

The Board of the Community Media Center of Carroll County (“CMC”) engages in a strategic planning process every 3 to 5 years. To assist in current strategic planning cycle, the Board retained Columbia Telecommunications Corporation (“CTC”) to conduct interviews and provide a study reporting on the needs and desires of important County Stakeholders (“Stakeholders”). The report’s goal was to assist in the development of a strategic vision for CMC’s future in light of rapidly changing technological and regulatory environments. The final report has been received and the Board is in the process of developing strategic initiatives based thereon.

The Board is distributing copies of the report to all individuals and organizations that participated in this process for their review and comment. For those who have not had the time to read the full 60 page document, the following is a summary of the reports findings related to (1) Stakeholders’ concerns and priorities as they relate to the CMC and (2) recommendations of goals for consideration as a part of CMC’s strategic plan:

Summary of Stakeholders concerns:

- Stakeholders look to the CMC for local content, production support, and IT/emergency services, including access to
 - Independent locally produced programming,
 - Government processes (for example, Town council meetings),
 - Community events (for example, parades, school sports and events, arts events, holiday events).
 - Educational content (such as speaker events and library events).
- With respect to technology services, Stakeholders see significant needs for getting more information to the public, expediting routine processes, maximizing use of existing staff and finding low cost ways to implement enabling technologies, such as:
 - Public emergency alert capabilities
 - Enhanced web presence-streaming video
 - Streaming video
 - Increased local video production
- Stakeholders see value in realizing economies of scale by collaborating with their counterparts in other municipalities or entities throughout the County.

Summary of CTC Recommendations:

CMC should consider a far-reaching plan implementing and utilizing a strategy the crosses several different but related types of media disciplines.

Immediate Goals

- Develop a robust, interactive web-presence which will broaden technological distribution to include Internet and digital media, offering both CMC-produced content and user-generated content over a robust web-presence.
- Develop a citizen alert system for Municipalities.
- Develop a more robust intern program emphasizing promising new media skills like WEB.

Medium-Term Goals

- Develop content to appeal to broader demographic including user produced content.

- Enable genealogy, oral history content, local history.

Long-Term Goals

- Leverage physical assets to meet Stakeholder needs including hosting civic events, partnering with other organizations to use facility for events and add a public WiFi space.
- Provide IT services to Municipalities.
Be a competitive alternative to commercial services by aggregating needs. Services such as centralized e-mail servers, storage back-up, ISP, VoIP, website hosting, development and monitoring, central video conferencing.
- Work with Municipalities to provide centrally managed, non-commercial, public wireless Internet hotspots in or around downtown areas.

Conclusion

This study and its recommendations are a dramatic shift from CMC's present operational model and as such will require a commitment from Stakeholders to accomplish these goals. CMC's mission has always been to promote the use of local and community television to help citizens engage in the life of their community. CMC is now faced with the challenge of embracing the Internet as a local system of communication and distribution of content. We are examining equipment, technologies, staffing and costs necessary for the implementation of these changes.

Thus, it is critical that you share your feedback and perspective on how CMC, as an active member of today's internet-based, interactive communications media, may best serve you.

Thank you for your continued support of the CMC and its mission.