

STRATEGIC PLAN OUTLINE

Mission: Community Television provides tools, training and programming to foster dialogue, civic engagement and self-expression through television, the internet and other digital media.

Vision: Empower our community to thrive in a digital world.

This Strategic Plan document is intended to provide a strategic plan for the continued operation and development of Community Television of Santa Cruz County (CTV) into the future. At the Board's direction, the Strategic Plan Committee met and drafted this plan for the Board's consideration, hoping to provide a roadmap for the organization as it moves into the future and adapts to budgetary and technology challenges.

In an effort to map out the strategic vision for the future of CTV, the Committee identified three areas of focus, namely (1) strengthening the organization, (2) operation of channels and (3) building technology use and skills, and this plan document is divided accordingly.

I. Strengthening the Organization

A. CTV must expand opportunities to generate unrestricted income

CTV faces significant budgetary challenges. The organization operates under a contract with the County and City of Santa Cruz. This contract requires CTV to program and operate three channels - one each for Public, Education, and Government (PEG) access. These are channels 25, 26, and 27 on the Comcast system and 71, 72, and 73 on the local Charter system. In addition, CTV programming streams on communitytv.org. Under this contract, CTV receives \$600,000 annually. However, none of these dollars can be used to fund the operation of CTV. Instead, as will be discussed, these dollars can only be used for capital expenditures and for CTV's Youth Grant Program.

When a cable company wishes to provide cable service in a community, it seeks a franchise to operate in that community. The franchise sets out the terms and conditions under which the cable company is allowed to use the public rights-of-way in the community. In 1984, Congress passed the Cable Communications Policy Act which, among other things, established the ability of cities and counties to: 1) require payment of a franchise fee (up to 5% of the cable company's gross annual revenues); 2) require a cable company to provide capacity on its system for three PEG channels ("Public access", "Educational", and "Government"); and, 3) require cable companies to pay an additional fee to support PEG channels. The use of PEG fees has generally been limited to capital expenditures.

In 1989, as a result of a lawsuit between the County and City of Santa Cruz and the local cable provider, a Federal Consent Judgement was filed and that Judgment loosened the restrictions on how PEG fees could be spent. CTV, which received PEG fees from the County and City to operate PEG channels, was allowed to use those PEG fees to meet operating, as well as capital needs. This is the model under which CTV operated for 25 years. Unfortunately, the settlement agreement came to an end on July 1, 2014. Since

then, all money provided by the County/City to CTV has been restricted for use on capital expenditures only. As a result, the lack of unrestricted funds serves as an existential threat to CTV's existence. This required CTV to reevaluate its operations and structure and find other means of raising unrestricted funds to support its activities.

In 2015, CTV partnered with Satellite Teleworks Centers to create the *Satellite Coworking Space and Digital Media Center* within CTV's facility. Under this partnership, some of the space within the CTV facility is used for coworking space that generates revenue, some of which accrues to the benefit of CTV. While this partnership provided enough money to support CTV's current operations, it is not expected to provide enough additional dollars to allow CTV to expand the services it currently provides to the community.

Accordingly, looking forward it is imperative that CTV develops additional sources of unrestricted income.

B. CTV Fosters Community Support and Engages Community Organizations

As has been demonstrated in the past, it cannot be assumed that the City/County contract will be renewed absent: 1) A record of financial stability; 2) Successful completion of all contractual obligations; and, 3) Both political and community support. By fostering support and engaging with community organizations, CTV can maintain and strengthen its standing as a well-regarded entity worthy of support in Santa Cruz County.

Development and growth of relationships with the following types of community organizations are critical to the future of CTV.

- i. Nonprofits - CTV provides local non-profits with opportunities to create short videos highlighting their work and the services they offer. This helps address a key challenge for non-profits - reaching those who may benefit from the non-profit's services, along with potential non-profit volunteers and charitable supporters.
- ii. Educational Institutions - CTV has two Board seats reserved for education, one for K-12 and one for post-secondary. CTV has an equipment grant program for local nonprofit youth organizations. CTV can also explore partnership agreements with educational organizations.
- iii. Government Institutions - CTV cable and online channels provide meeting coverage for the City and County of Santa Cruz, as well as the City of Capitola and PVUSD. In addition, CTV provides coverage of several special districts within the County. All of this coverage helps keep the residents and businesses within Santa Cruz County informed about community issues and is at the core of CTV's mission.
- iv. News Organizations -- To the extent that CTV is able to amplify the work of local news organizations, there will be opportunities to partner with these organizations to extend their reach and support additional community engagement.
- v. Private Sector – As CTV adds new facilities, equipment and services it must remain aware of meeting the needs of all of the above-stated

organizations, including the private sector.

C. Increasing Outreach to Government Liaison

As noted previously, all of the dollars that flow to CTV through its contract with the City and County of Santa Cruz come from the PEG fees these jurisdictions receive from the local cable companies. Throughout California and the country, the cable industry has a strong lobbying presence, and the reduction and/or elimination of PEG funding is a constant target of many of these lobbying efforts. The elimination or reduction of PEG fees paid by the cable industry is a threat to CTV's existence as this money could not easily be replaced by other sources within our community.

CTV has only limited ability to influence legislative and/or FCC rule-making efforts that threaten PEG funding. The Alliance for Community Media, an association of PEG access organizations across the country, works to protect PEG funding, and CTV is a member of the Alliance. However, public agencies such as the City and County of Santa Cruz have significantly greater influence on legislative and rule-making efforts including through the League of California Cities (LCC), the National League of Cities (NLC), and the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisers (NATOA). It is critical that CTV works closely with its City and County liaisons to educate them about CTV and its positive impact on the community and to oppose efforts by the Cable Industry at the State and Federal level to reduce or eliminate PEG fees.

D. Empowering Technical Skills

CTV strives to expose both staff and volunteers to the newest technology through group trainings. This effort could be enhanced by volunteers working together to create additional group practice sessions lead by the volunteers, themselves. It will be important to continue to create opportunities for exploring new technology, both virtual and physical.

E. Recruiting and Developing Volunteer Leaders

One critical aspect of the evolution of CTV has been the development of the volunteer personnel, an evolution required by the loss of operating dollars in 2016. Volunteer earn credits which allow them to offset the cost of using CTV's facility and equipment. While the work of this group has played a significant role in CTV's continued ability to meet its mission, there are a number of additional areas where the volunteer cooperative could support CTV. Examples from elsewhere in this plan include equipment maintenance, equipment training, content production, volunteer recruitment, and online services to reduce staff time. Increased reliance on and reliability of volunteers will be a key to CTV's future.

The following sections (i-viii) reflect areas where additional volunteer efforts could further support CTV's mission.

- i. **Equipment Maintenance:** CTV currently has little capacity for maintenance. A volunteer leader could review monthly all equipment in

checkout and the studio for correct operation, suggest equipment replacement purchases and retire broken and old equipment. The retired equipment is reviewed by an employee and its disposal authorized by the Executive Director for security.

- ii. Training: A volunteer leader could create (or find links to) online training for CTV's equipment so that this information was readily available as a reference on the CTV website.
- iii. Disposal: A volunteer leader could list for sale obsolete but usable equipment on appropriate sites (eBay, Craigslist) and manage this process from listing to sale, including necessary documentation. Some equipment needs to be e-wasted, which requires moving the equipment off-site with proper documentation.
- iv. Automation: While the majority of automation decisions will be made by staff, there could be volunteer input on possible automation of public access equipment.
- v. Volunteer Recruitment: CTV has occasional orientations to recruit volunteers but could utilize a volunteer leader to more actively recruit volunteers.
- vi. Production Assistance: A volunteer leader in the role of "Access Facilitator" could be helpful. One option could be to provide extra training to select studio supervisors who could provide more help (for more credit.)
- vii. Production: CTV produces monthly short "Spotlight" video pieces on various non-profit organizations in Santa Cruz County. Development of new "Spotlight" programming for CTV could come from a volunteer leader or intern.
- viii. Automation of Public Access Needs: A volunteer leader could look for and implement web based reporting and management of a number of the activities in this list.

F. Seeking Automation Opportunities

CTV must identify opportunities to automate tasks so that its limited pool of staff and volunteers can do more. The organization has successfully reduced staff requirements for content intake and volunteer management. Content now only comes into the system through the internet - no physical media is exchanged. This reduces waste (plastic DVDs) and staff time (users upload their own content). Possible further reductions could occur in scheduling. Other services, such as the community calendar, potentially could be further automated. The following two sections reflect areas where additional automation efforts could further strengthen the organization.

- i. Public access productions still require from 4-8 volunteers per program. Automation of camera, graphics and audio operations could reduce this and simplify production staffing requirements. Moving some of the current training to online video could also increase volunteer capabilities with little additional volunteer time.
- ii. Volunteer Management: CTV currently has a Volunteer Coordinator

(itself a volunteer position) who solicits volunteers for various CTV functions. For much of this work, volunteers earn credits which they can then use to reduce or eliminate their own cost to access CTV facilities or equipment. Volunteers report their hours monthly to the Coordinator. When volunteers help in the production of public access programming, they do not receive credit for their work. However, CTV would like to record these volunteer hours for grants, the 990 IRS form, and other uses. In the past, CTV has tried, unsuccessfully, to automate all of this tracking. One suggestion would be to link the ability to book new facilities and equipment reservations with reporting. Currently staff must schedule studio reservations on the Satellite calendar. Other than physical checkout, equipment rentals are handled through an Internet application. Completely automating these two tasks would free staff for other uses.

II. Operation of Channels, and More!

A. CTV Provides Three Distinct Channels

CTV's mission includes "programming to foster dialogue, civic engagement and self-expression." CTV's contract with the City and County of Santa Cruz requires that we maintain the three channels for the good of the County residents. The channels are designated for "Public" "Educational" and "Government" access (hence the PEG acronym).

All of CTV's equipment and facilities are funded by PEG fees that the City and County of Santa Cruz receive from the cable company. By Federal law, PEG fees can only be used to support PEG access.

CTV covers many government meetings on our Government channel, including the City and County of Santa Cruz. This enables anyone with cable access or a computer to watch their government meetings live (and rebroadcast and on demand).

CTV's Educational channel broadcasts many educational programs pulled from multiple sources, including curated programs.

The Public access channel broadcasts content uploaded by County of Santa Cruz residents. CTV's policy is to broadcast any uploaded video at least once. Most content airs many times. Our strategy is to continue broadcasting this content on our cable channels and look for additional options to stream them as technology develops.

B. CTV Uses and Provides Access to State-of-the-Art Equipment

The majority of CTV's funding (and 100% of the PEG fees CTV receives from the City and County) is restricted to "facilities and equipment." This means CTV has the dedicated funding and the responsibility to have state of the art equipment so that all programming is of top technical quality. CTV's strategy is to stay up to date on technology trends related to video and audio broadcasting and acquire the most appropriate equipment its budget will allow.

To take advantage of the latest in technology requires CTV to stay up to date.

Understanding state of the art equipment requires training for staff and volunteers

Maintenance of equipment is critical. CTV funding restrictions severely constrain its ability to pay for equipment maintenance. Many other community access facilities around the country use some portion of their similarly restricted funding to pay for maintenance of their equipment. This approach should be explored further with the City and County of Santa Cruz, who provide guidance on how PEG fees are expended.

Because CTV's contract prohibits the use of capital-restricted dollars for maintenance, it relies on volunteer leaders for studio maintenance, while staff maintains government access equipment and broadcast equipment. Volunteers and staff have kept equipment working beyond expectations, but this patchwork approach to maintenance limits the useful lifespan for much of its equipment.

C. Provide Quality and Informative Programming

Ensuring quality production entails meeting technical standards and production standards while creating quality content. The importance of technical standards is highlighted in the prior section addressing state of the art equipment. All equipment must be kept in top working condition as dictated by applicable technical standards and, as noted, this has proven difficult to do with volunteers.

Production standards require uniform, standard operating procedures for capture and broadcast of Government meetings and training for Access producers.

Current funding constraints have resulted in CTV missing many opportunities for quality programming that would be of interest to the community. As funding becomes available (due to increased unrestricted income as discussed in this plan) CTV should cover, as appropriate and as funding allows, community and electoral forums, civic events, high schools sports programs, and other programming of interest to the community. Possible ideas discussed by the committee included issue and candidate debates hosted by non-partisan organizations, as well as candidate statements.

Most current arts and culture coverage at CTV is through public access producers. Programs like CTVs Elected and Non-Profit Spotlights should be expanded to cover arts and culture. The same imperative applies to health and well-being programming.

CTV currently carries limited sports programming. With further deployment of equipment through the Youth Grant Program CTV should increase programming of high school sporting events. CTV should reach out to high schools, Cabrillo and UCSC to provide their sports programming to CTV. Another opportunity will be local pro and amateur sporting events.

D. Facilitate content creation by community

Public access programming currently includes many hours of material produced off site with privately owned equipment. As one of the three legs of the PEG stool, public access programming is a challenging but important part of our mission. The current cooperative model where skills are taught by co-op members is not increasing the amount of material produced on site or through CTVs equipment - in fact, it is declining.

As discussed above, there is a need to develop volunteer leaders. This is the first step in increasing locally-produced content. Community members who may have specific goals and timelines for project they wish to publicize to the community could be strong content creators. As resources allow, CTV should identify and train these potential content developers to make sure they have the resources necessary. One possible way to do this might be through intern programs that appeal to young producers. The problem for CTV with this idea is that interns need oversight, which requires operating funding.

E. Provide training programs

CTV currently provides basic studio and field training for the community. This peer-to-peer training is designed to ensure that operators of CTV equipment understand its proper use and know how to keep it safely functioning. As CTV acquires ever more sophisticated equipment it will be necessary to provide professional training for the equipment. Unfortunately, CTV has attempted to provide professional training in the past, but has not been able to fill the classes. To do a better job of providing and filling training classes CTV must determine what type of training is needed and what type of training and outreach will draw enough participants.

III. Building Technology Use and Technical Skills in the Community

A part of the CTV mission is to provide tools and training centered on digital media in an effort to empower individuals and organizations in our community to thrive in a digital world. A core feature of that mission is the use of technology and ongoing development of technical skills.

The rapid development and availability of digital technology has, and will continue to, fundamentally alter the lives of children, adults and institutions. Advanced communication tools have helped eliminate time and distance as obstacles to effective communication. The rapid growth of the Internet, mobile connectivity, and social networks has fundamentally altered entertainment experiences. The Internet has provided easy access to all sorts of information, news, and technology solutions and conveniences in the home. The internet and digital technology is altering health care delivery as people are now using the Internet to diagnose themselves, find suggested treatments and remedies and alternative solutions while enabling providers to use text messages, videos, and e-mails to consult colleagues and patients including those that live in rural and under-developed areas. Digital technology has expanded the access to education through distance learning and ready access to vast troves of information.

The continued development and use of technology assets depends on a digitally literate population, familiar with the concepts, tools and uses of present and newer state of the art digital technology. CTV is perfectly situated to deliver tools and training opportunities to individuals and organizations, allowing hands on experiences and skills development with modern, state of the art audio-visual digital tools. This is a rarity, a hands-on technology hub available to individuals, students, adults in our community providing an opportunity to learn about and use digital assets which skills can readily transfer to future education, arts and employment settings.

A. Get State of the Art Equipment Out into the Community

CTV will continue to meet its mission to build technology use and technical skills in the community by acquiring and maintaining, and making available, state of the art digital audio-visual production and distribution technology assets, training, learning and use opportunities. Because of its unique funding structure (see above regarding PEG funding limitations) CTV will continue to acquire truly advanced digital media hard assets – cameras and editing equipment for example.

Simply acquiring such equipment is not meaningful without the ability to get that cutting-edge equipment into the hands of individuals and organizations in the community. In addition to in-house learning, training and use opportunities, CTV pushes state of the art equipment and associated use opportunities into the community through lease, rental and grant programs.

- i. **Equipment Lease Program:** CTV's equipment lease program puts television gear into the hands of local non-profits, empowering them to share their missions and inform the public by creating content that can be shared with the entire community via CTV channels. CTV buys the needed equipment at our discounted price and passes those savings to nonprofit organizations. CTV leases the equipment to the organizations for 60 payments equal to CTV's purchase price. There are no fees or interest. At the end of the lease, the organization may buy the equipment for \$1 or return it to CTV and/or request a new lease.

The benefits to CTV are two-fold. The lease payments help to fund CTV's operating budget, thereby supporting the cost of operating the three PEG channels. And, the content produced by the non-profits provides relevant, informative and enriching programming for CTV's Public Access channel.

- ii. **Equipment & Facility Rental:** CTV also rents equipment to individuals, businesses and organizations for use in production of audio-visual programming both off-site and using the CTV studio facilities. Video equipment can be rented for use on location, and the studio facilities can be rented for production and post-production. CTV allows hourly, daily and weekly rental, allowing audio-visual production from concept to delivery. By requesting access to equipment, facilities, and playback, access producers agree that CTV may use portions of their programs for non-commercial, promotional purposes or for entering in community programming festivals. Public access programs are required to grant an attribution, noncommercial, non-derivative (BY-NC-ND) Creative Commons license to CTV. Any production that uses CTV facilities or equipment paid for with volunteer credits must be uploaded to CTV for broadcast.

- iii. Youth Grant Program: CTV gets cutting-edge digital technology assets into our community through its Youth Grant Program (YGP). YGP is an equipment grant program focused on nonprofit or public agency organizations that enhance academic achievement and prepare youth and young adults for employment or higher education with skills using digital media tools. This unique program delivers audio-visual tools directly to organizations serving Santa Cruz County youth and young adults. YGP equipment grants are for a period of three years. All equipment granted under this proposal remains the property of CTV and must be returned to CTV at the end of the grant period.

The YGP grants provide various equipment bundles – editing kits, studio kits, sports maker kits. Grants are available to organizations that meet the following criteria: (1) demonstrate a clear mission and related education/training program; (2) demonstrate a need for the equipment; and, (3) have developed a curriculum that include the following:

- utilizes the equipment
- teaches the techniques and language of visual story-telling and the communication of ideas
- teaches event documentation
- has clear and measurable objectives likely to produce results
- has staff with demonstrated video production skills
- has capacity to manage and utilize the equipment.

Finally, the grant project must result in the production of content for CTV.

B. Provide Training on State-of-the-Art Technology

Acquisition of state-of-the-art digital equipment requires training in order to meet the potential of that equipment.

- i. Internships: CTV can play a role in launching Santa Cruz’s next generation of content creators by partnering with local public education outlets on an internship program in which students learn to use state of the art production and distribution tools.
- ii. Classes: CTV can become the “go to” place to experiment with and learn to use leading edge content production tools. CTV’s classes can empower organizations, businesses and individuals to use the communication tool of choice - video - to educate, inspire and inform the community.
- iii. Partner and Engage with Community Organizations: CTV can build partnerships with many community organizations (some examples include the Digital Nest, the Boys & Girls Club, and the Library). Using this combined network CTV can expand its training capabilities and reach by leveraging joint skills, expertise, knowledge and facilities.