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CITY SIGNS NEW CABLE LICENSE AND NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY TELEVISION AGREEMENTS

Mayor David Narkewicz announced a renewed multi-year agreement with Comcast as the city's cable television provider. In addition to renewing its cable license the city also renewed its agreement with Northampton Community Television (NCTV) as the city's cable access provider. The license renewal is the result of diligent and successful negotiations between the City and Comcast, and reflects agreements among all parties.

In speaking on the renewal, Mayor Narkewicz said, "Signing this license is the culmination of months of negotiations, all with the goal of giving Northampton subscribers a first-rate, modern cable agreement." Mayor Narkewicz also publicly thanked the members of his Cable Advisory Board led by Chair Clodagh Parker for their indispensable role in the process, which included holding a well-attended "public ascertainment hearing" to gather resident feedback on the current cable system.

Highlights of the new Comcast cable license include:

- \$750,000.00 in capital funding (an increase of \$350,000 in capital funding over the previous license)
- Addition of a community access channel, bringing the total access channels to 3
- Replacement of the coaxial link out of the access studio with a fiber link to provide higher quality video service
- Continuation of a senior discount

The cable access agreement between the City of Northampton and Northampton Community Television (NCTV) affirms the confidence and support of one another. Henry White, President of NCTV Board of Directors, said, "NCTV's presence in the Northampton community has grown tremendously over the last 10 years and this new contract provides strong support for the next decade." In 2008, NCTV's first year of existence, it recorded 155 engagements with the community. In 2015, that number was 2917. An MOU between the city and NCTV asserts that the organization will continue to curate a robust and cutting-edge media arts organization for the city.

"NCTV is an important asset to our city and this agreement provides additional capital money for NCTV to build on the community resources it already provides," said Mayor Narkewicz. "I'm particularly excited that the agreement calls for NCTV to begin providing some close captioning for its local government coverage, something city residents have been requesting for several years."

Executive Director P. Al Williams, highlighted the growth that NCTV will be able to achieve under the new agreement, “The new contract and agreement will allow NCTV to expand its operations, which are currently past capacity.” Other possible enhancements highlighted by Williams include opening a second location to serve the public, and continued progress in new directions, such as VR production, transmedia projects, design thinking, scriptwriting, 3D modeling, and more

Northampton Community Television will continue to build on its original and innovative projects such as; Paradise City Press - www.paradisecitypress.org - a citizen journalism and community storytelling project utilizing print-on-web, still images, video and podcasting; 7 Day Film Sprint project, in which approximately 150 filmmakers participated this year in making original short films over the course of week; co-runs the entirely new Northampton Film Festival, which will take on the task of re-thinking the community film festival; Cinema Northampton project which screens free outdoor films to the public from Spring to Autumn as a way of exposing the public to art and building community; Production Grants project, which gives out thousands of dollars for local filmmakers to produce original narrative and documentary work; Crowdsourced Cinema Project, in which 40 teams of filmmakers banded together to remake, in its entirety, Raiders of the Lost Ark; and co-founded and funded the Minecraft Northampton Project, which is building a scale model virtual-reality tourable model of the city of Northampton to engage community conversations on space and community while providing students with high level tech education opportunities

Executive Director Williams also emphasized that NCTV resources will continue its strong connection to the schools, supporting cameras, computers, software, and instruction in the NHS Technology Department, NHS Theater Department, in curriculum, internships and after-school programs, and in programs such as the media literacy program with SOCA students at JFK Middle School.