

WATOA Teleconference January 9, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 1:35 p.m.

Legislative Report:

Olympia November 30 Hearing:

Jill felt that Ron Lucas did a phenomenal job in his presentation at the November 30 Hearing in Olympia, representing the Association of Washington Cities. She provided a copy of Bill Covington's PowerPoint presentation, which is done in a neutral stance, for members to use. With the upcoming short session in the Legislature, Jill said that Victoria Lincoln doesn't believe this will proceed. She also requested, on behalf of the new President, that WATOA only convey messages from a single source, which should be Bill. In this way the organization will avoid any possibility of multiple messages going out.

WUTC Broadband Survey – RFP:

The WUTC is issuing an RFP for a statewide broadband survey, specifically targeting five rural counties. The survey will help identify disparities in broadband service in the State. Until the results are in, it's unclear how this may affect members. Bill has a lunch meeting scheduled with Will Saunders from the WUTC; he will ask him at that time what is the definition of "high speed" as relates to the survey. Jill will also convey some questions about the wording used, for example, "obstacles or barriers to service," in an email to Will.

Committee Reports:

Chris, on behalf of the Nominating Committee, informed the members that ballots were mailed on Monday, December 10th, and to please return them before the deadline of December 28th. The mailing also included 2008 invoices for WATOA membership and a self-addressed stamped envelope. Chris also shared that Kim Van Estrom from Redmond will be joining the Nominating Committee next year.

Since Ann was unable to be present for this meeting, Jill reiterated that the membership invoices were sent with the ballots and to please take the time to renew.

Janice let the members know that she is working with Marc from the RMC on creating a marketing tool for use with legislators. If members could please provide footage from their jurisdictions, specifically showing why the member stations are such a benefit, they would be very appreciative. When providing footage, please do so in DVD format.

Old Business:

As Randy was unable to be part of this meeting, Jill let the members know that the Spring 2008 WATOA Conference will take place at the Garden Hilton in Yakima on June 16, 2006. Members should expect to see a flyer in January.

Jill shared that the 2008 NATOA Conference, scheduled for September 16-21 in Atlanta, is seeking speakers and conference topics. Suggestions should be submitted no later than January 15, 2008. Check out the NATOA website for further information.

Relative to the question put to Victoria Lincoln about a NATOA membership for WATOA, Jill reported that since all of our member cities are also members of AWC, WATOA will not need its own separate membership.

A discussion was had whether there would be some benefit in having Victoria Lincoln attend the NATOA Conference on behalf of WATOA. The members felt it would be great to have her attend as a presenter and wondered whether the Brian Wilson Memorial Fund could be used to help sponsor her. Bill will explore the possibility of sharing costs with AWC to send Victoria.

A discussion was had about presenting the outgoing Vice President with a plaque recognizing his contribution to the organization. It was moved, seconded and voted to expend \$100 towards a plaque for this purpose. Judy will follow-up on the wording and Mike will facilitate the purchase.

New Business:

Members shared information relative to the problems citizens are experiencing due to channels being moved to digital. It was felt by many of those present that the cable companies are not doing a good job of educating their customers about what services are available and in what types of packages. Unfortunately, it's the customer who is losing out, as they are spending more at times when they could just change packages and get the same thing for less. There was further concern about a starter digital package which begins at a fairly inexpensive rate, and that customers need to be vigilant as the package has a time limit and, once the discount ends, the customer may go back to basic. Members were encouraged to check with their jurisdictions to be certain any changes won't affect their current franchise.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.