

TVSea....*Watching The City of Seattle* **1999 Year In Review**

Overview

“TVSea.... *Watching the City of Seattle.*” Our station’s motto re-enforces the Jeffersonian concept that it is an informed society that finds its way to truth. TVSea helps inform citizens of Seattle about municipal government and local issues and, *ipso facto*, involves citizens in decisions that impact their lives.

As we entered the 21st Century, TVSea concluded its third year of operation as a consolidated unit providing video services to city departments and operating a TV channel available to cable subscribers. Commercial television stations employ numerous people specializing in each task, but at TVSea there are eight people who have to do and know everything. Our entire staff is involved in “multi-tasking,” operating a 24 hour/day, 7 day/week channel. This includes producing both field and studio programs, operating four robotically controlled cameras, programming the channel for playback, solving equipment problems, lighting the studio, supervising audio, developing graphics for television, updating a website, dubbing tapes for citizens and city employees, video streaming and more.

It’s hard to define an appropriate measure of success for government access television, but we are continuing to improve at every level and are already acknowledged as one of the better government access channels in the country. More importantly, we are an integral part of local government; citizens learn the most about what their elected officials are doing from watching TVSea.

During 1999 TVSea

- won national awards in prestigious competitions among our peers;
- taped and aired almost 400 different Seattle City Council events and many other events;
- developed almost 50 studio productions; including live studio call in programs with the Mayor, Councilmembers, Police Chief Stamper, City Attorney Sidran;
- taped more than two dozen press conferences;
- produced high quality field productions;
- initiated some significant joint productions with other government access stations;
- offered video streaming on our web site;
- duplicated more than six hundred tapes for citizens and city officials;
- and had citizens/viewers calling us daily with their praises and requests.

Specific Programming Highlights

There wasn’t much that the Council did during 1999 that TVSea didn’t cover. Viewers, Councilmembers, the Mayor and city departments all rely on our distribution to approximately 160,000 homes as a way to inform and involve citizens. We taped 388 separate council events, running the gamut from a five minute bond approval meeting to the two post-WTO public hearings that totaled 18 hours.

But at TVSea we do much more than air meetings.

The WTO events of November and December are a good example of how TVSea fulfilled its commitment to inform citizens. The Police Department’s November “Beyond The Badge” program focused on the WTO before it occurred and included a segment with citizens expressing their enthusiasm for it as a way to encourage business and heighten national awareness of Seattle. A pre-WTO Seattle Citizen studio program featured a debate between Bill Byrant of the Seattle Host Organization and Patti Goldman of Earth Justice. During the WTO we had press passes that gave us entrée to the Convention Center Media Room. Two TVSea camera crews roamed the streets during the demonstrations. We aired our first day “field tapes” without editorial comment to give them the same degree of unedited integrity as our gavel to gavel meeting coverage. We partnered with TVW, the statewide government public affairs channel, and aired live Seattle Host Organization WTO conferences and other events from Bell Harbor Conference Center.

When it became evident that protester and police activities would consume the media spotlight, TVSea began working on a video with a different focus. Voices of The WTO allowed protesters and delegates to address the issues that brought them to Seattle in the first place, important issues like fair trade, labor standards, environmental concerns, WTO secrecy and national sovereignty. In December, when the Mayor came to his monthly Seattle Citizen call-in program, callers were lined up on all seven of our rollover numbers for the entire hour with WTO questions.

(WTO issues remain important to the citizens. In January 2000, we had City Attorney Mark Sidran on for a lively call-in. We are currently taping, in its entirety, the first assault trial emanating from the WTO events and plan to air the investigatory forums that the Council will be conducting.)

During 1999 we produced 26 separate Seattle Citizen studio shows, our public affairs program. Almost half were live, with either the Mayor or Councilmembers taking viewer calls. In conjunction with the Seattle Police Department, we produced twelve monthly hour long Beyond The Badge programs, a combination of live studio and pre-produced segments. With the Seattle Public Library, we initiated a new program called TVSea BookTalk. Two of these programs stand out—the one featuring two young readers (ages 10 and 12) discussing the Harry Potter series, and the other featuring Ernest Gaines, author of “A Lesson Before Dying,” in an one hour live call-in program with viewers.

One the most popular events with our viewers in 1999 was the Seattle Library Design Competition--two days of final presentations by three world renown architecture firms competing to design Seattle’s new public library. We also taped the winner, Dutch-born Harvard Professor Rem Koolhaas, again when he returned in December with his preliminary design concept. Architectural and design concept presentations for the new City Hall and for the new Aquarium also were popular with viewers.

We produced four excellent Y2K programs that were a mixture of studio and remote shoots, programs that provided citizens with hard facts and sane solutions to disaster preparedness, whether it was for Jan 1, 2000 or for an unscheduled earthquake.

A studio program on African-American Family Violence brought together a national expert on the topic with local people involved in the same concern.

We taped 25 press conferences held by Mayor Schell, ranging from the listing of salmon on the endangered species list to the police chief announcing his post WTO resignation. We taped mock trials, a Kids Town Hall and numerous city awards and ceremonial events,

TVSea went outside of government to record important political and cultural events in the Seattle area. For example, we taped and aired the entire public hearing conducted and sponsored by the NAACP on allegations of police abuses in the African American community. And we worked with our counterpart in King County, CTV, to produce regional video voters guides for both the primary and general elections and two PSAs on salmon preservation.

Other noteworthy productions during 1999 included:

Workforce Success--showing what local employers are doing to get women on welfare back to work;

At Their Fingertips--a program on Seattle’s deaf and blind community;

The View From Here--a music and art celebration of Mt. Rainier’s Centennial;

Voices of the WTO--what were the issues that brought protesters and delegates to Seattle?

Longfellow Creek--urban creek restoration and the role it plays in salmon restoration;

Seattle Works--a look at city workers honored for unique service to the community;

Solid Waste Division Virtual Tour--a creative video showing what happens to our garbage and recycling;

Lighting Lab--ways to conserve electricity yet improve lighting.

We entered the two main national competitions for government access channels and received excellent national recognition. We won the following awards in 1999:

National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA)

- 2nd Place, Overall Excellence in Government Programming
- 2nd Place, Interview/Talk Show (Beyond The Badge)
- 2nd Place, Innovative Programming(Seattle Works!)
- 2nd Place, Outstanding Government TV station Website

Alliance for Community Media, Home Town Video Festival

- First Place, Documentary Profile (Cedar River Watershed Education Center)
- First Place, Government Profile (Neighborhood Matching Fund)
- Judge's Choice Award (Beyond The Badge).

Other 1999 Changes and Plans, Goals and Expectations for 2000

During this past year, TVSea's channel position was "relocated" from Channel 28 to Channel 21 in all of the TCI/AT&T franchise area. We dropped both TVW and the School District since both now have their own channels within the re-built cable franchise area. We also began video streaming on a regular basis, and became part of the City's new Department of Information Technology.

In addition, we experienced significant personnel changes. Peter Watson, who had operated the channel when it was housed in the library, moved to Florida. And Nick Cirelli, an excellent videographer and our *de facto* engineer who has been part of our new unit since its creation, retired this month. We appreciated Peter and Nick's expertise and their commitment to excellence. We were fortunate in our search for replacements and hired other excellent professionals.

While we are proud of our achievements, we can do more. Our goals for 2000 include:

- producing an on-air schedule, both on our own channel and on the TVGuide Preview Channel (99);
- improving our website and video streaming;
- developing a monthly or bi-monthly city video magazine;
- initiating a content-based studio program on council issues;
- partnering with 911 Media and the Seattle Arts Commission to develop a regular community-based Seattle Arts program;
- implementing programming that encourages more interaction between citizens and the Council.

When construction for the new Civic Center begins, TVSea will have to relocate. Moving to temporary facilities and planning for our space and technical requirements in both this temporary home and in the new Civic Center will pose significant and important challenges for 2000 and beyond.

1999 TVSea Detailed Program List

Council events (both in chambers and in the field)

388 separate council events, including full council, committee meetings, council forums, public hearings, joint meetings with school board, etc.

We also produced a professional “open” and customized it for each council meeting.

Mayor Press Conferences

25 Press Conferences, including a joint one with King County Executive Ron Sims, special ones on Salmon listing on Endangered Species List, Police Review Panel, etc.

Studio (48 productions)

26 Seattle Citizen- includes call-ins with Mayor Schell and council

Beyond The Badge (12; all live; with SPD)

African American Domestic Violence

Book Talk (4 programs- including one on the popular Harry Potter series and a live call in with author

Ernest Gaines during All Seattle Reads The Same Book Week)

Y2K Preparation--4 studio programs

Cultural and Community-Related

Community Hearing on Allegations of Police Misconduct (sponsored by NAACP)

Ernest Gaines- My Life As An Author

Juror Appreciation Day

Mock Trial

Native American Stories

Martin Luther King Banquet

Seattle Neighborhood Arts Conference

Transportation Forum (League of Women Voters)

Mayor's Scholarship Awards

Seattle Public Library Literacy Day

Youth Forum on Race

Morris Dees-speech

Related to New Architecture Competition and Design

Library Architect Competition Presentations (May 10 & May 12))

Rem Koolhaas design presentation for new Library (Dec.16)

Aquarium Architect Competition Presentations

City Hall Design Presentation and Forum

Produced Pieces

Solid Waste Division Virtual Tour

At Their Fingertips

Farmer's Market

Voices of the WTO

Woodland Park Zoo

Design Center

Longfellow Creek

View From Here

Seattle Works!

Work Force Success

Sound Transit Update

SCL Lighting Lab

River CPR

And much work for various departments that was internal and not for air.

Election-Related

Candidate Forum- Primary; League of Women Voters
Candidate Forum- General, in chambers
Seattle Citizen Candidate Face-Offs (4)
Video Voters Guide (Primary) (with King County CTV)
Video Voters Guide (General) (with King County CTV)
I-200 Forum
Impact of I-200 Forum (post election)

Other Public Meetings and Events (Non-Council)

Elevated Transportation (13 meetings)
CTTAB- Citizens' Telecommunication and Technology Advisory Board (6)
Board of Health and Board of Health Underage Drinking Subcommittee (7)
Council-Mayor Town Hall Meetings (2)
Project Impact-Disaster Preparation
Human Rights Day
Forum- Living with Disabilities
Kids' Town Hall
Youth and Philanthropy Event
Parks Planning Meeting
Seattle-King County Water Quality Board
Forum on Childcare
Diversity Awards
Martin Luther King Kickoff Event
Seattle Works Awards
Seattle Management Association Luncheon

Public Service Announcements and Promos (produced by TVSea)

Salmon Information Network (2; co-produced with King County CTV)
Seattle Citizen promo
Watermains (SPU)
Western Ave. Improvements (SPU)
Occidental Ave. (SPU)
Streets (SPU)
Chip Seal (SeaTrans)
Fireworks Danger (SFD)
Seattle Community Access Network Board
Millennium PSAS (3)
New City Website (2)
Human Services (2)
Woodland Park Zoo
Light Rail Public Forum
WTO Website
BookTalk Promo
Technology Matching Fund

Aired Programming Provided By Other Organizations

School District (until November)
TVW (during legislative session and for a few "specials" at their request)
City Hall Architect Presentations of July 28 (taped by a private production company)
Puget Sound Regional Council (3)
Cedar River Habitat Conservation Plan Workshops (3)

Library Board Meetings (13)
Sound Commuter Rail Updates (2)
Fish and Wildlife Updates (11)
Developing A Spending Plan
SPU Community Reports (2)
At Ocean's Edge
Meadowbrook Pond (2)
Tribes Video
911 Media Arts Young Producers Series
Earth Café Series
Town Meeting on Salmon
Seattle's Favorite Poems
Other National PSAs
Media 411 Adult Literacy Series

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