



The Seattle Channel

2002 Annual Report

For The Seattle Channel, 2002 was a year of change. There were changes in name, structure, mission and management. It was the year of beginning implementation of the recommendations of the Seattle Commission on Electronic Communication who delivered their report to the City in December 2001. Mayor Greg Nickels embraced the recommendations and the City Council gave mid-year funding approval to begin phase one of creating Seattle's "Democracy Portal."

The Commission recommended a new mission statement: "To inform and engage citizens in the governmental, civic and cultural affairs of Seattle through compelling use of television, Internet and other media." The Commission outlined a plan with 31 points to move the channel "To be a national leader in using technology to dramatically expand civic engagement and public discourse by transforming TVSea into a multimedia organization that provides compelling content and two-way communication opportunities."

Seattle's Government cable access channel had been known the past several years as TVSea. In 2002, after work with consultant Pyramid Communication, the organization changed its name to The Seattle Channel. The new name is intended to reflect and communicate the change in mission and purpose. Also with Pyramid's help a new style guide was adopted changing and unifying the on-air look and graphic presentation. Over the year a News Director, Webmaster, and new General Manager were hired.

The Seattle Channel is both our cable TV channel (Channel 21/28) and our new interactive website www.seattlechannel.org, both focused on life in the city of Seattle. We cover government, community and culture with a variety

of programs, features and interactive possibilities including call-in, polling, and e-mail with the goal of involving the citizens of Seattle. This City initiative to use television, the Internet and other media to engage residents in civic debate and interaction with government on issues of concern is Seattle's "Democracy Portal." It is an effort to give people information and opportunities to interact with Seattle government on the issues that affect their lives.

We are cable casting 24 hours a day, seven days a week and streaming all programming live on the Internet as well. The Seattle Channel continues to give its highest priority to our "window on government" responsibilities, providing gavel to gavel coverage of all Seattle City Council and Committee meetings, and Mayor's Press Conferences. The Seattle Channel began a number of programming innovations in 2002.

Seattle City Council- On September 19, 2002 we started carrying Seattle City Council meetings live for the first time. In our efforts to make the "Democracy Portal" a reality, all Full Council and Council Briefing meetings and most Council committee meetings are carried live, repeated on television in the evening, again on weekends, and then moved to video-on-demand on our website. The live Council coverage has turned out to be very popular with City employees who can now watch from their desks, instead of spending hours attending meetings. In 2002 we did live coverage of all 24 hours of Council Budget hearings, including a Budget "Town Hall" meeting. For the first we produced a Council Budget Special featuring Council members Drago, Compton, McGiver in our studio with C.R. Douglas, and taped comments from all Council members. We played dozens of Council Forums and "Brown Bags," both live and taped, throughout the year from Council Chambers. We taped a special program with Councilmember Jim Compton on domestic violence. This Council coverage was all intended to make information readily accessible, and involvement an easy and open process.

Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels- The Seattle Channel covers all of the Mayor Greg Nickels' Press Conferences. If Council is not in session we cover them live. If Council is in session, the Press Conferences are recorded and played back at the first opportunity. **Ask the Mayor-**Our monthly live call-in show with the Mayor was revamped in 2002 and given a new name. The program has a new set and graphics, as well as pre-recorded tape roll-ins of citizen questions. C.R. Douglas has returned as host. The Seattle

Channel accompanied Mayor Greg Nickels on his monthly **Neighborhood Walks** to West Seattle, “The Ave”, Downtown and Madison Park. We produced a special on The Mayor’s Honor Song, a song created to honor Mayor Nickels and the City of Seattle for their support of our Native American community. All of these program activities with the Mayor and City Council members are given multiple repeat broadcasts, and are then archived for video-on-demand playback.

Live Remote- On September 11, 2002 the Seattle Channel did the station’s first-ever live remote broadcast. For 6 hours we covered the city’s 9/11 memorial events at Westlake Center, Town Hall and the Seattle Center. C.R. Douglas hosted our coverage.

Seattle Spotlight- Kelly Guenther produced Seattle Spotlight segments on The Alaskan Way Viaduct, Cable Privacy, the Seattle Citizen’s Service Bureau, the Lighting of Athletic Fields, Racial Profiling, the Seawall, the Skagit River Salmon revival, among others. The Spotlight pieces are 6 to 8 minute features exploring all sides on these city issues.

On the Ballot- During the 2002 election season we produced balanced “On The Ballot” features on The Housing Levy, The Monorail, I-776, and Referendum 51. The Seattle Channel also covered debates on ballot issues at City Club, Town Hall and The League of Women Voters.

Beyond The Badge- We continued our work with the Seattle Police Department with 12 new shows of the award winning Beyond the Badge series. These half-hour programs explore all aspects of SPD’s work in the city.

Seattle Library- The Seattle Channel and the Seattle Public Library continued as production partners on many programs about books and authors. Poetry, ethnic writers, travel books and reading for young adults were some of the featured topics.

City Inside/Out- Our newest weekly program is City Inside/Out, a half-hour hosted by C.R. Douglas. The program is a mix of news, information and opinion from the people making news at city hall and the people covering it. Each week the program features and “insider” guest from city government, and an “outsider” guest with a different take on the week’s subject. The

program has featured nearly every Councilmember, staff from the Mayor's office and the Directors of many of Seattle's City Departments.

Seattle Channel Specials- The Seattle Channel also produced dozens of special programs and features on a wide range of topics including: The history of African-Americans in Seattle, the Salmon Homecoming, the 40th Anniversary of the Seattle World's Fair, "**Playing Hardball**": Gender Equity in Sports, "**Rosies**": Washington Women in Trades in WWII, and the rebuilding of the Pioneer Square Pergola among many others.

New Programming- The Seattle Channel tried out several new programs and formats during the year, including a weekly feature produced and hosted by Nancy Guppy called "**City A go-go**". The show looked at the highlights of Seattle's arts and cultural offerings each week. We are searching for underwriting with hopes of continuing that experiment. Walt Crowley hosted "**HistoryLink**", a series of segments on Seattle historical features and areas. We've started a new monthly program on the Seattle's neighborhoods called "**Neighborhood News.**" Kelly Guenther produced the first six segments on Seattle's neighborhood districts.

Community Meetings and Events- During 2002 The Seattle Channel covered a wide variety of issues at community meetings, events and Council Forums around the city. Selected topics included: childcare issues, small businesses in Seattle, reparations for African-Americans, City recycling efforts, parking meter rates, wastewater reuse, emergency preparedness issues, water rates, Safeco Field street vending, Sound Transit meetings, Elevated Transit Company meetings, food bank issues, the Music and Youth Advisory Group, all age dance venues, the Olympic Sculpture Park, the UW Master Plan, the Espresso Tax, Animal Control fees, fire & burglar false alarms, video cameras in police cars, off leash dog parks, many Seattle City Light issues, Pioneer Square alcohol issues and the covering of city reservoirs.

Bumbershoot Uncut- The Seattle Channel covered the city's arts festival Bumbershoot for the first time. We did six hours of "Bumbershoot Uncut"...sending unedited tapes to air via a fiber line from Seattle Center to The Municipal Building. Nancy Guppy and Matt Smith were our festival guides. We also presented two hours of short films on the festival's 1Reel Film Festival featuring Councilmember Heidi Wills along with our host Warren Etheridge.

Seattle Cine-Visions- We launched a limited series in co-operation with The Seattle Arts Commission highlighting the video and film work of local artists. It showcases the vibrant range of voices developed by Seattle media artists over the past 15 years.

Seattle Review-Preview- At the end of 2002 David Brewster of Seattle's Town Hall hosted a conversation with some pundits and observers of the Seattle scene. Joel Connelly, Stephanie Ellis-Smith, Eric Liu, and Jim Vesely looked back at city events and issues in 2002 and ahead to 2003.

Because we are a 24 hour television operation with limited production resources, all of our programs receive many, many broadcasts. This allows our viewers multiple opportunities to see our programming.

www.seattlechannel.org

The new website seattlechannel.org launched in 2002 and offers a variety of news, features, information and interactivity about life in Seattle...its government, community and culture. The website is very strong on providing linkages to public information and opportunities for residents to interact with their government and each other across all media platforms. The Seattle Channel website offers daily news links to a wide variety of Seattle media. The "In Depth Articles," "Daily Headlines," "City News" and "Talkback" features are just a few of the innovations the staff has created. The website and television broadcasts compliment and support each other with features and information presented in a variety of ways. The Seattle Channel website focuses on issues and interaction, linking to information from other city and non-city sources. The city's main website www.cityofseattle.net is the city's site for city information and services.

The streaming of the Seattle Channel programming, the Seattle City Council live stream and the video-on-demand functions were all dramatically upgraded with new content, improved software, and platform improvements. The new website utilizes a variety of interactive techniques—e-mail, contests, indexed video-on-demand, and polling — to promote citizen engagement and easy participation. The website staff works to create and display compelling, topical, and accessible content presented in a concise and timely fashion. Expanded web casting coverage of Council meetings is providing a mechanism for instant feedback we plan to grow in the future.

We've enhanced our video on demand archives, and now can archive a year's worth of City Council and Committee meetings, Mayor Press Conferences and dozens of our other programs. At the end of 2002 our On-demand archive numbered over 300 videos.

The Seattle Channel made great strides in 2002 in beginning to implement the recommendations of the Seattle Electronic Communication Commission. The staff looks forward to creating new content, meeting new challenges and continuing the important work of serving the residents of Seattle.

In 2003 the Seattle Channel will move into new quarters in the new City Hall building. Goals for the coming year include increasing the citizen voices heard on the channel and website, improving coverage of the City Council, and enhancing their meetings with graphics, links, indexing information and archiving for easy access.