

Five Reasons To Take Cable TV License Renewal Seriously

1. Many cable systems are old and need to be updated. Many towns still have a 450 MHz system. That is the cable equivalent of a dinosaur. System upgrades to 650 MHz, 750 MHz, or 870 MHz can provide more channels, clearer pictures, and access to high speed internet services.
2. Many existing systems need to be built out. That means that there may be streets, neighborhoods, or subdivisions within the Town that have not been cabled. Most licenses obligate a cable operator to build out into all areas of the town, with certain exceptions. It is typical that during the renewal process, a town may discover that there are areas that were supposed to be cabled, but never were.
3. Signal quality can be improved. The FCC has technical specifications for signal quality. In many towns, particularly those with older systems, the cable system does not comply. There are remedies for this, but the best time to pressure the cable operator to improve signal quality is when the cable operator is trying to get a license renewal.
4. Customer service complaints can also be best addressed at the time of license renewal. Many subscribers have problems with billing questions or service calls. Sometimes cable subscribers cannot reach the cable operator by phone at all, or are put on hold for inordinate lengths of time, and then are told that they have the wrong number. A cable operator is highly motivated to correct these types of problems during renewal negotiations.
5. If the Town has, or wants to have, a viable Access program, the laws governing cable license renewal permit the Town to seek money or equipment contributions towards the Town's Access programming. This requires some homework on the part of the Town, but the rewards here can be great.