



2007 TATOA CONFERENCE

August 2nd & 3rd, Mark Your Calendar!



In an effort to synchronize with the 80th Texas Legislature, the 12th Annual TATOA conference will be held in beautiful downtown Austin, Texas. The conference is scheduled for August 2nd and 3rd at the Omni Austin Downtown Hotel.

Rooms are available at a special rate of \$149 per night for the conference and extend through the weekend should you wish

to stay in Austin. Call 1-800-THE-OMNI to make reservations and be sure to ask for the TATOA group rate. Daily parking is available for \$7 and overnight guest parking for \$15 per day. Valet parking is also available for \$20 per day. Taxi prices are approximately \$20 from the airport to downtown Austin. The City of Austin's Capital Metro public transportation also offers "The Airport Flier" for \$.50 each way if you don't mind making a few stops along the way.

The theme for this year's conference is "Up the Digital Stream Without a Paddle," and will feature such topics as: '*SB 5 in Action*', '*The Future of PEG*', and '*Emerging Technologies in Telecommunications*.'

The TATOA Governmental Programming Awards will celebrate its 6th year running and promises to be as exciting as always!

Also in store for 2007 is an Austin-Style reception at Maggie Mae's, a cornerstone of Austin's famous 6th Street that has rocked this city for over twenty-five years. Get ready for some amazing entertainment provided by local favorites The Recliners, voted "BEST LOUNGE/SWING BAND" and "BEST COVER BAND" by The Austin Chronicle.

Texas Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors 2007-09 Board of Directors

President: Margaret Somereve, Assistant to the Director of Public Works, City of Farmers Branch

Vice President: Janet DeVault, Information Services Specialist, City of Richardson

Secretary: Sheena Harden, Program Coordinator, City of Austin

Treasurer: Ernest B. Davis, Franchise Manager, Finance and Administration, City of Houston

South Regional Representative: Gerardo J. Leal, Public Access Director, City of Laredo

East Regional Representative: Victoria LaFollett-Koenig, Deputy City Manager, City of Nacogdoches

West Regional Representative: Vacant (see below)

North Regional Representative: John Cabrales, Jr., Public Information Officer, City of Denton

Government Access Programming Representative: Keith Reeves, Cable TV Manager, City of Austin

Please welcome your new TATOA Board, elected for the 2007-2009 term! Thank you to everyone who voted. The Board would like to thank Pam Percival for serving as West Regional Representative. She has decided to leave the City of Abilene, effective Feb. 5 and will no longer be serving TATOA. As such, the Board is seeking to fill the vacancy. If you are interested, please contact TATOA President Margaret Somereve at (972) 919-2596 or margaret.somereve@farmersbranch.info.



Board Members (left to right): John Cabrales, Jr., Keith Reeves, Margaret Somereve, Pam Percival, Janet DeVault, Ernest B. Davis, Rondella Hawkins, Gerardo J. Leal, Sheena Harden, Victoria LaFollett-Koenig

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's March in Texas. That means the spring flowers are blooming and with it being an odd numbered year, the 80th Texas Legislature is in session. With the passage of SB5 in 2005 by the Texas Legislature, little is expected for changes in current law. However, at its December 20, 2006 meeting, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted its order on local cable franchising, (FCC 06-180). The FCC released the 109-page text of the order on March 5, 2007 that purports to establish new regulations governing local cable franchise negotiations. The order does not preempt SB5 but it does preempt any local franchises, which are inconsistent with the FCC order. The FCC has set a very short comment period for their Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking of 30 days after publication of the Order for initial comments, and fifteen days for reply comments.

The order's introduction states that "municipal level franchising authorities ("LFAs"), are unreasonably refusing to award competitive franchises. We anticipate that the rules and guidance we adopt today will facilitate and expedite entry of new cable competitors into the market for the delivery of video programming, and accelerate broadband deployment consistent with our statutory responsibilities." There is much to digest and analyze in the order especially when the order states "we do not preempt state law or state level franchising decisions in this Order. Instead, we preempt only local laws, regulations, practices and requirements" To read the order in its entirety, please go to www.fcc.gov.

What is interesting to note is that the order makes repeated references to Texas and SB5. The FCC pointed to Guadalupe Valley Telephone Cooperative that could not deploy service in the face of differing build-out requirements across jurisdictions and once

Texas's new state-issued franchising law went into effect, deployment became economically feasible. The order also points out that when a second cable operator enters into a market the rates are approximately 15 percent lower than in areas without competition. "The magnitude of the rate decreases caused by wire line cable competition is corroborated by the rates charged in Keller, Texas, where the price for Verizon's "Everything" package is 13 percent below that of the incumbent cable operator."

Texas is still the focal point for the national debate since we have had state franchising first and the longest. This is why it's so critical that we maintain accurate information about the impact of SB5 on Texas cities. In February of 2005, TATO A compiled a list of cable rates for basic and expanded non-introductory, non-bundled programming packages to serve as a resource for those interested. This chart which can be found on our website at www.tatoa.org needs to be updated. The TATO A board will be calling member cities asking for this information in the next few weeks. It's important that TATO A be a credible source of information about telecommunications in Texas to our members and to our counterparts in other states and cities.

Finally, please save the date for TATO A's 12th Annual conference, "Up the Digital Stream without a Paddle" scheduled for August 2-3 at the Omni Downtown in Austin, to discuss life after SB5.

Regards,



Margaret Somereve
TATO A President

THE BEAUTY OF RSS

By Sheena Harden

RSS stands for “Really Simple Syndication” and is a way for content to be delivered to us news junkies without being overwhelmed by information. It also keeps us from having to visit dozens of different web pages a day to get the information we need.

If you read an on-line newspaper, newsletter or blog you may have noticed a button or link that says something like, “Subscribe to Posts [Atom],” “RSS” or “XML” (see illustrations below.) These are links that you can use to subscribe to the news source by syndication. If for example you click on the “Atom” link on the bottom of the TATO A blog page it will take you to a page with text at the top which says, “This is an Atom formatted XML site feed. It is intended to be viewed in a Newsreader...” You may notice that there is no formatting on this page, that’s because it is not meant to be viewed as a website but shows instead the raw information which can be sent to a Newsreader (also called an aggregator.) The Atom, XML or RSS link is what you use to tell the Newsreader where to go to get the latest information.



So what is a Newsreader? It is a program, utility or website which gathers up feeds to which you subscribe and puts them neatly in one place. So let’s say you wanted to see the TATO A Blog, the A-News, B-News and C-News every day. Rather than going to four different sites each day you set up a Newsreader to go get the headlines from each page for you and display them in one place.

There are a few different types of newsreaders. Integrated readers come with the software you already have such as a browser or email program. They are fairly easy to set up for the most part. The disadvantages to integrated readers are that they are not very customizable in terms of look and feel and they reside only on the desktop on which you set them up. In other words, unless you’re on a laptop you can’t take them with you.

Stand-alone Newsreaders are available for free or fee-based download and also reside on your desktop. The advantage to these readers is that they are specifically written as Newsreaders

and give customization options not offered with integrated readers. The disadvantage is that they also reside only on the computer on which they are set up.

Web-based readers act the same as web-email. You can login from any computer and read your feeds. The advantage to having your feeds on a web-based reader is that you can access the information from home, work and on the road. The only disadvantage is that the free ones are not customizable in terms of look and feel. If that is a concern, many web-based readers offer subscription packages which allow you more options for customization.

One free web-based Newsreader site is Bloglines (<http://www.bloglines.com>). To use Bloglines you must first sign up for an account. Next you go find the URLs for the site feeds you want syndicated. For TATO A it’s that page you went to earlier, <http://www.tatoa.org/blog/atom.xml>. On other sites look for buttons saying “RSS,” “XML” or “Subscribe to Feed.” Copy the link. In Bloglines choose ‘Add’ and paste the URL in to the blank provided, hit the ‘subscribe’ button and you’re done! You can also set up folders for specific types of news if you don’t want to look at everything at once. It may take a little while to set up your feeds initially but it is well worth it in future time savings.

The great thing about sites like Bloglines is that they also provide search capability. If you’re really into Pink Widgets you can search for “pink widget” and it will show you all of the feeds available with those key words.

For more information:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS_\(file_format\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS_(file_format))

<http://www.xml.com/pub/a/2002/12/18/dive-into-xml.html>

Web-based Newsreaders:

<http://www.bloglines.com>

<http://www.newsgator.com>

<http://www.newzcrawler.com/>

And for a listing of many more go to:

<http://www.newsonfeeds.com/faq/aggregators>



CALL FOR ENTRIES
6th ANNUAL TATO
PROGRAMMING AWARDS
ENTRY DEADLINE: May 4, 2007

Eligibility Requirements

All entries must:

- * Be submitted by jurisdictions located in Texas and produced primarily in-house.
- * Have been initially cablecast between June 2, 2006 and May 3, 2007.
- * Must have all rights and clearances for contents of video (music, clips, etc).
- * All entries must be submitted on separate DVD-R discs playable on a consumer DVD player.
- * **Label/ Slate Information: DVDs must be properly labeled with name of jurisdiction, governmental entity or organization, category entered, original program running time, entry running time, and program title. A slate with the same information must be included at the beginning of the entry tape.**
- * Include a copy of the official entry form with each tape.
- * Be **postmarked** no later than May 4, 2007; **late entries will not be accepted!**

Entry Fees

- * **\$20** per entry for TATO members. **\$35** per entry for non-TATO members.
- * Program may be entered in no more than two categories.
- * To join TATO, visit www.tatoa.org for more information.
- * For awards related questions, call Keith Reeves at (512) 974-7952.
- * **Payment:** (No refunds)
 - **Checks** – Make checks payable to TATO and mail with 1 (one) copy of the entry form for each entry to the below address.
 - **Credit Card Payments** – Available online at www.tatoa.org. Please note: Cards are run through Pay Pal and some cities have restrictions on their cards that prevent payment on Pay Pal. This is not a problem with the TATO website, please check the restrictions on your card.
- * **Send entries/ payment to: Alan Petty**

Denton Television
215 E. McKinney Street
Denton, TX 76201
alan.petty@cityofdenton.com

Judging Process/Criteria

- * Panel of at least three qualified judges will judge all entries.
- * Judging will occur between May 14, 2007 and June 15, 2007. Judges can select up to three finalists in each category based on accumulated points.
- * Entries will be rated on content, creativity, concept, and technical quality.
- * Each judge will award one (1) bonus point if the entry follows all of the directions for the category. This includes: **complete information on the slates/ DVD labels and correct running time for the category entered.** The moderator will make sure all judges are consistent in awarding the bonus points.
- * Finalists will be announced via email on June 22, 2007.
- * First, second and third place winners will be announced at the 6th Annual TATO Government Programming Awards luncheon on August 2, 2007 during the annual TATO conference in Austin, Texas.

NOTE: Call for Entries and the Official Entry Form can be downloaded from www.tatoa.org.



6th ANNUAL TATO PROGRAMMING AWARDS
Texas Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors
ENTRY FORM
(All categories except Overall Excellence in Govt. Programming)

Name of Jurisdiction/Organization: _____

Contact Name: _____ Contact Title: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ Fax Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Number of Entries (\$20 per Member Entry) _____

Number of Entries (\$35 per Non-Member Entry) _____

Entry _____ of _____ Total Amount Enclosed: _____

Category Name and Number: _____

Program Title: _____

Original Program Length: _____ Entry Length: _____

Are outside production resources used in any part of this entry? _____

If yes, how much and what exactly? _____

Brief Program Description (explain to the judges what makes your program unique – approximately 25 words): _____

Annual Production Operating Budget (defined as budget for video production personnel, supplies & services; do not count budgets for franchise enforcement activities or building expenses): _____

I hereby certify that I am authorized by the jurisdiction/organization listed above to make this entry and to give TATO permission to exhibit and distribute this entry. (TATO assumes that the jurisdiction/non-profit has full rights to all material used in entries and accepts no liability in the matter.)

Signature of Contact

Payment Method:

Check

Online Credit Card at www.tatoa.org



6th ANNUAL TATO PROGRAMMING AWARDS
Texas Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors
ENTRY FORM
OVERALL EXCELLENCE IN GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMING

Name of Jurisdiction/Organization: _____

Contact Name: _____ Contact Title: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ Fax Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Number of Entries (\$20 per Member Entry) _____

Number of Entries (\$35 per Non-Member Entry) _____

Entry _____ of _____ Total Amount Enclosed: _____

Category Name and Number: _____

Year Channel/Facility Became Operational: _____

Number of Production Staff (FTE): _____ Number of Volunteers: _____

Outside Production Facilities: _____

Annual Production Operating Budget (defined as budget for video production personnel, supplies & services; do not count budgets for franchise enforcement activities or building expenses): _____

Number of Government Channels Under Jurisdiction's Responsibility: _____

Are outside production resources used in any part of this entry? _____

If yes, estimate that cost in the past year: _____

What percentage of your productions are done in-house? _____

By Volunteers: _____ By Outside Production Facilities: _____

I hereby certify that I am authorized by the jurisdiction/organization listed above to make this entry and to give TATO permission to exhibit and distribute this entry. (TATO assumes that the jurisdiction/non-profit has full rights to all material used in entries and accepts no liability in the matter.)

Signature of Contact

Payment Method:

- Check
- Online Credit Card at www.tatoa.org

Call for Entries Deadline: May 4, 2007

6th ANNUAL TATO A PROGRAMMING AWARDS
Texas Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors
AWARDS CATEGORIES

**Entries in categories 1-13 must be a continuous segment or up to three segments from same program (10 minutes maximum for entire entry).
A slate must be on the beginning of all entries.**

Category Number	Category Name	Description
1	Community Event Coverage (Operating Budget to \$250,000)	Coverage of a community event (parade, festival, performing arts, sports, etc.)
2	Community Event Coverage (Operating Budget over \$250,000)	Coverage of a community event (parade, festival, performing arts, sports, etc.)
3	Public Affairs	Unedited (live-to-tape) production of a civic or governmental issue (public meeting coverage, town hall, debate, election coverage, etc.)
4	Documentary – Social Issues/Profile (Operating Budget to \$250,000)	In-depth treatment of non-fiction single event/issue or of an individual or group that is produced primarily on-location or w/ historical footage.
5	Documentary – Social Issues/Profile (Operating Budget over \$250,000)	In-depth treatment of non-fiction single event/issue or of an individual or group that is produced primarily on-location or w/historical footage
6	Education/Instruction/Training	Must be produced to educate the public on a specific issue (i.e. recycling, transportation) or for teaching/training purposes (i.e. staff orientations). Can be for either in-house use or cablecasting.
7	Interview/Talk Show	Must include in-studio or on-location interviews; pre-produced segments must not exceed 50% of program (mayoral show, studio talk show).
8	Profile of a City/County or City/County Department (Operating Budget to \$250,000)	Highlights aspects (resources, services or staff) of a city/county or city/county department to promote its images with citizens and visitors.
9	Profile of a City/County or City/County Department (Operating Budget over \$250,000)	Highlights aspects (resources, services or staff) of a city/county or city/county department to promote its images with citizens and visitors.
10	Public Health/Public Safety (Operating Budget to \$250,000)	In-depth treatment of public health (i.e. AIDS awareness) or public safety (i.e. fire prevention) focused on subjects of concern to a community.
11	Public Health/Public Safety (Operating Budget over \$250,000)	In-depth treatment of public health (i.e. AIDS awareness) or public safety (i.e. fire prevention) focused on subjects of concern to a community.
12	Special Audience (Operating Budget to \$250,000)	Programs targeting specific audiences (non-English speaking, seniors, children, physically impaired, ethnic, etc.)

AWARDS CATEGORIES (cont.)

13	Special Audience (Operating Budget over \$250,000)	Programs targeting specific audiences (non-English-speaking, seniors, children, physically impaired, ethnic, etc.)
<p>Categories #14 and #15: Programs must be individual programs with the same title or theme; and be programs that contain a number of different production elements (interviews, how-to segments, features). Series must be produced on an on-going basis with at least three separately produced and scheduled episodes or segments within the awards year (includes news shows). The entry must consist of one continuous excerpt from 3 different programs in the series. Each excerpt not to exceed five minutes in length for a total not exceeding 15 minutes. Excerpts must be separated by silent slates not to exceed five seconds in length.</p>		
14	Magazine Format Series (Operating Budget to \$250,000)	See above.
15	Magazine Format Series (Operating Budget over \$250,000)	See above.
16	Promotion/Public Service Announcement (Operating Budget to \$250,000)	Short spots (under 5 minutes) related to local government agency supported or sponsored issue, topic or cause.
17	Promotion/Public Service Announcement (Operating Budget over \$250,000)	Short spots (under 5 minutes) related to local government agency supported or sponsored issue, topic or cause.
18	Video Text Bulletin Boards	Excerpts highlighting content, variety and timeliness of messages on channels delivering this service to the public. 10 minute maximum.
<p>Categories #19 and #20: Entry up to 15 minutes, consisting of a minimum of one excerpt from at least ten different programs (PSAs, magazine shows, documentaries, bulletin board, public meetings, etc.); must be separated by silent slates not to exceed five seconds in length. NO ADDITIONAL POST PRODUCTION WORK PERMITTED!</p>		
19	Overall Excellence in Government Programming (Operating Budget to \$250,000)	See above.
20	Overall Excellence in Government Programming (Operating Budget over \$250,000)	See above.

Categories with two budget levels could be combined if there is only one entry in a category.

Entry Checklist:

Each judge will award one bonus point for each entry that follows all of the directions. This could affect final placement, so please follow directions.

___ ***DVD is burned on a DVD-R.***

___ ***The DVD has been successfully tested in a consumer DVD player.***

___ ***Complete entry information is included on the DVD label and on a slate at the beginning of the tape:***

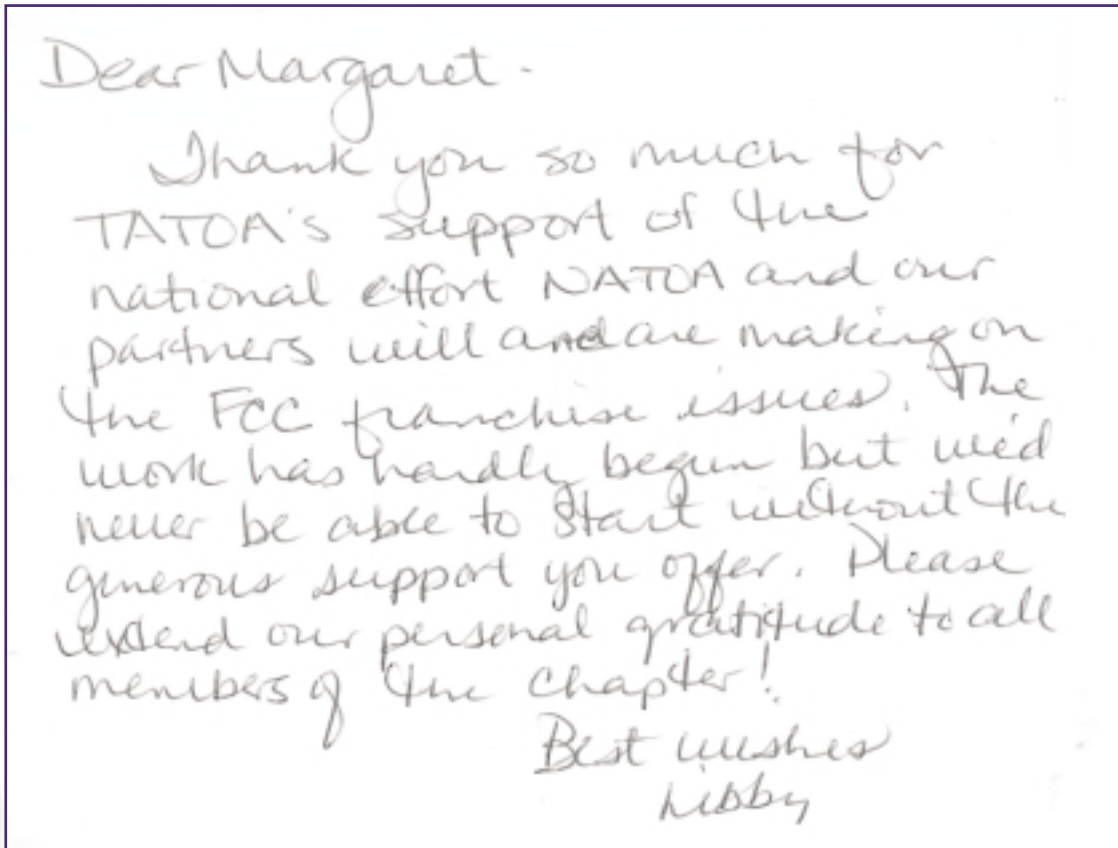
- ***Name of jurisdiction governmental entity or organization***
- ***Category entered***
- ***Original program running time***
- ***Entry running time***
- ***Program title.***

___ ***Slates are included in between segments in categories #14,15, 19, and 20.***

___ ***The total running time for each entry complies with the instructions.***

TATOA SUPPORTS NATOA'S EFFORTS

On January 8, 2007 TATOA sent \$1000 to support NATOA's legislative and regulatory efforts. NATOA Executive Director Libby Beaty sent this thank you note to share with our members:



TATOA Board Member Starts New Job!

Keith Reeves, TATOA Board of Directors Programming Representative, recently left the City of Denton to take the position of Cable TV Manager with the City of Austin. "I am very proud of my accomplishments in Denton, but I could not pass up the opportunity to work in such a great city as Austin."

New Contact Information:
Keith Reeves, Channel 6 Manager
City of Austin
512-974-7952 (office)
512-944-3049 (mobile)



eNATOA Learning Series

TATOA

NATOA is pleased to announce the topics for the eNATOA Learning Series for most of 2007.

eNATOA seminars are offered via teleconference and supplemented with electronic learning booklets that are distributed to participants in advance. eNATOA is designed to offer a high-quality learning experience to NATOA members and supporters, including those with limited technology access. All sessions last one hour and are offered at 2 pm eastern/ 11 am pacific time.

January 8-Preparing for your State Legislative Session: strategies and war stories

Please note: The January 8 seminar will be offered only to NATOA government and government-retained members

March 19-PEG and the Telco Cable Systems

April 2-Customer Service in a Deregulated Environment

April 16-The Post I-Net I-Net

May 7-Building your Community Broadband Business Plan

May 21-Strategic Planning for New Funding for PEG

June 4-Telecommunications Taxes

June 18-Community Fiber to the Premises: technical and business models

July 2-Legal Issues in Community Wireless Networking (CALEA, preemption, copyright, financing)

July 16-PEG and IPTV

August 6-Community Broadband International: case-studies

August 20-Lessons Learned in the 800 Mhz Rebanding

The cost for each one-hour seminar is \$45 for members, \$65 for non-members.

Or, register for a series:

· Three seminars: \$110 (members)
\$165 (non-members)

· Five seminars: \$160 (members)
\$265 (non-members)

· Ten seminars: \$300 (members)
\$500 (non-members)

· Fifteen seminars: \$435 (members)
\$735 (non-members)

Register for eNATOA at www.natoa.org

eNATOA seminars are offered approximately twice a month. For questions regarding registration and payment, please contact Melissa Robinson at mrobinson@natoa.org. For questions regarding seminar subject matter and technology, please contact Joanne Hovis at jhovis@internetCTC.com.

www.tatoa.org
Austin, TX 78767
PO Box 1088
c/o City of Austin
Officers and Advisors
Texas Association of Telecommunications



TATO



Help Us Help You!

Committees are forming now for the 2007 TATO Conference in Austin, Texas! We need volunteers for the conference committee and to help with the Annual Government Programming Awards! Interested?

Is there a topic you would like discussed or a speaker you'd like to hear from at the conference? Let us know!

Contact TATO President Margaret Somereve at margaret.somereve@farmersbranch.info or (972) 919-2596.