

To: MPC
From: Milo Mecham
Date: June 9, 2003
Re: Cable Franchise Update

In recognition of your full agenda, and because none of the items mentioned here are such that MPC action is warranted at this time, this communication is intended to provide information, with the expectation that the matters will return to the MPC agenda at a later date when action is appropriate. The discussion is focused on items that you may hear about in other contexts, and is designed to give you some information on those items from the MPC context.

1. Changes in Privacy Policy

Comcast is sending notices to subscribers this month of a change in the subscriber privacy policy. The change constitutes a lessening of the privacy of subscriber information. Perhaps the most significant change is that from now on Comcast may make subscribers names and addresses available to third parties (mailing lists) unless the subscriber calls Comcast and asks that this not be done.

This is a new policy and the local franchise authorities and other franchise authorities are only beginning to hear from subscribers. The local franchise authority staff are only now beginning a review of the policy and the related provisions of the franchise. When there is more to report we expect to come back to the MPC with more details. This may fit into and provide a clear example to use in the discussion of what the franchise expectations are concerning unilateral changes, enforcement choices and future options for the franchise authorities.

2. "Audit"

The MPC directed LCOG to undertake an "audit" of the franchise fee payments. I am using the term "audit" because the process was not a formal audit, but it was not a franchise review as described in the franchise. The "audit" is completed, but Comcast has raised questions about how some bookkeeping entries are to be considered. Staff is discussing the issue with Comcast. When we have reached some sort of understanding, even if it is an understanding of exactly what matters might be disagreed about, we will report to the jurisdictions and the MPC, and provide recommendations about next steps.

3. Upgrade Completed

Comcast has completed an upgrade of its system in Eugene, Springfield and Lane County service areas. This upgrade makes more channels available, allows a wide range of digital services, and provides everyone with the opportunity to purchase broadband internet service from Comcast.