

## **GWINNETT COUNTY GOVERNMENT ACCESS CABLE TELEVISION PROGRAMMING GUIDELINES**

### **A. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this document is to create programming and operating guidelines for consistent, high quality, politically unbiased, legal and ethical dissemination of government related information on the Gwinnett County Government Access Cable Channel. Therefore, the Gwinnett County Government Access Cable Channel is not intended to serve as a public forum for the exchange of ideas.

### **B. OBJECTIVES**

1. To provide public service and emergency information to the people of Gwinnett County.
2. To widen the dissemination of the activities of the legislative, administrative and advisory bodies of Gwinnett County.
3. To increase the knowledge of the citizens of Gwinnett County about the various functions performed by their government.
4. To provide additional information to citizens needing access to various departments and agencies.
5. To provide information on functions performed by or sponsored or funded by Gwinnett County, Gwinnett County municipalities, the State, or Federal Government.
6. To cablecast 24 hours a day.

### **C. PROGRAMMING POLICIES**

Gwinnett County's government access channel shall provide non-editorial information to the citizens of Gwinnett County. The cable channel is not intended as a mechanism for building support for particular policies, programs or issues. Requests for access to the cable channel by any individual or group for the purpose of advocating personal or political viewpoints shall be denied. This channel shall not be used for the following purposes:

1. Any advertising message, including specific messages on behalf of or opposing any political candidate or measure on a ballot. Candidates for election or reelection to any elective office, regardless of whether they are opposed, shall not be permitted to make personal statements from the first day authorized by law for circulation of nomination papers as a candidate, except as part of a formal public meeting, normal County business or

ceremonial activities, or as part of a political forum in which all candidates or sides of a measure have the same opportunities for speech.

2. Any advertising message on behalf of or opposing any measure proposed by a County department, or under consideration by municipality, State Legislature, U.S. Congress or any other legislative, policy making, judicial or advisory body.
3. Any advertising message or other information that promotes the sale of any product or service offered, except for promotional announcements for County sponsored events or programs, government-sponsored events in County facilities, or events and activities promoted by the Gwinnett Convention and Visitor's Bureau. Advertising messages embedded in satellite programming, or embedded in programming provided by a State or Federal agency will not be edited from the program due to staff and technical limitations unless the message in conflict with section C-1, C-2, C-4, C-5, or C-6 of this policy.
4. Any presentation of obscene, discriminatory or defamatory material.
5. Any endorsement of specific brand names for consumer use.
6. Any material that would violate any local, state, or federal law.

D. OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

1. Modes of Operation:

- a. **LIVE CABLECAST.** This will consist of certain public meetings, events and programs where live cablecast is technically feasible.
- b. **TAPE DELAYED CABLECAST.** Some public meetings will be videotaped for cablecast at a later time. Others will be cablecast both live and subsequently by tape at other appropriate times. Because of technical considerations or programming conflicts, some meetings may only be taped and played back at a later time. (See Appendix A & B for details)
- c. **LOCALLY PRODUCED PROGRAMS.** County Communications Office staff (or designees), utilizing County facilities and equipment, will produce programs to illustrate functions and operations of County departments and agencies. (See Appendix A & B for details)
- d. **OUTSIDE PROGRAM SOURCES.** The County Communications Director will consider pre-recorded material for cablecast on a variety of topics regarding Federal, State, local government, or economic development issues, subject to the constraints of this policy.

- e. CHARACTER GENERATOR TEXT MESSAGES. Printed, on-screen text messages regarding County Services and events are available to all County departments and County funded projects. (See Appendix B for details)
  - f. LOCAL AFFILIATE REPEATS. Arrangements may be made for repeat cablecast of programming related to Gwinnett County produced by local broadcast affiliates or production companies.
2. Access Policy:
- a. MEETINGS. Meetings of official Gwinnett County Boards, Commissions and Authorities may only be telecast live or by tape delay if the meetings for the group have been authorized for telecast by the Board of Commissioners or the County Administrator. Any live cablecasts and tapings of specially-called public meetings (i.e. town hall meetings) will be coordinated through the Communications Office. Coverage will follow standard protocol and all boards' and authorities' rules and procedures. Final decisions on cablecast issues will be the responsibility of the Communications Director with guidance from the County Administrator and/or County Attorney as needed.
  - b. INFORMATIONAL PROGRAMMING. All County departments may submit requests to initiate programming of an appropriate nature to the County's cable channel.

Any programming requests made by County departments, agencies or offices must conform to the following guidelines:

- 1. Programming may be locally produced or obtained from alternate sources. However, only those tapes consistent with the overall operating policy of the Gwinnett County Government Access Cable Channel that have copyright clearance shall be considered.
- 2. From the last day authorized by law for qualifying for election, through the conclusion of the election, any elected official opposed on the ballot, or becomes opposed on a ballot through some other legal process, who regularly appears on or hosts a program that is cablecast on the Gwinnett County Government Access Cable Channel, shall only be permitted to appear on the Channel as part of a formal public meeting, incidentally through coverage of government functions and events, or as part of a political forum in which all candidates or sides of a measure have the same opportunities for speech. Candidates for election or reelection for

any elective office shall also comply with subsection (C)(1) of this Policy.

3. All requests must be submitted in writing to Gwinnett County Media Services.
  4. Upon the approval of the Communications Director, the Multimedia and Web Communications Manager will make any necessary modifications as required.
- c. **TEXT GENERATOR MESSAGES.** Any department, agency or office may submit information for character messages. All requests must be submitted as text files. Submitted messages must adhere to margin and font guidelines. Style sheets are available from the Gwinnett County Communications Office. (See Appendix B for details)
  - d. **PROGRAM LOGS AND REPORTS.** Communications Office staff will produce a daily log of all cablecast programming. The Web guide will serve as the daily log. These logs shall be kept as a part of the public records regarding the operation of the channel.

3. Editing Policy:

- a. **PUBLIC MEETINGS.** Cablecasts of official public meetings shall be edited only when time or technical considerations require and will not be subject to editorial comment. Meeting coverage will cover all agenda business items whenever possible.
- b. **DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAMS.** Any programming originated, prepared, or provided by a County Department may be modified or edited as appropriate by the Gwinnett County Media Services as dictated by scheduling and personnel availability. Edited material will be available for review by originating department prior to cablecast.
- c. **TEXT GENERATOR MESSAGES.** Programmed messages may be edited to provide clarity and to maximize the use of the character generator.
- d. **ERROR.** Gwinnett County does not guarantee the accuracy of the information cablecast by the Gwinnett County Government Access Channel. No agents, employees or officials of Gwinnett County or Gwinnett County Media Services shall be held liable for the cablecast of inaccurate information through either human or mechanical error.

4. Gwinnett County Communications Network Operating Hours:

The Gwinnett County Government Access Channel shall operate 24 hours, seven days per week. Live, taped and text generated messages will be cablecast.

5. Scheduling:

Scheduling the use of the Gwinnett County Government Access Channel or use of the Media Services staff can be accomplished by contacting the Gwinnett County Multimedia and Web Communications Manager. Requests appearing to be in conflict with portions of the Gwinnett County Government Access Cable Policy will be forwarded to the Communications Director for resolution. Scheduling will be on a first come, first serve basis, with priority given to emergency messages affecting the health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of Gwinnett County. (See Appendix C for details)

## Appendixes

### A. Technical Standard

Operating standards for technical quality of live or taped programs will be determined by the Multimedia and Web Communications Manager. All videotaped programs must meet the following technical standards:

1. Tape format must be Betacam, Betacam SP, DVC Pro, DVCam or DVD.
2. Video and audio quality must be acceptable for cablecast transmission.
3. Maximum videotaped program length should exceed no more than 120 minutes unless time or circumstances warrant longer presentation. Time limitations may be adjusted at the discretion of the Multimedia and Web Communications Manager.

### B. Points of Contact

Requests for video production or billboard messages (or other programming requests) for cablecast on the Gwinnett County Government Access channel may be initiated by elected officials, department heads, the County's Communications Director or a designated representative of these officials. All requests for programming will be submitted in writing to the Multimedia and Web Communications Manager via departmental memo or E-mail.

### C. Coordination Requirements

1. The Multimedia and Web Communications Manager will coordinate Media Services staff, interns and volunteers to execute the operation of the Gwinnett County Government Access Cable Channel to include: billboard announcements, live video production for cablecast, edited video production for cablecast, video playback, music playback, satellite programming and any other programming source for cablecast.
2. The Multimedia and Web Communications Manager will prioritize program scheduling based on the following criteria:
  - a. message urgency
  - b. production staff limitations
  - c. order of request
  - d. timely submittal of request
  - e. production equipment limitations

Conflicts that cannot be resolved to the requestor's satisfaction will be forwarded to the Communications Director for resolution.

3. The Multimedia and Web Communications Manager will coordinate cablecast programming records, records of public comments and the timely response to policy and programming inquiries.
4. Requests for both cablecast and non-cablecast video production made to the Multimedia and Web Communications Manager will be forwarded to the Communications Director for final approval.
5. The Gwinnett County Communications Director will serve as a program and content advisor when programming requests deal with sensitive issues, County Administrator policies or specific issues relating to the Board of Commissioners. Guidance will be sought from the County Administrator and/or the County Attorney as needed.

D. Budget

1. Funding for staff, equipment and the day-to-day operation of the Gwinnett County Government Access Cable Channel will originate from the Communications Office.
2. Funding for tape, special equipment rentals, freelance production staff, or any extraordinary costs associated with the execution of a programming request will be the responsibility of requestor unless associated with initiatives funded from the Communications Office budget.

***Gwinnett County reserves the right to refuse any programming that does not accomplish the goals set forth herein of providing politically unbiased government information to the citizens of Gwinnett County.***