TVMT: a state public affairs network

The future of TVMT is bright. Full-time, year-round, gavel-to-gavel coverage of all three branches of state government will cast a continuous light on the process that produces the guidelines and goal posts of state law.

On the horizon are many shining prospects for diverse public affairs programming, including televised tours of historic places, informative documentaries about key industries, cultural communities, and outstanding personalities, and imported programming from the bordering Canadian provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan.

TVMT aims to become a model of unbiased, non-partisan television service designed to transcend distance, overcome detachment, and counteract the traditional disaffection people tend to have for state government institutions.

TVMT will play an important role in shaping the future of the Treasure State. Citizen awareness will lead to increased participation in politics and government. In the longer term, interactive technologies will enable citizens in far flung reaches of Montana to testify on and bear witness to legislative proposals concerning health care, education, prisons, economic development, natural resource management, and the whole gamut of state policy.

Television by the People, For the People, and Made in Montana

TVMT is Big Sky ingenuity at its best, blending government resources, private sector support, and advanced communications technology for a vital public service.

TVMT programming is completely non-commercial and non-partisan.

Private sector contributions to HCTV for the TVMT Pilot Project are tax deductible. (Helena Civic Television is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.) Underwriters will receive on-screen recognition at least twice per day every day during the 2007 Legislative Session. Such attribution may include business logos and contact information, but no direct sales pitches.

All the funds raised for this project will be earmarked for TVMT and expended accordingly. HCTV is responsible for paying charges for hardware, software, installation, maintenance, and telecommunications circuits associated with the establishment of this network.

For further information and to make a contribution, please contact:

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(406) 447-1612 phone
(406) 447-1609 fax
(406) 444-4828 at the state capitol
maly.hctv@bresnan.net and smaly@mt.gov
1015 Poplar Street, Helena, Montana 59601

TVMT
TELEVISION MONTANA

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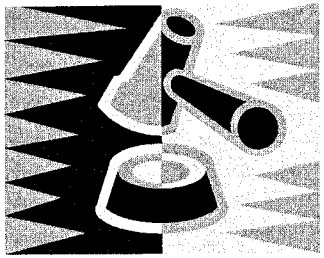
Uniting People & Government Through the Power of Television

EXHIBIT 1
DATE 2/7/07
HB 368

2007

Expanding Democracy



Helena Civic Television (HCTV) is a non-profit community access television station under contract to the Montana Legislative Services Division to produce gavel-to-gavel coverage of the 2007 Legislative Session and the subsequent Interim. We call our state government programming TVMT—Television Montana.

TVMT provides Montana citizens with increased and unfiltered access to unbiased information about state government deliberations through gavel-to-gavel coverage of the legislative process as well as select activities of other agencies of state government.

To date, only residents of the Helena area have enjoyed full-time access to TVMT programming. In partnership with Bresnan Communications, VisionNet, Mid-Rivers Communication, and other members of the Montana Cable Television Association, HCTV is engaged in a pilot project to distribute our daily production of committee hearings, House and Senate floor sessions, Governor's press conferences and other special events, LIVE to cable TV viewers in Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Missoula, Kalispell, Great Falls, Havre and to other communities in Eastern Montana during the 2007 Legislative Session.

Making Government Transparent

The citizens of Montana have an inherent right and responsibility to watch and listen to their government at work. The TVMT project is designed to provide the type of civic education that is vital to the public's understanding of the laws, rules, and policies that affect the lives and livelihoods of all Montanans.

TVMT is reality television. The gavel-to-gavel approach provides a window on the inner works of government. Viewers can see how laws are made, and administered, without the selective sound bites, political spin, and other distortions prevalent in more conventional media.

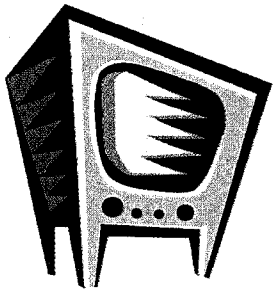
Televising Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branch proceedings brings transparency to state government, and this in turn boosts the legitimacy of elected officials by making their activities more measurable and their performance more accountable to the people.

A Public-Private Partnership

In 2001, the legislature provided a partial funding mechanism for TVMT by raising the cost of lobbyist registration fees and allocating a portion of those biennial proceeds to the TVMT budget, which is administered by the Legislative Services Division (LSD). In 2003, through a competitive bidding process, Helena Civic Television HCTV) entered into a renewable contract with LSD to produce TVMT programming at the state capitol.

In subsequent years, HCTV has engaged in various fundraising efforts to obtain foundation grants and business underwriters. Cable television companies and a variety of telecommunications service providers have cooperated with HCTV to establish the first stages of a public affairs network. ***House Bill 368*** is a proposal in the 2007 Legislative Session to provide public funding to sustain and expand the ability to transmit TVMT programming statewide.

The long term goal is to make TVMT programming available to all citizens, via cable television, the Internet, and in partnership with Montana PBS as a digital multi-cast offering.



Please call your local cable TV or video service provider to find out which channel TVMT programming is on in your community!