

Local communities absolutely have the right to reserve the PEG access and should even demand more access. One local cable access channel in Durango, Colorado is DCAT. I was a participant in the process of starting this channel. While starting small, with scant programming, it now serves the needs of our community with important news and information vital to the development of our community.

One example is the coverage of the details of the progress of the massive fires we had in the immediate area a few years ago. Every day, twice a day, we were able to see the organization and disposition of the fire crews, where the fires were spreading, evacuations, positive results, and much more information. Through this one piece of local intense coverage, we came to appreciate and support the fire fighting efforts at the time. The whole community was mobilized.

The most important issue is how to ensure that the rights and services of local communities are protected and enriched. Local governments must play a key role in any future franchising process.

These franchise agreements guarantee that local governments control rights-of-way and obtain fair rents from the companies that dig them up to lay cable. They guarantee universal build-out of the technology and its advantages to every household in the community, not just affluent neighborhoods. They guarantee funding and facilities to provide public access television as well as other services like low-cost broadband for our schools and libraries.