphic of the speed of Netflix videos on Comcast before and after it had negotiated a deal for faster service with the cable provider, comparing it to a "mob shakedown."

Over the months, the chorus of critics of the Comcast deal grew, and grew louder. When the merger was announced in February 2014, Senator Al Franken, a Democrat from Minnesota, was its lone outspoken critic in Congress. Earlier this week, five other senators joined him in urging the Justice Department and the F.C.C. to block the acquisition.

Most media and tech companies have been wary of speaking out publicly against the deal because they did not want to antagonize a company with which they do business. But this did not stop them from making their case privately to government regulators.

The notable exception throughout has been Netflix. The company's chief executive, Reed Hastings, could not have been clearer about where he stood from the start. A few days ago, in a conference call with analysts, he said that Netflix's "main goal at this point is to get the government to block the Comcast-Time Warner merger."

Mission accomplished.

A version of this news analysis appears in print on April 24, 2015, on page B1 of the New York edition with the headline: In Too Deep.



The New York Times | <http://nyti.ms/1DobbDR>

BUSINESS DAY

Comcast Is Said to End \$45 Billion Bid for Time Warner Cable

By EMILY STEEL, DAVID GELLES, REBECCA R. RUIZ and ERIC LIPTON APRIL 23, 2015

Facing intense regulatory scrutiny, Comcast is planning to abandon its \$45 billion takeover of Time Warner Cable, people briefed on the matter said on Thursday, ending a bid that would have united the country's two largest cable operators and reshaped the rapidly evolving video and broadband markets.

Broadband service, in particular, has become more important than ever, with advances in technology and an array of Internet offerings upending how people watch and pay for television. Had the deal been approved, the combined company would have controlled as much as 57 percent of the nation's broadband market and just under 30 percent of pay television.

Opponents portrayed Comcast's takeover effort as a land grab that would have given the company too much leverage in the industry, and over the last year lawmakers, consumers, public advocacy groups and media and technology companies rallied against the merger. Complaints reached a fever pitch in recent weeks.

The fears were plenty: that customers would end up paying more for declining service; that the industry behemoth would use its heft to stifle competition in the budding online video business; that there would be a lack of independent and diverse voices on television. Critics also criticized the company for failing to live up to promises it had made in previous deals, particularly its acquisition of NBCUniversal in 2011.

"My fear has been more and more concentration of power, and that is why I have been against this," said Senator Al Franken, the Minnesota Democrat who has

been a vocal opponent of the deal since it was announced in February 2014. “We need more competition in this space, not less.”

The public perception of the two companies was also damaging to the deal’s prospects. Comcast and Time Warner Cable consistently rank at the bottom of consumer satisfaction surveys.

A Comcast spokeswoman declined to comment, as did a spokesman for Time Warner Cable. The companies are expected to announce their decision as soon as Friday morning.

The development is a major blow for Brian L. Roberts, the chief executive of Comcast who has steadily built his company into one of the country’s largest media conglomerates through a series of acquisitions in recent years, and who was praised for boldly seizing the moment when Comcast announced its bid for Time Warner Cable 14 months ago. It is also a setback for David L. Cohen, Comcast’s executive vice president, who was in charge of steering deals past regulators. Mr. Cohen is a well-connected lobbyist known for his influence in Washington.

For Comcast, the deal was a rare opportunity to become a national provider of television, Internet and phone service, giving it unprecedented scale to compete against smaller rivals. The company had dismissed concerns that the deal would face major backlash from regulators, arguing that the transaction would not change the competitive landscape because the two companies did not compete in the same markets.

“This is not that complicated a deal from an antitrust or a regulatory perspective,” Mr. Cohen said when the deal was announced. “It presents a lot fewer issues than the NBCUniversal transaction did.”

That position did not convince skeptical regulators — the Justice Department, which had to determine whether a deal would harm competition, and the Federal Communications Commission, which would decide whether it was in the public interest. On Monday, Mr. Roberts met with Tom Wheeler, chairman of the F.C.C., according to a government filing made by Comcast. During the meeting, Mr. Roberts made one last pitch as to why the transaction was in the public interest and promised that Comcast would deliver “best-in-class” service to its new customers. He said that the company would live up to the commitments it made, and as evidence pointed to its earlier deals.

Then on Wednesday, Comcast officials met with officials from both the F.C.C. and the Justice Department and met with stiff resistance from both agencies.

One of the biggest concerns of the Justice Department, according to two former antitrust lawyers for the department who were briefed on the agency's concerns, was that Comcast, with such a large footprint in broadband and cable television operations, could use its clout to place restraints on television networks. For example, it could pressure networks not sell their content through stand-alone Internet streaming services, like those offered by HBO and CBS, that let consumers watch programming without paying for a traditional cable subscription.

The death knell for the deal came on Wednesday when Jonathan Sallet, general counsel of the F.C.C., met with staff members. He told them that his office was going to recommend that the transaction be referred to a hearing before an administrative law judge, multiple people involved in the meeting said.

That hearing process is long and drawn-out, and was essentially a way of saying the deal would be blocked, said Robert M. McDowell, who until 2013 served on the commission and is now in private practice. He said that in his 25 years of observing actions by the F.C.C., he could not recall a transaction being approved after such a referral took place. In 2011, the F.C.C. formally proposed the same path when considering the AT&T and T-Mobile bid to merge. Within a week the two companies had withdrawn their application.

"That is a fatal bullet to the heart of the deal," Mr. McDowell said.

Neil Grace, a spokesman for the F.C.C., declined to comment.

Christopher Jon Sprigman, a former Justice Department antitrust official who is now a professor at the New York University School of Law, said that officials he had spoken with in recent days who were involved in reviewing the transaction had concluded that the deal could not be fixed simply by asking Comcast to make changes.

The Justice Department "is not confident in its ability to restrain Comcast with conduct remedies," he said, referring to concessions Comcast might offer to win approval. "They are too powerful and they had shown before they don't respect them very much."

The collapse of the deal, one of the biggest in the media industry in recent years, effectively puts the brakes on several other multibillion-dollar transactions.

Charter Communications, the regional cable operator backed by the billionaire John C. Malone, will no longer acquire some of the Time Warner Cable markets that Comcast had expected to divest. And Charter's planned \$10.4 billion acquisition of Bright House Networks was also contingent on the completion of Comcast's acquisition of Time Warner Cable.

While those blows represent a near-term setback for Charter, the company may soon resume its pursuit of Time Warner Cable. Before Comcast and Time Warner Cable agreed to their deal last year, Charter had aggressively pursued a hostile acquisition of Time Warner Cable.

In November, Mr. Malone said that if the Comcast deal fell apart, Charter would try its hand again. A spokesman for Charter declined to comment.

For Time Warner Cable, the drawn-out process could prove particularly costly. In many such acquisitions, the buyer would have to pay the target company a steep breakup fee if the deal fell apart. But Comcast and Time Warner Cable did not include a breakup fee in their deal. Rob Marcus, the Time Warner Cable chief executive, also missed out on a big payday. He will not collect on the extraordinary \$80 million exit package he would have received had the merger gone through.

The collapse of the deal will also have widespread ramifications across Wall Street.

Several of the nation's top investment banks, including JPMorgan Chase, Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley and Citigroup, will miss out on tens of millions of dollars in advisory fees. Investment banks typically get paid for their work on deals only after the transactions are completed.

Correction: April 25, 2015

A picture caption on Friday with the continuation of an article about Comcast's decision to abandon its effort to take over Time Warner misidentified the building shown. It is Time Warner Cable's flagship store, not the company's headquarters.

A version of this article appears in print on April 24, 2015, on page A1 of the New York edition with the headline: Comcast Is Said to Abandon Bid for Major Rival.

BloombergBusiness

Comcast Plans to Drop Time Warner Cable Deal

by Alex Sherman, Gerry Smith and Todd Shields
3:00 PM EDT April 23, 2015



Comcast Said to Plan Dropping TWC Deal

Fourteen months after unveiling a \$45.2 billion merger that would create a new Internet and cable giant, Comcast Corp. is planning to walk away from its proposed takeover of Time Warner Cable Inc., people with knowledge of the matter said.

The decision marks a swift unraveling of a deal that awaited federal approval for more than a year. Opposition from the U.S. Justice Department and Federal Communications Commission took shape over the past week, leaving officials of the two companies to conclude the deal wouldn't pass muster.

Comcast's board will meet to finalize the decision on Thursday, and an announcement may come as soon as Friday, said one of the people, who asked not to be identified because the information is private. Time Warner Cable executives plan to tell shareholders on an earnings conference call next Thursday how the company can survive independently, the person said.

The deal's collapse, a major setback for Comcast Chief Executive Officer Brian Roberts, sets off a cascade of recalculations in the businesses of broadband Internet and delivery of television and movies. Comcast must regroup to focus on adding more Internet subscribers and defending its pay-TV business, while Time Warner Cable could pursue other possible merger partners, such as John Malone's Charter Communications Inc.

“It’s the end of one chapter but the beginning of another,” said Craig Moffett, an analyst at MoffettNathanson. “The pace of cable consolidation is likely to accelerate rather than decelerate. It’ll just be Charter rather than Comcast leading the charge.”

Amazon, Netflix

The deal’s demise promises to strengthen the hand of online players like Amazon.com Inc., Netflix Inc. and others providing programming over the Internet. Philadelphia-based Comcast, the largest U.S. cable provider, faced scrutiny in Washington over whether it complied with agreements made in its 2011 acquisition of NBCUniversal.

The Justice Department had been reviewing whether Comcast was too actively involved when co-investors 21st Century Fox Inc. and Walt Disney Co. tried to sell Hulu in 2013, people familiar with the matter said earlier. Comcast agreed to be a passive investor in Hulu when it acquired a stake in the company through the NBCUniversal purchase.

On Wednesday, FCC staff joined lawyers at the Justice Department opposing the transaction. That day, FCC officials told representatives of the two companies they are leaning toward concluding the merger doesn’t help consumers, a person with knowledge of the matter said.

The FCC’s plan to call a hearing effectively killed the deal’s chances of success. An FCC hearing can take months to complete and drag out the approval process beyond the companies’ time frame for completion. Bloomberg News reported last week that Justice Department staff was leaning against the deal. Senators including Al Franken, a Democrat from Minnesota, also voiced opposition.

“Comcast’s withdrawal of its proposed merger with Time Warner Cable would be spectacularly good news for consumers,” Michael Copps, a Democratic former FCC commissioner working with Common Cause to oppose the deal, said in a statement.

Comcast shares rose 0.8 percent to \$59.23 at the close in New York, while Time Warner Cable slipped 0.6 percent to \$148.76.

Sena Fitzmaurice, a spokeswoman for Comcast, declined to comment, as did Bobby Amirshahi, a spokesman for Time Warner Cable.

Little Hope

As recently as yesterday, Comcast lobbyists were making a last-ditch effort to save the deal, which would have created a cable and Internet juggernaut serving 57 percent of U.S. homes that receive broadband at speeds that meet the FCC standard set in January. After meeting with FCC officials, Comcast and Time Warner Cable were left with little hope, said one of the people.

FCC staff concluded that an extended hearing was required in part because of the complexity of the issues raised by the deal, according to a person close to the agency. The hearing would have given all sides an opportunity to weigh in on the deal's impact on issues like innovation, the rise of Internet-based video, cable-TV pricing and bundling of channels.

The loss of its suitor leaves Time Warner Cable's future in limbo.

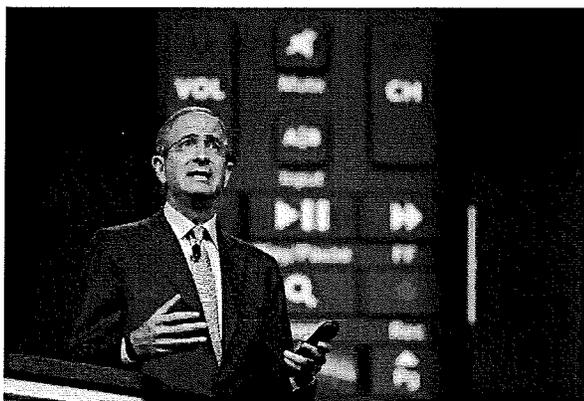
Before the deal with Comcast was announced in February 2014, Time Warner Cable was in talks to merge with smaller Charter Communications, whose largest investor is billionaire Malone. Those talks could be revived by Comcast's exit.

In the short term, the deal's collapse means Charter, which agreed to take control of 3.9 million Comcast cable-TV subscribers, won't get those customers. Another Charter deal, the recent agreement to purchase of Bright House Networks, could also be in jeopardy, because Time Warner Cable has the right to block it as part of its long-time arrangement to negotiate programming and other deals for Bright House.

BloombergBusiness

Comcast's Roberts Faces Rare Defeat After Trying to Go It Alone

by Alex Sherman
3:49 PM EDT April 23, 2015



Brian Roberts, chairman and chief executive officer of Comcast Corp.
Photographer: Andrew Harrer/Bloomberg

In hindsight, maybe Comcast Corp. Chief Executive Officer Brian Roberts should have just played nice.

More than a year after Roberts unexpectedly backed out of talks with Charter Communications Inc. to divvy up Time Warner Cable Inc. between the two of them -- opting instead to make a bid to buy it all himself -- it seems he will end up with nothing.

Comcast withdrew its bid for Time Warner Cable Friday after concluding the merger would be rejected by regulators. The Federal Communications Commission and the Department of Justice were both in favor of blocking the deal, Bloomberg reported Wednesday.

“Comcast rolled the dice on what was from the beginning a high-risk regulatory strategy,” said Craig Moffett, an analyst at MoffettNathanson LLC in New York. “It clearly would have been safer to take a back seat to a Charter-led deal. But they ultimately decided that the rewards of control were high enough to warrant the risk.”

The deal would have positioned Roberts to challenge John Malone for a distinction coined by pundits as the “king of cable.” Malone, who owns media assets including Sirius XM Holdings Inc. and more than a

quarter of Charter, now has a chance to retain the title if Charter can hammer out a deal for Time Warner Cable.

When asked in November if Charter would attempt to buy Time Warner Cable if the Comcast deal failed, Malone responded, "Hell yes."

Hostile Offer

The tangled negotiations began when Charter made a hostile offer in January of \$132.50 to acquire Time Warner Cable. Behind the scenes, Charter and Comcast were already discussing how they would carve up Time Warner Cable once the deal was done. Comcast would get subscribers in regions including New York City, North Carolina, New England and potentially Los Angeles, while Charter would get the rest.

Roberts soon soured on the idea, and instead blindsided Charter by making a bid to buy all of Time Warner Cable. One reason was that he wasn't happy with how Charter and Malone's Liberty Media Corp. were badmouthing Time Warner Cable, unusual in a traditionally collegial industry, people familiar with the matter said at the time.

Breakup Fee

Charter Chief Operating Officer John Bickham had publicly criticized the strategy and management of Time Warner Cable to convince investors that Time Warner Cable would be better run by Charter.

Roberts had another reason to act. Time Warner Cable CEO Rob Marcus preferred to do a deal with Roberts rather than with Greg Maffei, Malone's principal deal negotiator and CEO of Liberty Media, according to people familiar with the matter. To entice Roberts, Time Warner Cable didn't insist on Comcast paying a breakup fee if regulators turned against the deal.

Comcast and Charter ended up reaching a side pact after Comcast's bid for Time Warner Cable was accepted. Comcast agreed to shed four million subscribers to Charter and a new entity Charter would control. Still, the acquisition was framed as Comcast buying Time Warner Cable, rather than Charter as the acquirer.

Consumer Groups

That proved to be politically sensitive, as the proposed merger of the two big cable operators drew complaints from consumer groups and some lawmakers.

This is Roberts's second failed attempt at a huge media acquisition. Comcast made a \$54 billion hostile bid for Walt Disney Co. in 2004, which was rejected by Disney's board and subsequently withdrawn.

“The failed acquisition of Time Warner Cable has to be viewed as a major disappointment for Brian Roberts and the Comcast management team,” said Paul Sweeney, an analyst at Bloomberg Intelligence. “While the prospects for Comcast remain bright, the company put a lot of resources into getting this deal done.”

Working with Charter to acquire prized pieces of Time Warner Cable, including New York and Los Angeles, would have drawn less regulatory scrutiny than the merger of the nation's two biggest cable operators, Sweeney said.

Charter has only about 4.3 million video subscribers, while Comcast has more than 22 million customers and Time Warner Cable has about 11 million. Comcast also owns NBC Universal, giving the company significant media power that Charter doesn't have.

High Risk

Charter now has no incentive to work with Comcast if it makes another run at acquiring Time Warner Cable, as Comcast is no longer a threat to bid.

Comcast may be better off in the long run focusing its efforts on buying a wireless company or more content, Rich Greenfield, an analyst at BTIG in New York, said Thursday on Bloomberg TV. Still, it's hard not to see this as a failed gambit for Roberts, he suggested.

“He doesn't lose ever,” Greenfield said of Roberts's deal history and clout in Washington. “This is obviously kind of an ego blow.”

Comcast-TWC deal moves to Capitol Hill in day of talks

Apr 22 2015, 19:15 ET | About: [Comcast Corporation \(CMCSA\)](#) | By: [Jason Aycock](#), SA News Editor 

- "There are essentially three options: OK the deal, negotiate a consent decree to impose conditions, or sue to block the deal. The first is not in play," says media lawyer Andrew Jay Schwartzman to CNN about the now somewhat shaky \$45B Comcast-Time Warner Cable ([CMCSA](#), [TWC](#)) merger deal, following a marathon day where Comcast executives sat down with the Justice Department and then the FCC.
- Comcast issued a statement saying it's not appropriate to share the content of the meetings.
- With no breakup fee, there's less disincentive for Comcast to up and walk away from the deal, which has been more than a year in the making. But that would depend heavily on whether the government sues to block the deal, or just seeks concessions to make it happen.
- Comcast's new sweetener is promising to expand its low-income "Internet Essentials" program that offers \$10/month broadband to qualified households. Another statement from the company came today to "set the record straight" on the program, saying that critics are recycling old claims. (This must include articles like [this one](#), referring to IE as Comcast's merger "trump card" and proclaiming it "bullcrap.")
- Critics say that while Comcast claims it's "one of the most successful, if not the most successful, private sector initiatives to close the digital divide ever," the company has signed up just 13.4% of 2.6M eligible households.
- Previously: [Reuters: FCC staff sets Wednesday briefing on Comcast-TWC \(Apr. 21 2015\)](#)

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