

**CITY OF MADISON  
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL  
CORRESPONDENCE**

Date: July 3, 2008

To: Deb Simon, Comptroller's Office  
From: Brad Clark, City Channel Station Manager  
Subject: Communication for the July 28, 2008 Board of Estimates meeting  
regarding Madison City Channel's move

Madison City Channel has been informed that effective August 12, 2008, our station will no longer be located on cable channel 12 on the Charter cable system. As of August 12<sup>th</sup>, we will be on channel 994 on Charter. We will still be on Charter's basic tier of service; the only difference is that since we will be carried digitally as opposed to in analog, subscribers will need either a Charter digital converter box or a television with a "QAM" tuner.

There will be no extra charge for this tier of programming since it will still be the basic tier. For people who already have any digital service from Charter (including any premium channels like HBO, or if you ever order video on demand or Pay-per-View), these folks are all set and need to do nothing more.

Madison City Channel will be part of Charter's new "Public Affairs Neighborhood" which will include channels such as Wisconsin Eye (channel 995) and the various C-Span channels (996-998). Charter will be moving CSpan 2 to 997 and will be launching CSpan 3 on 996, and is looking to move CSpan to 998 as soon as they are contractually able to do so. This neighborhood will be seen throughout Dane County, which means that communities outside of Madison will be able to watch our live coverage of the Dane County Board (long a bone of contention in those communities). There is obviously a certain logic in having the various "government" channels such as Madison City Channel, Wisconsin Eye, and CSpan grouped together.

I liken this situation to this: In the early days of cable, in the early to mid-1970's, when we added cable we all had to have a settop box on top of our TVs in order to get the 12 channels they offered at that time. Then, in the 1980's, these "cable-ready" TVs started becoming the standard and so folks like you and I no longer needed that settop box. Now, as cable companies like Charter transition from providing analog signals to providing digital signals (which eat up much less bandwidth and therefore allow Charter to have more bandwidth for, for example, more HD channels or faster internet speeds), we need these settop boxes, but more and more the standard will be TVs which have digital ("QAM") tuners built in, and in a few years just by attrition if you will, most of us will not need the boxes any more.

Charter says that it intends to start carrying Madison City Channel on both 994 and 12 in the near future, and continue this "dual illumination" (their term) until August 12th.

If subscribers do not have either a digital converter or a "digital-ready" TV and wish to continue watching Madison City Channel, they will need to contact Charter to get a converter box. It is our understanding that Charter will make a certain number of boxes

available to subscribers at no charge for six months, but after that time there will be a monthly charge of about \$5.00.

Please keep in mind that this transition has nothing whatsoever to do with the digital transition mandated by the Federal Communications Commission which will take effect in February of 2009, and has nothing to do with any government coupon or rebate program. That transition only affects people who only receive television signals broadcast over the airwaves, and has nothing to do with cable television.

Also please keep in mind that you will still as always be able to access virtually all of Madison City Channel's award-winning programming through our website at [www.madisoncitychannel.tv](http://www.madisoncitychannel.tv).

While changing our channel location after all these years is certainly a challenge, there's no question that digital television is the future, so we are optimistic this transition will go smoothly.