

Access Tucson – a Chronology (1984 to 2006)

1984

July 2 - Access Tucson assumes responsibility for public access programming in Tucson, and begins cablecasting member programming on channel 37 of the Cox Cable system.

December - Nuevos Horizontes funding is inaugurated, designed to develop bilingual Spanish-English programs. A total of \$120,000 is earmarked for this program, which will result in videos like "Brazos Cruzados" about three Central American women who fled the violence in their country, and "Receta para Salud", information about health problems and ways to get treatment.

1985

March - First Annual Oasis Awards for Cablecasting Excellence are held, featuring programs in eight categories. In 1996 the awards had grown to 23 categories and over 150 entries.

July - Access Tucson takes ownership of the old VFW Building at 124 E. Broadway; it will be many months, a lot of demolition and remodeling, before the building is ready for use as a public access facility. In the meantime, a second public access channel - channel 64 - comes on line to cablecast member programming.

July - The cultural News Project was a grant-funded program created to test the waters of interactive television. The series producers created short documentary-style video segments that took the viewer from an archeological dig on the city's east side to home life with a Tucson punk rock band, or shopping with a peace worker living in Nicaragua, stories all told by the subjects themselves. These segments were offered to viewers as programming options during the live studio cablecast. The viewers then phoned in their choices, comments and opinions and determined the direction, content and flavor of the show. The Cultural news project received the National Federation of Local Cable Programers (NFLCP) award for best innovative series in July 1985.

November - The four-part "National Issues Forum," presenting important social issues is cablecast. Featuring live and taped material with audience feedback, the forums are well attended. Topics include "Soviet-American Relations" and "The Welfare State". Some things do change; others remain the same.

December - Cox Cable sells its Tucson cable franchise to McCaw Cablevision.

1986

April - The live studio facility at 10 W. Congress is closed down, and moved to temporary quarters at McCaw Cablevision's building at 1802 W. Grant Road. Editing/equipment check-out operations continue at 131 E. Broadway Blvd.)

July - Access Tucson revises and expands the training and instruction classes it offers.

November 11 - Renovation and remodeling is over (or at least much of it is) and Access Tucson consolidates its operations, for the first time, in its "new" building at 124 East Broadway Blvd. The date, Veteran's Day, is appropriate, as what was once the VFW Hall in Tucson is transformed into another place designed to defend important principles like free speech. A horde of staffers, volunteers and "friends" of public access help move equipment and supplies into the facility; the City even closed down two lanes of traffic on Broadway to help out.

December - Two more public access channel, channels 3 and 51, come on line. Channel 51 becomes the first interactive public access channel in the country, allowing viewers with touch-tone phones to receive a variety of on-screen information about community activities and events.

1987

January - Before there was Court TV, public access features comprehensive coverage of the trial of Frank Jarvis Atwood, accused (and later convicted) of the murder of eight year-old Tucsonan Vicki Lynn Hoskinson. Coverage of the trial, which draws large numbers of viewers, is produced by the University of Arizona Department of Journalism.

February - McCaw Cablevision sells its Tucson cable franchise to Cooke CableVision.

March - Access Tucson staffers take a 25% pay cut and volunteer to work the additional hours necessary to maintain current level of members services, to help cope with a budget crisis brought about by the delay in securing collateral for loans to renovate the new access facility.

April - Using a grant from the Nuevos Horizontes program, 5th and 6th graders from Carrillo School produce "View from Carrillo", a series of 20 videos about their community, their neighbors and themselves.

June - City of Tucson Mayor and Council vote to eliminate almost \$150,000 of annual funding provided.

July - Board of Directors passes a new budget that restores funding of services (and staff) to their previous levels.

1988

Cooke CableVision buys the Tucson cable system from McCaw Communications.

TCCC member Charlie Delgado receives a grant from the Arizona Humanities Council and produces video featuring Native Americans practicing traditional art forms.

TCCC initiates *Community Calendar Coverage*, serving local non-profit organizations.

TCCC member Rev. Bill Bowler hosts talk show with Arizona Gov. Evan Mecham.

February - Access Tucson producer Charlie Delgado receives a grant from the Arizona Humanities Council for her program "The Native People; Yesterday and Today" which presents Native Americans practicing traditional art forms.

June - Dave Bukunus and Randy Harris, producers of the "T.W.I.T." (Tucson Western International Telethon) Show, finally call it quits after 138 episodes. The "T.W.I.T. Show," three hours of live mayhem on most Friday nights, defined a certain style of public access programming - usually funny, inventive and accessible, but always unpredictable.

September - Satellite downlink coverage of NASA shuttles missions becomes available over the public access channels; NASA space missions continue to draw a sizable and dedicated viewing audience.

November - Access Tucson collaborates with the University of Student radio Task Force to develop radio programming on FM 104.1; this project evolves into KAMP, the student-operated radio station at the UA.

December - Pima County Superior Court uses the public access facilities to produce "Mediation: For Your Children's Sake", a tape for use by divorcing couples to better understand the effects of divorce on their children. The tape is cablecast on the public access channels as well as used during the divorce process in Superior Court.

1989

January - "Call City Hall," a series of one-hour, live television programs begins. Each episode is produced by staff from the Mayor (then Tom Volgy) or council member's office. Important city issues are discussed, with citizens calling in to directly ask questions and give their feedback.

February - Project VITAL, a national program to train the developmentally disabled in video production both behind the scenes and in front of the camera, begins at Access Tucson. Produced with Pima County Adult Education Project RAISE, the unique curriculum enables students to participate in community-television projects and helps them develop skills that expand their employment possibilities.

March - With Access Tucson's assistance, the Tucson Children's Museum creates a one-camera studio to accompany their exhibit "News of the World." The temporary studio gives kids hands-on experience with television technology; some of the videos made during the exhibit are shown on cable.

October - "Freedom of Speech in the Media: Who's To Judge?" a two-day conference on about First Amendment issues, is held in Tucson. The conference, which brings together local and national speakers, is sponsored by Access Tucson, National Federation of Local Cable Programmers, Tucson Public Library, and the university of Arizona departments of Journalism and Media.

TCCC provides Tucson with complete NASA coverage of Voyager 2 first close-up look at the planet Neptune.

1990

June - Cooke CableVision sells its Tucson cable franchise to Robin Cable Systems (operating as Tucson cablevision).

December - Access Tucson member Robert Flanagan produces "How Do they Do It?" a first-person look at living life with Cerebral Palsy. Flanagan, who fought to be accepted into the media program at Pima Community College, is also an intern for the inaugural class of Project VITAL.

1991

February - The News Project debuts on public access. A collaboration between Access Tucson and the University of Arizona Media Arts Department, UA students enrolled in The News Project use public access facilities to produce live, weekly news shows.

June - Access Tucson wins the Community Communications Award for Public Access. Sponsored by the Alliance for Community Media, the national advocacy organization for public access facilities, this award recognizes the nation's "best" access center.

October - Sun Sounds, a reading service for the print impaired, begins cablecasting its audio signal on public access channel 51. Teams of volunteers read newspapers, magazines, poetry and novels for individuals unable to read, hold or understand printed materials.

October - An episode of the public access series "The Great Satan At-Large" is deemed obscene by the Pima County Attorney's office; the producer and three performers on the show are indicted by an Arizona superior court on four felony counts. Public access in Tucson has weathered its share of free speech battles; this becomes the most serious.

TCCC offers C-SPAN II, live coverage of the U.S. Senate to the Tucson community.

December - Access Tucson receives the Janice S. Armstrong Award from the Association of Retarded Citizens of Arizona, in recognition of public access' support of people with disabilities.

1992

February - Access Tucson's Board of Directors responds to the "The Great Satan At-Large" controversy by implementing the Adult Program Policy, which balances First Amendment rights with public access's responsibility to young members of the community.

June - "The Empty Closet" premieres on public access. The program is directed to young gays, lesbians and bisexuals, and episodes deal with issues of coming out, growing up gay, family relationships and AIDS.

Be True to Yourself, shot at TCCC, is the first program about gays and lesbians to be shown on Russian television.

Local TCCC producer Capt. Jeffery Prather is honored in Japan for his video *Close Quarter Combat*.

TCCC partners with the Tucson/Pima Arts Council to run the Arts Channel.

Producer Reverend Gilberto Marez starts *Un Nuevo Dia's* televised sermons in Spanish.

1993

Three local programs (*Community Legal Forum*, *Bridges* and *Project RAISE*) receive Community Impact Awards from the Alliance for Community Media's Mountain States Region.

Producer Michael Ragsdale portrays life and poverty on Tucson's streets in *The Rags Show*.

TCCC co-sponsors a reading of *The Shadow Box* by eight national actors along with *Tucson Talks: An Issue of Free Speech*, a community discussion on free expression and censorship in schools.

1994

Tele-Communications, Inc. (TCI) buys Tucson CableVision.

Tucson Community Cable Corporation changes its name to Access Tucson, reflecting a renewed commitment to help Tucson connect better with itself. Access Tucson is where Tucson's on TV!

1995

Access Tucson initiates *Local Matters*, *On-Line*, the Community Producer Service and Interactive Video Bulletin Board to foster connections between non-profits and the community.

Access Tucson launches *Direct Dialog*, to help members create one-person, low-tech shows.

Access Tucson and the Etherton reopen the Gallery.

1996

Intermedia (operating as Tucson Cablevision) sells its Tucson cable franchise to TCI.

Access Tucson begins providing free public internet access.

Access Tucson is honored for overall excellence at the Hometown Video Festival – the world's most prestigious festival for community TV.

1997

Protracted license agreement negotiations between the City and TCI force Access Tucson to continue operations with severely reduced funds – service levels and staff are reduced and equipment purchases are frozen. A new 10-year license agreement is approved by City Council at year-end.

Producer Kita Scrivner releases her ambitious documentary about a Tucson landmark, *Santa Cruz Church; A Year in the Life*.

1998

Cox Communications buys the Tucson cable system from TCI.

Producer Eddie Goldberger celebrates the 100th episode of *Young at Heart*, his show for senior citizens.

Member Scotty Mills receives a Tucson/Pima Arts Council grant to produce his series *Video P-Funk*.

Access Tucson co-produces a series of public forums about alternative media called *Whose TV is This Anyway?*

1999

Marks fifteen years of public access.

Access Tucson implemented two highend production resources, a 32 ft. production truck and a mini-mobile production box.

Access Tucson produced so much original programming in 1999 that we qualified for a new public access channel.

Expanded free Internet Access & channel streaming.

DVCPRO digital video cameras and the Trinity digital editing suite.

Local Matters is a 30-minute talk show featuring representatives from local organizations. In 1999 *Local Matters* reached a milestone--its 200th show.

The City of Tucson & Cox Communications conducted a survey of their Tucson customers in August of 1999.

2000

2000, Mini-DV format cameras for checkout.

\$626,500 Economic impact of Alliance for Community Media International Conference held in Tucson in July, 2000 (estimated by Metropolitan Tucson Convention and Visitors Bureau)

Access Tucson provided space in the front lobby of our facility for four local artists to have solo shows.

Access Tucson collaborates with Descriptive TheatreVision to bring classic movies to the visually-impaired community.

2001

Access Tucson decided to convert totally: all digital, all the time, top to bottom. During the

talking and planning phase, five iMovie non-linear digital editing stations became available for community producer use. One of the most talked-about digital conversions involves edit gear, especially a non-linear editing appliance called ScreenPlay.

High School Sports

This highly exciting project involves young people from several Tucson area high schools coming together to produce high school sports programming.

Youth Opportunities New Media Project

In January of 2001, Access Tucson entered into a partnership with Youth Opportunities (YO) and Pima County. A grant from the U.S. Department of Labor is helping to fund the training of out-of-school youth in media production and academic skills.

Access Tucson was recognized with a community service award for "Innovation in a Program Serving Youth" from the Tucson Saguaro Rotary Club.

During the summer of 2002, Access Tucson faced the prospect of a severe budget cut by the Mayor and City Council. This cut would have drastically affected the services used by all the people and organizations. However, the community rallied for Access Tucson, with over 200 supportive phone calls and emails in addition to in-person appearances at several City Council meetings. On Monday June 17, the Mayor and Council balanced the 2003 budget by a 4-3 vote without any additional cuts to Access Tucson's budget beyond an already anticipated 10%.

Access Tucson airs *Democracy Now!*, one of Tucson's only in-depth, alternative news shows dedicated to comprehensive civic journalism and committed to truth, justice, and peace.

Access Tucson expands its reach by providing channels to Comcast and the county.

Access Tucson provides media training for four women running for public office in Kazakhstan.

Access Tucson produces its first annual *Building Free Speech* panel discussion.

2003

20 years of service to the community. Access Tucson grows to 19,199 members.

Access Tucson honored by The League of Women Voters for serving democracy through its distinguished coverage of election issues and candidates.

Access Tucson and KXCI 91.3 community radio invite Amy Goodman of *Democracy Now!*, to talk about the importance of independent media in a time of war. More than 2,400 Tucsonans attended this event at Centennial Hall. Awareness of public access and Access Tucson increased dramatically due to this event.

In addition to the public event, Access Tucson worked with the producers of *Democracy Now!* to produce *Democracy Now!*'s first ever remote broadcast. *Democracy Now!* is a daily national independent radio and TV news program pioneering the largest community media collaboration in the U.S. The live broadcast from the Access Tucson studios was simultaneously broadcast to nearly 200 community radio and public access stations across the country.

Access Tucson also contributes to the leadership of Public, Educational and Governmental Access through its participation on both the national and regional Alliance for Community Media (ACM) board of directors. Access Tucson staff members have served on the national board and on the regional board. In 2003 Access Tucson provided representation on both the regional and national level.

24 Community remote productions.

Two new Access Tucson produced programs were introduced in 2003. *Call City Hall* and *Your County, Your Call* presented the mayor, city council members and county supervisors as the host. Produced live, these weekly shows took phone calls and email from the viewers. Topics were unique to each elected official's perspective, ward or district. Often, these shows were conducted in Spanish or in a bilingual format.

2004

The Pan Asian Community Alliance presents Access Tucson with a Friend of the Pan Asian Community Award for championing cultural diversity and for philanthropic service and achievement in the Tucson community.

June 21, 2004, following three consecutive years of 10% reductions to our budget each year, the Tucson Mayor and City Council voted to cut Access Tucson's budget by an additional \$300,000, a 43% reduction in our operating funds.

The Everyday People Getting Involved series highlights Access Tucson producers, volunteers, viewers and community organizations.

In 2004, Access Tucson was recognized with two regional awards; Western Access Video Excellence award for overall excellence in community cable programming and The Brian Wilson Award. This award is presented each year to an individual or individuals in the Western States Region who has had a positive impact on others and the community media field by effectively using his or her skills as a mentor, coach, teacher, and guide through significant challenges faced at the local, regional or national level. Staff member Larry Foster received the award. Both awards were established and given by the Western Region of the Alliance for Community Media.

In 2004, 161 non-profit organizations received television resources, consultation, training and airtime to get their messages out in ways they could never afford through commercial media.

In 2004, Access Tucson introduced *Government Connection* which focuses on local government issues like ballot propositions, homeland security, economic development and tourism in Pima County and school district concerns.

No other production truck is available for rent in the Tucson Metro area. Organizations such as Pima Community College and the Muscular Dystrophy Association accomplish their goals with greater efficiency and lower cost.

In 2004, volunteers donated 2,728 hours of time, skill and sweat.

Member producers and local organizations combined created 8,305 local programs in 2004.

In September 2004, the host of *Democracy Now!*, Amy Goodman visited Tucson while on tour. Amy Goodman spoke to 2,000 people at Centennial Hall about independent media in a time of war. The proceeds of the event benefited community media, KXCI 91.3 FM Community Radio and Access Tucson. The next morning, Amy Goodman broadcast her national show from the studios of Access Tucson.

Correction is a documentary that contrasts the training correctional officers receive with their real-life experiences inside prison. *Correction* was produced using auxiliary equipment from Access Tucson. In January 2004, Producer/Director, Michael Mulcahy, Access Tucson, KUAT-TV, and the Loft Cinema collaborated to hold a public screening of the documentary followed by a panel discussion.

MAKING WAVES (2004. USA. 64mins. Directed by Michael Lahey.)

Making Waves follows the uphill struggle to be heard on our publicly owned but corporate-controlled airwaves. Michael Lahey was awarded a midi-grant from Access Tucson to produce this project. He completed the project using Access Tucson equipment and facilities. In April 2004, *Making Waves* was an official selection for the Arizona International Film Festival.

When documentary filmmaker Michael Moore came to speak in Tucson before the election, Access Tucson member Elaine Higginbotham managed to get Moore's permission to air the documentary *Fahrenheit 9/11* on Access Tucson.

2005

For the eighth year, Green Fields School has offered training through Access Tucson as part of their spring interim activities. Students participate in an intensive weeklong training creating class projects. Many Green Fields students have gone on to create their own work here after their class experience.

Mariachi Aztlan "Noche de Mariachi" Pueblo High School media arts students trained to use the Access Tucson Mini-Mobile production equipment to cover this event at the school.

Pascua Yaqui Edge Charter School

The Old Pascua Youth Artist Program (OPYA) was awarded a grant from the Pascua Yaqui Tribe for the Old Pascua Murals Restoration Project. As part of this unique collaboration between OPYA and Access Tucson, a team of youth was trained in the creative and marketable skills of editing and videography.

This year marked the tenth year that Access Tucson has offered production training during the summer months for youth. Kids learn about television production and become programmers instead of consumers. Students create their own messages on-location and in the studio.

Access Tucson Deputy Director, La Monte Ward was honored with the Brian Wilson Award. The Brian Wilson Award is presented each year to an individual or individuals in the Western States Region of the Alliance for Community Media who has had a positive impact on others and the community media field by effectively using his or her skills as a mentor, coach, teacher, and guide through significant challenges faced at the local, regional or national level.

Access Tucson was recognized with an Appreciation Award by the The Long Range Public Education Coalition for the continued support of their educational goals. The Long Range Public Education Coalition (The Long Rangers) is comprised of consumers, Community Partnership of Southern Arizona members, professionals, advocates, family members and stakeholders from all areas of the behavioral health field who volunteer their services. The Long Rangers produced a series of programs at Access Tucson demonstrating that mental health treatment does work for persons with addiction and/or mental health disorders.

Access Tucson member and staff, Vikki Dempsey won the most innovative program category at the Hometown Video Festival for her short, *Looking For Yoko Ono*. The Hometown Video Festival is a national video competition sponsored by the Alliance for Community Media.

Access Tucson provided Tucson citizens extended coverage of the two contested ward races in 2005. Access Tucson partnered with the Tucson Citizen and the Arizona Daily Star as they each conducted their own candidate forums. *Tucson Citizen: Inside the News* captured the Tucson Citizens' editorial board as they interviewed the all the city council candidates. The Arizona Daily Star presented a public forum for the candidates. After each newspaper printed their

endorsements, Access Tucson carried both forums several times on our channels before the election so Tucsonans could watch and make up their own mind.

22: Number of scholarships awarded for production classes

2006

In 2006, Access Tucson provided training for almost 600 Tucson residents in media production.

University of Arizona/YMCA Girls Career Camp. Students enrolled in this program from the Sunnyside School District. Over 20 girls received training in camera operation, scriptwriting, production managing and on-camera skills. They then went on to produce a television talk show about their perspectives and feelings regarding teen pregnancy.

University of Arizona Wildcat Endurance Training Exercise

This exercise involved multiple public safety agencies participating in a simulated crisis on the University of Arizona Campus. The purpose: to test public safety readiness and interagency communications and functionality. The training exercise and the resulting program were funded through a grant from Homeland Security.

Pima Community College Graduation

For the 2nd year, Access Tucson's production truck made this proud and joyous occasion available to Tucson cable viewers live on the Pima Community College channel.

Producers Receive WAVE Awards for Excellence in Programming

Bunny Uriarte, 19 year old University of Arizona junior and Access Tucson producers, Martha McGrath, Chris Montgomery and Robert Choate all received WAVE (Western Alliance Video Excellence) Awards at the 2006 Alliance for Community Media Western Region. Their award winning programs are: *The Bunny Show*, *Puro Sabor* and *City Talks*.

The Alliance for Community Media awarded its 2006 George Stoney Award for Humanistic Communications to Access Tucson Executive Director Sam Behrend in a recent ceremony in Boston. The Stoney Award is given annually to an organization or individual that has made an outstanding contribution to championing the growth and experience of humanistic communications.

New PSA Service Added for Non-profit Organizations in 2006

Access Tucson can now create 30 second public service announcement (PSA) for any organization wishing to promote an event.

MISSION STATEMENT

Access Tucson is a community resource facilitating public dialogue and participatory democracy through citizen access to television and other electronic media.