

# **Proposed Policy Framework For Community-based Media**

*Public Notice CRTC 2001-129*



*Submitted by the Canadian Conference of the Arts*

*February 22, 2002*

## INTRODUCTION

### **The CCA: who we are and what we stand for**

1. The Canadian Conference of the Arts is Canada's oldest and largest arts advocacy organization. Our objectives are "to promote the encouragement and advancement of the arts and culture in Canada; to serve the interests of Canadian arts; to gather and disseminate information concerning the arts in Canada; and to cooperate with governments, public bodies, institutions, societies, corporations and individuals in Canada and abroad".
2. Our current membership represents over 250,000 artists and cultural supporters from all regions of Canada and all sectors of the arts and cultural industries. Members include individual artists and cultural workers, arts and cultural industry organizations, labour groups, arts educators, professional and trade associations, service organizations, and arts supporters from across the country.
3. We believe in the following:
  - (a) Canadian arts and culture are intrinsically valuable and should be supported because they enrich the lives of Canadians and Canadian society and create distinctively Canadian cultural content in an increasingly global environment.
  - (b) All Canadians deserve the opportunity to experience, participate in, and appreciate the arts and culture wherever they live and whatever their personal circumstances.
  - (c) Canadian cultural workers are professionals who deserve supportive working environments, legal protections for safety and health, opportunities for training and professional development, appropriate financial compensation for their work, and access to social benefits. Creators have the right to enjoy the economic benefits of their creative work.
  - (d) Canadian governments at all levels have the lead responsibility for supporting the arts and culture and creating conditions for a dynamic, diverse and sustainable artistic life in Canada. Public policies and programs should recognize and accommodate the wide diversity of identities, traditions and forms of expression which characterize contemporary Canada, reflect the full spectrum of cultural activities (creation, production, performance, exhibition, publication, presentation, dissemination, consumption, preservation, and conservation), and encourage the widest possible participation in the arts.
  - (e) leadership role in arts and cultural support, adopt a comprehensive policy to govern all federal activities that have an impact on the arts and culture, and work in cooperation with governments at other levels of jurisdiction. Federal cultural

policy should promote and enhance those aspects of our national life that are distinctly Canadian: the artistic and cultural practices and cultural identities of our two official language groups, our Aboriginal peoples, our culturally diverse populations, and our regions.

- (f) Freedom of expression is a fundamental value in Canada and should be central to Canadian cultural policies.

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4. The CCA supports the principles and policies laid out in the *Broadcast Act* and the CRTC's regulatory role in implementing the *Act*. We encourage the CRTC in its efforts to provide more space for Canadian cultural expression on broadcast media and to foster an environment where diverse forms of cultural expression can flourish.
  5. The CCA sees an opportunity for artists who are part of *la relève* or who are working at the margins, to present their work via community-based media services. Indeed existing university radio stations are an excellent example of how a small local community can promote artistic expression and commentary on a very low budget. One can also compare the proposed community- based media services with artist-run centres in the area of media and visual arts and the significant role they have played in supporting the work of emerging artists and non-commercially viable art forms. The ability to experiment in an environment free from market constraints is a necessary component for the development vibrant cultural industries .
  6. Since community- based services will offer a unique opportunity for the presentation of artistic expression which is not in itself commercially viable, it will be important to ensure that advertising and other commercial interests are not able to dominate these services.
  7. These services are worthy of support because they offer the prospect of more diversity in broadcast media at a time when convergence of ownership is exerting an homogenizing influence. The CRTC is encouraged to put in place a structure and review the process to ensure that the services meet their stated goals.

#### **DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITY CHANNEL**

8. The 'cable community channel' came into being in the 1960s when local cable companies - the only type of broadcast distribution service then available -- allowed volunteers from the communities they served to operate and program their own television service using one of the companies' cable channels. Some companies also provided channel capacity to local groups offering radio service. This community use was unregulated.

9. When the CRTC began regulating broadcasting in 1968, however, one of its major concerns was with the development of policies and regulations for cable television. As a result, it issued several policy statements that laid out the framework with which it would approach the regulation of this medium. Three factors influenced the Commission's approach to cable television and the issue of local community programming.
10. The first had to do with the nature of cable technology. Cable television (or 'community antenna television', as it was also described in the CRTC's first years) technology was seen as an ideal mechanism for facilitating communication within communities about matters of local importance that other media were unable or chose not to address, without introducing new competition that might threaten conventional radio and television broadcasters' financial viability.
11. The second had to do with the establishment of jurisdiction over telecommunications. It was not until the mid-1970s that the federal government asserted jurisdiction over telecommunications. Given that cable companies shared many of the characteristics of telecommunications companies - use of copper wire to communicate - the CRTC's decision to require cable systems to originate new, original production ensured that these companies resembled conventional broadcasters more than telecommunications companies.
12. The third factor had to do with the development of the broadcasting system itself. When cable television companies were first established they did not - unlike conventional television stations -- have to pay anything to the broadcasters whose programming they carried and used to attract subscribers. This not only gave cable television companies a considerable financial advantage over conventional broadcasters, but also heightened concerns about how this medium would contribute to Canada's broadcasting system, particularly since much of the programming that cable companies provided to their subscribers was American in any event. A requirement that cable companies provide a community channel was a way for this medium to 'put something back' into Canadian broadcasting, whether by training new generations of producers, or by generating new programming that might interest the local audience.
13. Although cable operators were encouraged to spend money on providing a community channel (as well as equipment and training for program production), improvements to community channel programming were a factor that the CRTC specifically considered when it received applications from cable companies to increase their basic subscriber rates throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s. In other words, some of the revenues earned by older cable systems were made possible because they provided a community channel. Moreover, subsequent rate increase applications (from the mid 1980s to mid 1990s) were also calculated based on those original basic service rates that included a community channel component.

14. By the mid 1980s however, support from extensive industry regulation had declined, and the Commission reduced or eliminated its oversight of the cable industry. Beginning in 1986 small cable systems did not have to provide community channels at all. In 1997 the Commission made the community channel requirement optional for all cable systems.
15. A quarter of a century has passed since the CRTC's first policy on community programming, and five years since it dropped the requirement. What, if anything, has now prompted the Commission to review community channel programming and propose changes? Two developments come to mind.
16. The first is the gradual abandonment by conventional broadcasters of local programming commitments and production. On the public broadcaster's side, budget cuts throughout the 1980s led, in 1991 to the CBC's decision to close a number of its local stations. Non-news program production was concentrated at the network level, and local non-news programming both on radio and television virtually disappeared. In the private sector, non-news program production has also fallen. In television, increased concentration of ownership has enabled broadcasters to spread the costs of program production over a greater number of stations, so that one program may be carried by a number of different stations. As a result, fewer television programs of specific interest to single communities are being produced. In radio, technological advances have made it cheaper to program stations with network-type material, so that less programming of specific interest to local communities is produced.
17. The second development that may have led the Commission to review its policies is the effect that increased levels of concentration of ownership in cable, radio and television are seen to have had on the diversity of programming content available to Canadians. A few large companies now provide service to most Canadian subscribers, while a few large broadcasters control most of Canada's radio and television stations. As a result, it appears that access by local community members to Canada's communications outlets has become more limited. This concern is heightened because of cross-media ownership among broadcasters and newspapers.
18. Protecting current levels of community involvement, or increasing that involvement, would therefore address two basic concerns. First, by enabling community members to provide more programming to their local communities, the Commission would not need to change its current, less-intrusive approach to conventional broadcasters: the CRTC would not have to use its regulatory powers to reintroduce regulations and conditions of licence with which it has already dispensed and require local broadcasters to produce more local programming.
19. Second, by increasing community participation through the community channel, the CRTC would not have to change its approach to allowing concentration of ownership to grow. In any event, even if the Commission wanted to licence new conventional broadcasters, few frequencies remain that would allow it to do so. Replacing existing broadcasters is just as difficult: high levels of concentration of ownership have also

raised prices of individual stations, so that even if the Commission wanted to licence “new” broadcasters, few have the financial capacity to enter this field; as for replacing existing broadcasters (by failing to renew licences, for instance), the Commission has exercised this authority very infrequently and is unlikely to do so now.

20. Maintaining or improving community access to the local community cable channel therefore achieves a number of goals for the Commission. It may also present Canada's cultural groups with new opportunities to reach local communities.

## “CABLE” COMMUNITY CHANNEL

### *21. CURRENT POLICY*

- The CRTC’s first policy on the community channel was issued in 1975
  - it emphasized that that the community channel should reflect the official languages, each community’s multicultural and Native reality, as well as the needs of the disabled and other minority groups
  - it suggested that cable licensees should spend up to 10% of their gross annual revenues on the community channel
- The current policy was published in 1991 (the *Community channel policy*)
  - the community channel was to be “primarily of a public service nature, facilitating self-expression through free and open access by members of the community”
  - the Commission required that 60% or more of the community programming schedule be devoted to ‘local programs’ - yet
    - ‘local’ was not defined clearly, and
    - specific time periods for this community reflection were not established
  - cable licensees were spending an average of 5% of their basic service revenues on the community channel
- In 1997 community channels were made optional; the Commission said that “opportunities for local expression would continue to be provided in the absence of a regulatory requirement”
 

The Commission also said that cable operators could use the channel “to promote a positive corporate image for themselves” (see paragraph 84), and to promote the broadcasting services they provide
- In a 1997-98 review of community channel programming, the Commission found that community participation in the channels varied widely
 

Moreover, some licensees were

- breaching the distributions by broadcasting commercial messages that promote their non-broadcasting business,
- not keeping within the spirit of the *Community channel policy* because of excessive self- and cross-promotion
- Funding for the community channels also varied widely; this was in part because BDUs contribute to Canadian television programming either through the CTF alone, or through the community channel and the CTF; only large cable companies are still required to provide a local community channel

Based on the statistics provided by the CRTC in this notice, average funding per channel decreased by 10% between 1997 and 2000:

	1997	2000	% change
# of channels <sup>1</sup>	746	851	14%
# of cable systems providing funding <sup>1</sup>	238	245	3%
Total funding for 'local expression' <sup>1</sup>	\$78 million	\$79.7 million	2%
<b>Funding per channel</b>	<b>\$104,558</b>	<b>\$93,655</b>	<b>-10%</b>
Production fund contributions (CTF)	\$46 million	\$79 million	85%
CRTC proposal would			
• add \$5 million to local expression funding	\$78 million	\$84.7 million	9%
• Remove \$5 million from CTF	\$46 million	\$74 million	61%
Effect of \$5 million addition, per channel	\$104,558	\$99,530	-5%

<sup>1</sup> Public Notice CRTC 2001-129, paragraph 32.

## 22. NEW CRTC PROPOSALS

- The Commission plans to define 'local programming' as follows:
 

“Licensees who provide community programming services should devote not less than 60% of the programming aired in each broadcast week to the broadcast of local community programming.

For the purposes of this policy, local community programming is programming that is reflective of the community, and produced by the licensee in the licensed service area or by members of the community in the licensed service area. Programs produced in other licensed areas within the same municipality will also be considered local programming.”
- Licensees should not
  - Charge fees for providing access programming
  - Insist that programs have sponsorship
  - Deny, restrict or reduce access opportunities if a community citizen group or individual is unable or unwilling to attract a sponsor
- All revenues from sponsorship advertising, and from the rental of production facilities for external commercial and industrial productions should be reinvested into the operation of the community channel, and should be identified in licensees' annual

financial returns

- Since licensees should not use the community channel as a promotional vehicle, the CRTC proposes to
  - restrict the amount of cable licensee promotional material carried to moving visual presentations of no more than 5 seconds
  - restrict the number of minutes per hour that may be used for promotional purposes
- Half the programming would come from the community itself:
 

Licensees should devote at least 50% of the community programming schedule in each broadcast week to programming produced by individuals or groups in the community, either assisted or unassisted by the licensee
- The CRTC says that to allocate more money to the community channel,
  - All small Class 1 BDUs should put all of their Canadian programming funding into the local community channel - CRTC estimates this would add \$5 million to programming for local expression (while removing \$5 million from the CTF)
  - With an extra \$5 million, the average funding per channel would have decreased by 5%, to \$99,530.
- Advertising will still be limited to sponsorship and contra, but will be expanded to include “moving visual presentations and a limited description of their products or services”:
 

“an oral or written acknowledgement, including a moving visual presentation of no more than 5 sections, contained in community programming that mentions no more than the name of a person, their address and telephone number and a description of the goods, services or activities that are being sold or promoted by the person, where the person provided direct financial assistance for the community programming in which the acknowledgment is contained.”
- The Commission will enforce quantitative aspects of the policy through random audits of community channel logs and videotapes
- If a local cable operator will not provide a community channel (under the provisions of the new policy), local, not-for-profit community groups may apply for a licence for a “community programming undertaking” that would be given mandatory analog carriage as part of the basic tier, and would receive the percentage of the cable system’s gross revenues (if the cable system had decided to operate the community channel) (see “Community-based Television Services”, next section)
  - Applicants would have to show how the proposed service will meet the *Community Channel policy*, the *Distribution Regulations* and *Cable Television Community Channel Standards*
  - The not-for-profit community groups would have to provide for the membership, management, operation and programming (primarily by members of the community)

### 23. CULTURAL CONCERNS

- a. Is the current 5% contribution level sufficient to achieve the policy's objectives? Is it sufficient to enable community groups to provide programming of sufficient quality that it attracts an audience?
- b. Should larger cable companies (say, the five largest companies) be required to contribute more to the community channel?
- c. Other Commission policies have been codified into regulations and conditions of licence; broadcasters who do not meet these face sanctions under the *Broadcasting Act*.

In this case, the Commission has said it will review licensees' promotion of access to and training for the channel as part of the licence renewal process. Is this adequate for enforcing the policy?

- i. Does the Commission have adequate resources to monitor compliance?
- ii. Will there be annual public reporting with respect to compliance?
- iii. Given the heavy reliance on limited community resources that in turn require disproportionately high amounts of volunteer time, will the Commission also assess the effects of its policy through a well-designed annual survey of community participants across the country?
- d. Those who are to provide this programming are granted licences primarily to provide broadcast distribution services. If they breach the new community media 'policy', will these licensees face sanctions from the CRTC over something for which they are not licensed and which is not codified through regulation or condition of licence?
- e. Does sufficient cable capacity exist to provide community-based television services, as well as special programming services?
- f. In the event of channel scarcity, who decides?
- g. Who will own copyright on programming material produced by community organizations with financial assistance from cable operators?
- h. The Commission describes past developments in broadcasting as follows:

“In PN CRTC 2001-19, the Commission noted that during the past several years, the communications environment has continued to evolve at a rapid pace. This has led, among other things, to a high degree of media consolidation and cross-media ownership with integrated broadcasting companies at both the national and regional levels of the Canadian broadcasting system. Quite apart from some associated benefits, this trend may result in a system with fewer players in conventional television, radio and broadcast distribution and, for certain licensees, a reduction in programming reflecting local and community concerns.”

This paragraph may leave the impression that these important changes - growth of media consolidation, increase of cross-media ownership, reduction in the number

of those who control the system, and the reduction in local programming - simply happened. Yet in reality they resulted from the CRTC's own policies and decisions.

It is therefore striking that the CRTC now proposes that solutions to the problems it has helped to create, should come from those with substantially fewer resources than any other element of the broadcasting system. Is this reasonable?

- i. Program production equipment requires specialized equipment, yet many local conventional television stations have reduced or eliminated their non-news production studio capacity.
  - i. Where will program production equipment come from?
  - ii. Who will fund its acquisition?
  - iii. Who will then own - and control - it?
- j. Should broadcasters with existing interests in any of the media be allowed to participate financially, and what impact will such participation have on
  - i. Program content
  - ii. Program ownership
  - iii. Competition with other media
  - iv. Diversity of voices
- k. The CRTC has spent decades tinkering with ways to capture 'Canadian content', in both radio and television. How should the Commission measure the concepts of 'local production' and 'local control'? How will the policy address the issue of repeats? (In which the same community-produced program is played over and over and over .... so as to gross up the percentage of time community-produced programming makes up in the year's schedule.)
- l. If local community groups and cable operators who provide facilities for local programming are unable to reach agreement, how should such disagreements be resolved?
- m. Should limits or requirements be established for specific program categories (i.e., arts programming)?

## COMMUNITY-BASED TELEVISION SERVICES

### *26. CURRENT POLICY: from 1987 Television Policy*

- The CRTC now licenses some television services as 'remote' stations; they serve remote communities that have no competing local or regional television service, and no regularly operating community channel.
- There are relatively few of these stations; approximately 20 originate programming for a couple of hours daily, using material from the CBC's Northern Television

Service to fill the rest of their schedule

**27. FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS:**

- Commission expects that future growth in this area will be limited
  - If based on the UHF band, there will be increasing competition from non-broadcast users such as wireless and land mobile services
  - Vacant analog cable channels are scarce - more than half of cable subscribers are served by systems that have no unused analog channels
- As well, Industry Canada will not issue broadcasting certificates for low-power television stations that want to use channels 60 to 69, because the department has other plans for this spectrum in both the medium and long term.

If the department issues broadcasting certificates for stations below channel 60, these may eventually have to move to other channels to enable the country's transition to digital television.

**28. CRTC PROPOSALS**

- Although Commission expects future growth in this area to be limited, it also believes there is more flexibility to license community television stations in rural and remote areas, especially if low-power UHF channels are used.
  - "Rural and remote" areas would have to be at least 60 kilometres from major metropolitan centres,
  - They could not be located within the Windsor-Quebec City corridor, or BC lower mainland.
- there will be two types - for low-power television, and for digital services; objectives for both types will be the same:
  - to provide high level of locally-produced, locally-reflective programming that complements the programming provided by conventional television stations and the cable community channel
  - to 'enrich' the variety of local and community-based television programming available to the public, and to enable new voices to participate in the broadcasting system
- Both for-profit and not-for-profit groups may apply
- Minimum of 80% Canadian content over the broadcast year
- Minimum of 60% local programming over the broadcast year ("reflective of, and produced in" the area served)
- No set levels of access, but licensees will "be encouraged" to facilitate citizen access to program production, and provide training for those who want to participate in program production

- Volunteer participation encouraged
- 12 minutes/hour of advertising, but if used, no funding from cable licensees
  - may seek government support through special funding programs
  - not expected to have significant financial impact on existing broadcasting services
- Must adhere to Television Regulations and various industry codes

*Community-based low power television undertakings*

- Stations with a transmitter power of 50 watts or less on VHF, and 500 watts or less on UHF
  - Service contour not greater than 12 kilometres in any direction from antenna site
  - No protection from signal interference from regular stations
- May have to compete for these licences
- Cable companies may not have to carry them if their capacity is limited
  - If cable companies don't have to carry them, but do carry digital services, the companies will have to carry community-based television stations on a digital basis within the area served by the over-air-signals of those stations
- Commission wants to know if it should grant preliminary 3-year 'developmental' licences
  - No evidence of availability of financing required
  - Adherence to basic requirements such as Canadian ownership, technical certification, adherence to industry codes
  - After 3 years, would have to apply for 'regular' licence or stop operating

**29. CULTURAL CONCERNS**

- a. Although more than half of all cable subscribers are served by systems that have no unused analog channels, this is also due to the fact that the majority of Canadians live in dense urban areas.

This means that there may in fact be many small communities (with a small population) that do have vacant channel capacity and could offer local community members more opportunities to program

Do smaller communities and smaller cable systems have enough resources to allocate to such programming?

- b. If smaller cable systems cannot allocate more resources to the community channel, would it be possible for funding to be redistributed from larger to smaller

communities to support program production?

- c. Will financial necessity change the type of programming offered by local community groups if more advertising revenue would result? Is this appropriate?
- d. Will the development of more local programming by communities justify further reductions by conventional broadcasters of their local programming?
- e. Will conventional broadcasters reduce their training programs if community media begin to provide more training opportunities?
- f. Will artists who belong to *la relève*, whose cultural expression is not mainstream and those practicing in experimental forms have access to the system ?

## LOW-POWER RADIO

### 30. CURRENT POLICY

- Established in 1993, the CRTC has licensed 111 originating low-power radio stations
  - 14 community stations
  - 10 campus stations
  - 30 religious stations
  - 16 Native undertakings
  - 41 tourist/travel services
- The CAB believes low-power radio should increase diversity of voices available, and that priority should be given to not-for-profit and niche services rather than new commercial services.

Moreover, the CAB suggests that cross-ownership between low-power radio and low-power television should be avoided to promote true diversity of voices.

### 31. CRTC PROPOSALS

- The Commission does not propose changing its current licensing policy for low-power radio, but does propose general objectives for low-power radio, as well as changes for its method of calling for applications for low-power radio
- CRTC sees these services as being particularly well-suited to providing local community-based programming
- Programming provided should not replicate that offered by existing services
  - Should provide
    - Additional diverse voice to market served
    - Presentation of programming that complements that of existing licensees
    - Fulfilment of demonstrated community needs

**32. CULTURAL CONCERNS**

- a. Could cross-ownership by local community groups strengthen local community services, and enable better use of the two media by eliminating program competition (talking heads may be better on radio, than on television)?

## **Recommendations**

- i. Set the community radio and television services within a clear framework that will achieve the desired ends, and monitor carefully to ensure that the services do not degenerate into vehicles for advertising and promotion by other broadcast interests.
- ii. Review new services annually to ensure that a wide variety of community groups are accessing and using the services and that the policy intent has not been distorted.
- iii. Assess the quality and quantity of arts programming offered and ensure that experimental and non-commercial forms of artistic expression are being presented.

<b>APPENDIX: CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS</b>
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- 1967      Some local cable operators offer locally-originated programs, but shortage of channel capacity is a problem; others also sell commercial time on a regular basis
- 1968      CRTC created (with responsibility for broadcasting, including cable television)
- 1969      CRTC announces proposals for “community antenna television”
- “Local programming CATV can assist in the development of a community identity through locally produced programs; they can also assist provincial and local authorities in the development of educational services. They can participate in the enrichment of the community’s cultural life through the distribution of Canadian produced films, educational information and other films of particular interest produced for public showing but not normally available in that area. CATV local programming should complement, rather than compete with, programming already available to the community through television and commercial movie houses.”
- (CRTC Public Announcement of 13 May 1969: *Community Antenna Television*)
- 1971      CRTC *cable television in Canada*  
identifies variety of local community programs being offered through cable channel: local sports events, civic meetings, parades, fairs, panel discussions, talent shows, news and commentary, drama and others
- 1974      CRTC Public Announcement (18 September 1974)  
one of the criteria used by the CRTC in deciding whether to grant subscriber rate increases to cable companies, is the “introduction or improvement of community programming”
- 1975      CRTC *Policy statement concerning the Community Channel*  
Cable operators may apply to distribute ‘special programming services’ that extend and complement local Canadian programming services  
CRTC requires licensees to distribute community channel on their systems and that “licensees devote a minimum of 10% of their gross annual subscriber revenue to the operation of their community channel”
- 1979      CRTC *Review of Certain Cable Television Programming Issues* (26 March 1979)  
As cable systems have a stable base of subscriber revenue, “cable licensees should not expect to benefit from both subscriber revenue and commercial advertising in competition with broadcasters”
- 1985      Public Notice CRTC 1985-151 *Complementary Programming on the Community Channel*  
allows all systems with up to 3000 subscribers to carry other programming on the community channel that ‘complements’ the community programming, so that “cable licensees will make every effort to offer a minimum level of service, enhanced by the addition of other sources of programming”  
Defines ‘complementary programming’ provided by community channels to be

“Community programs produced by other cable television licensees, government or public service information material, NFB productions, children’s programs, education programs not provided by the Provincial Educational Authority, alphanumeric services such as Broadcast News, the Question Period portions of the house of ‘Commons or provincial legislatures and multicultural programs.”

1986 CRTC permits contra, credit and sponsorship messages if they relate to the provision of a community program (but not traditional spot advertising), “to help create community programs, and not simply to accrue to the general revenues of cable systems”

Small licensees (Part III) no longer required to have community channel

Systems with fewer than 6000 subscribers allowed to broadcast related programming on the community channel when community programming not being carried

1987 *Regulations respecting television broadcasting* (Public Notice CRTC 1987-8)

- Low-power television stations operating in remote or under-served communities (‘remote stations’) should develop community-oriented programming that contributes to the diversity of their community’s television services
- Must meet regulations for Canadian content (60% over day; 50% after 6pm)
- Advertising allowed following regulations or conditions of licence
- CRTC encourages ownership by organizations whose membership consists of community members

1988 Some cable systems are including moving visual presentations as part of their sponsorship messages on community channels (contrary to the policy), or using conventional spot advertising

1991 *Community Channel Policy* (Public Notice CRTC 1991-59)  
CRTC issues a new policy for the ‘cable’ community channel

- average industry allocation to the community channel between 1985 and 1988 remained constant at about 5% of basic service revenues (i.e., not total gross revenues)
- some licensees have been including costs associated with other services (barker channel, stock market reports) when calculating community channel programming expenses
- proposes assessing financial contributions of licensees case by case, and that the funding benchmark should be minimum of 5% of base portion (basic service), exclusive of capital expenditures
- Community channel should facilitate free and open access by community members
- Programming - “produced by a cable licensee or members of the community served by an undertaking” -- should complement that of conventional broadcasters
- Up to 40% of the programming may come from other community channels
- Program sponsorship is allowed, but not commercial spot advertising
- Large BDUs may reduce their mandatory contributions to Canadian television funds if they maintain a community channel

- 1993 (Public Notice CRTC 1993-95)  
CRTC establishes system for licensing low-power radio services in areas where available frequencies are scarce
- 1997 Public Notice CRTC 1997-25)  
CRTC makes community channel entirely optional  
BDUs must contribute to Canadian programming in different ways
- DTH: 5% of gross annual revenues to production fund
  - Class 1 terrestrial (60,000 subscribers +): up to 2% of gross annual revenues to local expression; rest to production fund
  - Class 1 terrestrial (up to 60,000 subs): up to 2% of gross revenues
  - Class 2 terrestrial: up to 5% of gross annual revenues to local expression (if less than 5%, rest to production fund)
- 2000 (Public Notice CRTC 2000-127)  
CRTC calls for comment on a licensing framework for low-power community television stations in urban areas; interveners say they want
- not-for-profit community-based operations with access open to the public
  - advertising, with restrictions
  - high Canadian and local programming requirements
- 2001 (February) CRTC calls for comments on its *Review of the community channel policy and licensing policy for low-power radio* (Public Notice CRTC 2001-19)  
Intervenors say they want
- better local programming
  - increased access by community groups
  - less programming by cable licensees
  - less mass-audience programming
  - mandatory funding from cable operators or contribution from CTF
  - Commission says that “during the past several years, the communications environment has continued to evolve at a rapid pace.”
  - There is now higher media consolidation and cross-media ownership, which means there are fewer “players” in conventional television, radio and broadcast distribution, as well as less locally-reflective programming
- 2001 (December) CRTC issues a proposed policy for community-based media (Public Notice CRTC 2001-129)

\*\*\* END DOCUMENT \*\*\*