

Waterloo's PEG Channels Moving into Digital TV World

The mission of Public Access television is to provide a free-speech forum open to all, without discrimination or favoritism based on content. Waterloo Community Television (WCTV) achieves this goal. Its sister channel is Waterloo Government Access (WGAT), which exists to make local government more transparent to community residents.

These two local channels, plus two educational channels, are undergoing a change to keep pace with newer technology in the cable television industry. Known as PEG channels (public, education, government), these are moving from an analog transmission to digital television beginning December 9.

For many TV viewers, this change will not be noticeable. But for those who do not use digital TV, viewing access will continue only on televisions linked to a digital tuner or adapter. Mediacom works in partnership with the City of Waterloo to make channel space available for PEG channels (15, 17, 18, 19). Mediacom values the important role of these channels and wants to ensure that customers retain viewing access even though the signal transmission will switch to digital.

Mediacom is giving its non-digital customers FREE digital tuners that function as “adapters” – bringing the digital signals into clear view on older, non-digital television screens. The digital tuner or adapter is known as a DTA. It is a small, simple device – not much larger than a deck of cards. Simply connect it beside or behind a television and the full set of PEG channels becomes viewable. The local PEG channels retain their display numbers but will be viewable only in a digital format beginning Dec. 9. (chart below).

An added benefit to using a DTA or a digital cable service is that basic cable line-up has expanded from 18 channels to 32 (more choices). Cable viewers using a DTA (digital tuner) will find 14 more channels in the digital space, located in higher channel numbers between 87 and 123. This set includes C-SPAN 2 & 3; a series of faith and inspirational channels; new public television channels; local weather and more.

How to view Waterloo PEG Channels after Dec. 9, based on three (3) viewing options:

1. Viewers with digital cable service (approx. 50% of Mediacom customers)
 - a. – No changes; your digital cable box tunes-in digital PEG channels
2. Newer televisions with built-in QAM tuners (TVs manufactured since 2004)
 - a. – No additional device needed; tune-in at 79.2, 79.4, 79.5 or 79.6
3. Cable customers with non-digital service (no set-top box) and non-digital televisions
 - a. – A digital tuner (DTA) is needed; get one FREE from Mediacom (modest fee for 2nd DTA use)

	Channel location with digital cable box or DTA	Display with QAM tuner (newer televisions have built-in tuners)
WGAT (Government Access)	15	79.2
WCTV (Public Access)	17	79.4
Educational Access (Hawkeye Community College)	18	79.5
Educational Access (Waterloo Community Schools)	19	79.6

For more information:

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