

**ELECTION COVERAGE
ON GOVERNMENT CHANNELS
WHAT CITIES ARE DOING**

Santa Monica, CA.

General Election Programming for November 5, 1996 Election

1. **Candidate Forums.** Proposal is to cover one for each contest: City Council, School Board, College Board of Trustees and Rent Control Board. Forums would be coordinated by League of Women Voters or other community group.
2. **Live New Technology Candidates Forum.** A live cable television show originating from the City Council Chambers. This will happen 4 to 10 days before the election. Santa Monica residents can submit questions via the internet, PEN, fax, telephone or in person. A transcription of the program will be available on PEN. Modelled after program done in Richmond, California.

Since there are 13 candidates, the program is planned to be 3 hours long, with each hour focused on a different community issue. Several local media will ask questions of the media along with the viewer questions. Opening and closing statements on the issue will also be allowed.

3. **Internet Voter Guide.** Provided by Democracy Network for Santa Monica candidates. This will include candidate position papers and profiles.
4. **Election Night Programming.** Election results continuously updated on CityTV.
5. **Candidate Profiles.** (still pondering) Quick overview of each candidate in a news format with a quick sound bite from each candidate.

Vancouver/Clark County, Washington

No written election policies.

The channel covers unedited 3rd party presentations and is selective about who they cover. They cover Republican and Democrat events evenly.

A 30 minute program interviews candidates for different state and local offices. If there is more than one candidate for office, the half-hour programs are aired back-to-back. If there are a lot of candidates for an office, then 15 minute interviews are done. The questions are developed from campaign materials and other background materials. The questions are made identical as much as possible for all of the candidates for the same office. The programs give the candidates more

time to talk in more depth.

On election night the channel provides commentary and analysis. Talent/interviews include a local newspaper editorial writer, former elected officials and a college professor. The cable company does the election statistics on their own local channel.

Irving, Texas

After the filing date for candidates has passed, every Wednesday the channel has a live call-in show called "Open Line". Each show features all the candidates running for one office. If the office is uncontested, the candidate has a 15 minute interview.

Candidates forums by the Democrats, Republicans and League of Women Voters are covered. They do both the Democrat and Republican Forums or none at all.

On election night live coverage from City Hall features interviews, talking to candidates and returns.

Aurora, Colorado

Candidate debates and live election coverage is done. Public affairs shows will cover both sides of a bond issue and if needed, a City Attorney will explain a measure that has too much legalese. There is also a news program that covers campaign activities in an objective way. PSAs and informational programming are also presented.

A program is done that invites the press in and they give their opinions on the candidates. This program has proven to be controversial and a disclaimer is given. There is a procedure to present an opposing viewpoint in response to a KACT program.

The State of Colorado passed a law that stated that no public funds can be used to support any one candidate or side of an issue. KACT is still continuing to do its election related programming because the City Attorney believes that KACT is a media outlet and has 1st amendment rights. No challenges have been made so far.

KACT also sells political advertisements, but has had no buyers so far. The channel is partially funded by the City but must also get funding from outside sources for its operations.

Hawthorne, California

No written election policy.

Hawthorne's government access channel beats the newspapers by airing election results on the bulletin board. The results are tagged "unofficial election results". League of Women Voters candidate forums are also covered.

Garden Grove, California

No written election policy.

Covers candidate forums which covers both sides of an issue, the Chamber of Commerce forum is aired live.

A contractor is hired to do programs that interview all of the candidates running for Mayor and Council. The coverage is designed to be neutral and equal, with no City input.

On election night, there is an election night party at the community center. Live coverage gives results, interviews candidates and community leaders and airs preproduced segments from other election programming.

In general, the state's FPCC guidelines are followed.