

Cable Views

Ohio Cable Telecommunications Association

Issue 3 2013

Industry Efforts Boost Online Literacy, Advance STEM Initiatives and More

With schools back in session across Ohio, educators are on the lookout for ways to encourage interest in core STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) subjects and help students incorporate digital technology to enhance their learning experience. At the same time, educators and parents want to know that children are using technology – especially when online – in ways that are productive, safe, and respectful.

As the nation's leader in providing broadband connectivity, and an important source for online content, the cable telecommunications industry understands these needs and concerns, and works with both national and local organizations to advocate for "digital citizenship" while promoting STEM activities.

Teaching Digital Citizenship

Cable in the Classroom (CiC), the cable industry's education foundation, has a long history of encouraging the safe, smart and effective use of technology in education. This approach continues with the entry of a brand new initiative, *InCtrl*, a series of free, video-based lessons that teach digital citizenship.

Digital citizenship empowers students to make thoughtful decisions and develop a sound digital foundation learning how to be safe, smart, and effective participants in a digital world. That means understanding their rights and responsibilities, and realizing the personal and ethical implications of their actions.

Partners in Education: A Local Perspective

Cable companies large and small support programs like *InCtrl* by providing funding for Cable in the Classroom and other non-profits, and by creating their own educational initiatives. Time Warner Cable (TWC), the nation's second largest cable MSO (multi-system operator) established Connect a Million Minds (CMM), a five-year, \$100 million philanthropic initiative to address America's declining proficiency in STEM areas. In locations around Ohio, the CMM initiative supports hands-on learning opportunities that are often the catalyst that sparks a young person's lifelong exploration of science, technology, engineering and math. Along with financial and in-kind support, TWC employees often volunteer their time at science fairs, robotics competitions and other STEM events.

Several Ohio based partnerships demonstrate Time Warner Cable's education commitment:

Invention Convention:

TWC supports Just Think Inc.'s "Invention Convention" event and its associated curriculum in school systems across Ohio. The program is a hands-on STEM enrichment program that teaches creative problem solving skills, innovative thought processing, and 21st

Cable in the Classroom research in 2012 found that 53% of educators felt their schools emphasized digital citizenship education less than they should and only 39% felt well prepared to teach digital citizenship. What teachers wanted more than anything else was lessons and teaching materials.

So Cable in the Classroom developed *InCtrl*, a series of free, standards-based lessons aimed at students in grades 4-8. Each lesson contains videos (one for the teacher and one to be used with the students), background information about a digital citizenship concept, and classroom activity ideas. The lessons, which are matched to Common Core State Standards, can stand alone or be used with others in the series.

InCtrl covers the topics of cyber bullying, ethics/copyright, privacy, media literacy, information literacy, digital citizenship, and communication and collaboration.

InCtrl resources are available, free of charge, on Cable in the Classroom's website and are also suitable for use in after school and other community-based programs. *InCtrl* lessons can also help fulfill the E-Rate requirements of educating students about online behavior and safety.

For more information on *InCtrl* and/or Cable in the Classroom, visit www.ciconline.org.



Century critical thinking to K-8 graders from several Ohio counties. The program challenges participating students to 1) identify a problem; 2) brainstorm solutions; and 3) build and field test their working prototype inventions. The curriculum culminates in an Invention Competition in the local region, and showcases the best selected young student inventors, their prototypes and presentations – evaluating their entries, and awarding scholarships & prizes.

Program on Wheels:

TWC partners with the Cincinnati Museum Center's Programs on Wheels (POW) to bring a broad menu of educational and entertaining programs directly to a classroom or group utilizing the Center's collections, expertise and scope of resources. All programs are aligned with Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky content standards. Programs are done within a 100 mile

With Keith Faber

Ohio Senate President Keith Faber represents the 12th State Senate District, encompassing all of Allen, Champaign, Mercer, and Shelby Counties as well as portions of Auglaize, Darke, and Logan Counties. Prior to his election to the Senate, Senator Faber served three terms in the Ohio House of Representatives. He also represents the Senate on the State Ballot Board, the Joint Legislative Ethics Committee, the Legislative Service Commission Board, and the Redistricting, Reapportionment & Demographic Research Legislative Task force. Senator Faber has been a strong advocate for lower taxes, restraint in state spending and an overall smaller, more responsible government. He worked with Lt. Governor Mary Taylor and Ohio Governor John Kasich to draft Ohio's Common Sense Initiative, which enforces common sense business regulations in Ohio.

Outside of his legislative duties, Faber is the principal partner with Faber and Associates in Celina, a law firm specializing in civil litigation and mediation. He earned his Juris Doctorate from The

Ohio State University in 1991. He did his undergraduate work in public administration/policy with a minor in biology, graduating with honors from Oakland University in Michigan.

Fast Facts:

Family Pastime – Taking the motorhome to a campground for the weekend

Last Movie – *A Bug's Life* with the kids

Reading – *Lincoln*, by Doris Kearns Goodwin

Non-Political Heroes – Police, firefighters and people serving in the military



Jonathon McGee: As its president, what are your goals for the Ohio Senate during the current session?

Keith Faber: The biggest thing we want to do is focus on jobs and growing the economy. The budget was a big piece of that. From that perspective, we did SB 1, which we want to make sure gets finalized and implemented. Our whole focus is growing the economy and focusing on job growth.

JM: And for the General Assembly?

KF: We're going to continue to work on those same things. We still have some regulatory reform to get done with the House, which I've always said is one leg of the three legs of the economic development stool – it's taxes, it's the regulatory environment, and it's also the legal environment at the same time. There are some specific bills we're going to work on getting through. The Governor wants to take another look at tax reform; our ways and means committees in both the House and Senate are going to start up this fall and hopefully make a much more thorough examination of tax reform. That's the big focus, and certainly we'll continue to have a Medicaid reform discussion.

JM: Are there any past Senate presidents or House speakers whose style of leadership you admire and might employ?

KF: All the speakers and presidents I have served under have given me good tips and techniques. They have ranged from the more authoritative to sometimes the more collaborative. I tend toward the collaborative side, so probably presidents Harris and Niehaus. Some people probably thought Harris was a bit more authoritative, and that was probably true the first couple of years, but by the time I got here he was more collaborative and letting the leadership team do more of the

work. I watched a bit of Doug White from my days in the House and he had a pretty good handle on working with people. I would say it's an amalgamation of several.

JM: What particular skills do you feel you bring to this leadership position?

KF: I think the biggest thing you can do is listen and have a relationship with members and try to find collaborative solutions. Maybe my experience as a mediator, where you spend a lot of time finding solutions that are going to work for everybody, has helped put that in focus.

JM: Was that experience helpful in the budget process?

KF: It proves helpful in everything you do in the General Assembly. It's rare that you can say, "This is what we're going to do," with no mediation. When I wasn't in leadership I thought perhaps it happened a lot more at the top, but it doesn't. Most everything you do is collaborative and when you're making decisions on finer points very rarely does the leader say, "Everybody else is for that but we're going to do this." There are times as a leader you have to do that – I call it putting my thumb on the scale – but that's pretty rare.

JM: With the changes brought about by term limits and the movement of legislators between the two bodies, are there still significant differences between the two bodies?

KF: Absolutely. It's culture. It's culture that is borne by the staff but also borne by the institution. To some degree the members shape the institution, but the institution also shapes the members. If you look at the Senate, our freshmen this year have the experience of eight years in Joe Uecker and 28 years

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Telecom Study Committee

S.B. 162 (128th General Assembly, eff. Sept. 2010), which made changes to Ohio's telecommunications law, also created a committee to study the impacts of that legislation on Ohio's telecommunications industry. This committee is to issue a report by September 2014. The committee has now held three hearings and does not plan to meet anymore. At the committee's last meeting on June 25, 2013, the OCTA's consulting economist Joe Gillan made a presentation on behalf of the OCTA. Also presenting at that meeting were representatives of AARP and Connect Ohio. These presentations, along with all other presentations made to the committee, are posted in the "members only" section of the OCTA website.

Pole Attachment Docket

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) opened a docket (Case No. 13-579-AU-ORD) to review its rules for access to poles, ducts, conduits and rights-of-way. On April 17, 2013, Commission staff conducted a workshop to solicit input from interested parties. The PUCO staff reviewed all input received at the workshop and draft rules were released for comment on May 15, 2013. Many interested parties, including the OCTA, filed initial comments regarding the draft rules on July 12 and reply comments on August 29. All comments filed in this docket may be viewed at: <http://dis.puc.state.oh.us/CaseRecord.aspx?CaseNo=13-579-AU-ORD&x=0&y=0>

New PUCO Member

Following PUCO Commissioner Andre Porter's appointment to the Ohio Department of Commerce, the PUCO Nominating Council selected four finalists for consideration by Governor Kasich. From those, he selected attorney Asim Haque, an assistant counsel at Honda North America, Inc., to fill the vacancy. Commissioner Haque is a graduate of Case Western Reserve University, where he received a bachelor's degree in chemistry and political science, and is also a graduate of The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law. He graduated *cum laude* from Case, and has been selected as an Ohio Super Lawyers Rising Star by *Super Lawyers Magazine*. His term began on June 24, 2013, and will end on April 10, 2016.

State Budget

The Ohio House and Senate agreed to a new two-year budget which Governor Kasich signed into law by on June 30, 2013, vetoing 22 line items. Below is a short summary of some highlights in this new state spending plan.

Sales Tax Changes:

First of importance to the cable industry, the as-introduced version of the budget contained a proposal to expand the state sales tax to services, including cable service. This proposal is not in the final budget bill and cable service remains exempt from the state sales tax. The OCTA and our members were successful in conveying our message that our product is already subject to a comparable tax at the local level. Senate and House leadership, and member of the Senate and House finance committees, understood that expanding

the sales tax to these services would amount to double taxation of our customers. Further, the expansion would also have had an adverse impact on our competitiveness with our largest competitor, Direct Broadcast Satellite (DBS), as the DBS product is not subject under federal law to the franchise fee.

Several important changes to the Ohio sales tax were included in the budget as passed. The state *sales tax rate increases from 5.5% to 5.75%* (eff. 9-1-13), and Ohio will become a full member of the streamlined sales tax compact. To become a full member, certain provisions of the streamlined sales tax compact had to be adopted into Ohio code.

Also notable is a *tax on digital goods* (eff. 1-1-14). The language as originally proposed included an exemption for cable service from the digital goods tax. However, upon review of the proposed language with tax counsel, it was determined that the exemption needed modifications to clarify that cable service was not subject to the new sales tax on digital goods. The OCTA worked with the Ohio Department of Taxation, the Governor's Office and leadership of both the House and Senate to draft language acceptable to all parties *that exempts sales to or by a cable service provider, video service provider or broadcaster of cable service or programming or video service or programming*.

In addition to the sales tax expansion to cable service, several other items in the initial budget proposal were kept out of the final product. These include the application of the sales tax to installation charges, repair charges, installation or maintenance of wiring/equipment on customers' premises, advertising time and space, intangibles (such as trademarks, copyrights, franchises), intercompany sales of services, services for resale, programming and retransmission fees, commercial real estate rental payments (including pole charges), professional services (lawyers, accountants, etc.), and insurance premiums. Had these items become taxable, it would have cost OCTA member companies and their customers hundreds of millions of dollars.

Customer Service Standards:

Ohio's video customer service standards were modified in the budget to give video service providers greater flexibility in terminating service for non-payment and fraud. The bill changes the number of days past the due date after which the subscriber may be disconnected for an unpaid bill from 45 to 14 days. Also, the bill provides that a due date may not be established until a date at least 14 days after a bill is issued. Under the new law, service may be disconnected without notice to prevent it being obtained through fraud.

Commercial Activities Tax (CAT):

The budget bill also modifies the method of calculating the CAT due on a taxpayer's first \$1 million in taxable gross receipts. Under current law, all taxpayers who exceed the \$150,000 minimum threshold pay \$150 on the first \$1 million in taxable gross receipts plus 0.26% of all taxable gross receipts in excess of \$1 million.

Under the new law, taxpayers with taxable gross receipts between \$150,000 and \$1 million will pay \$150; between \$1 million and \$2 million will pay \$800; between \$2 million and \$4 million will pay \$2,100; and taxpayers in excess of \$4 million will pay \$2,600. These amounts are in addition to 0.26% due by all taxpayers on taxable gross receipts in excess of \$1 million. Importantly, the CAT rate did not change.

Cable-PAC/PAT Participation

(January 1 – August 15, 2013)

Company	Amount Raised	Goal
Armstrong Cable	\$0	\$2,496
Buckeye CableSystem	\$5,110	\$10,972
Comcast	\$2,625	\$1,430
Cox Communications	\$1,553	\$3,068
G.L.W. Broadband	\$0	\$400
MCTV	\$15,000	\$3,270
Suddenlink	\$0	\$1,400
Total	\$24,288	\$28,288



Cable PAC/PAT Individual Contributions

(January 1 - August 15, 2013)

Buckeye CableSystem

Bonita Ash
Mike Bilik
Florence Buchanan
Laurie Cichy
Tom Dawson
Patrick DeVille
John Ducat
Bonita Ehrhardt
Diane Evans
Lorrie Grup
Pam Kkoontz
Brad Mefferd
Rick Mlcek
Will Ogburn
Steve Piller
Jessica Pitzen
Sarah Riedeman
Charles Riley
Christina Thomas

Kerri Wiley
James Wolsiffer

Comcast

Jim D'Innocenzo

Cox Communications

Gloria DeMarco
Steve Heuser
Dan Jakubowski
Alex Petrofski
Mark Pigman
Mark Preston
Allan Shockey
Craig Smith

MCTV

David Hoffer
Gary Johns

Thank You!

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radius of downtown Cincinnati. For the 2012-2013 school year, Programs on Wheels served 24,512 students.

COSI Field Trips:

Similarly in Central Ohio, TWC underwrites Center of Science and Industry (COSI) field trips and science workshop experiences for middle school students from underserved schools and provides in-kind support for these programs.

Supporting Digital Literacy in Diverse Communities:

Time Warner Cable recently added an Ohio location to a partnership with the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC). The latest "Empower Hispanic America Technology

Center" was opened in April at OCCHA (Organización Cívica y Cultural Hispana Americana), a non-profit organization assisting the Spanish-speaking community in Youngstown, Ohio.

TWC's partnership with LULAC is a multi-year effort to expand broadband access and literacy among the Hispanic community. The Youngstown location is one of four new centers being set up this year by TWC and LULAC. The centers provide job training and search assistance, English language courses, citizenship classes, computer training, safe learning environments for students during after-school hours, and college application and financial aid seminars. Ohio TWC/LULAC centers also include the Su Casa Hispanic Center in Cincinnati, El Barrio in Cleveland, and El Puente in Dayton.

in Randy Gardner. The Senate has a history of having much more deliberative, seasoned, experienced senators for the most part. There are some exceptions, but it tends to show in the deliberative thought process, the way the Senate operates.

JM: Do members coming from the House have trouble adjusting to that?

KF: No. I think if you ask any of the senators who've served in the House, almost to a person they'll say, "I liked the House, but I love the Senate." The big distinction is that you go from being one of 99 to one of 33. You represent three times the district, but more important is that the experience and the support we get from our staff is very different from what we got in the House. In the Senate, the staff works for the members. By and large in the House, it appeared that more often than not the staff seemed to work for the speaker. That's just a dynamic of how you have to make decisions, how you have to run a larger body. But if you ask Joe Uecker or ask Dave Burke or any of the members who served in the House previously, they would tell you that the way the Senate operates is much more empowering.

JM: Could you elaborate a little more on the role the staff plays here?

KF: The Senate has traditionally thought of its caucus staff in particular as much more an institutional staff. In the House, the caucus staff is viewed as a group that serves at the whim of the speaker. As the speaker changes, so generally does the chief of staff and the other senior staff positions. That's not the way the Senate in recent years has operated. In part, it's because the Senate leadership has been staggered and is in a situation where we have some continuity in leadership. So our staff is generally institutional. My chief of staff is somebody Tom Niehaus picked. Now, I had some say in that because I was in Senate leadership at the time. But for the most part, with senior staff like Liz Connolly and Brian Perera, who have both been with the Senate more than 25 years, you tend to get a more institutional perspective. Certainly the Senate president reserves the right to change those staff. When I met with them early on I said this may be one of the few times in a management structure where the chief of staff serves at the pleasure of the other staff people. Neither Brian nor Liz was given the golden handshake. They were, I think, both institutionally essential.

JM: How does the location of your district – including counties bordering on a neighboring state – inform your views on bringing and retaining jobs in Ohio?

KF: It's crucial. We border not just Indiana but have some border issues with Michigan. Indiana has a history of pulling Ohio jobs from our area over into Indiana. Their tax structure, their regulatory structure, their interactions are all factors of how successful Ohio cities are going to be in our area. Now my home county – Mercer County – has the lowest unemployment rate of anywhere in the state. That can be a real blessing, but at times it can be a burden because if you have a low employment rate employers are concerned about locating there because they don't have the labor market they want to draw from. I see Indiana now running into some of those same issues. Some of the changes we've made in the last year are giving us a competitive advantage over Indiana; they've still got some things going for them that give them an edge when we're competing one-on-one. But it makes us even more focused on retaining jobs here in Ohio.

JM: Are there challenges balancing the needs of your district with those of more heavily populated – or concentrated – areas of the state?

KF: Yes. I have to be constant in my vigil to serve as Senate president for all of Ohio, and a state senator for seven counties in west central Ohio. There is a difference in the needs and expectations, but I've always said what's good for Ohio is good for west central Ohio, and Cleveland, and Cincinnati and Columbus and southeastern Ohio. If you focus on the whole, you're going to achieve success for the entire state.

JM: With all the shale play happening in eastern Ohio, what resources in western Ohio do you feel are deserving of more attention?

KF: No question – it's our agriculture. The number one industry in the state of Ohio is agriculture and certainly the leading region in agricultural is west central and northwest Ohio. We're using agricultural products for more than just to eat; we're using them for value-added. We're making plastics, we're making lubricants, we're making all kinds of neat things out of Ohio's ag products. The chemistry industry in Ohio is very much an agricultural industry as well.

JM: Earlier you mentioned regulatory reform as being important for economic development. Can you tell us about any focus the Senate will have on regulatory reform?

KF: We're going to continue to work through regulatory reform. It was our group that started with the Common Sense Initiative and its predecessor, the regulatory reform task force. It's nice to have a governor who understands he's responsible for implementing regulatory reform to try to streamline the process. We're going to continue to do that with SB 3; we're going to work through the process to implement a more streamlined efficient system of regulation. But we're also going to take a look at a process where citizens can have more information on how our regulatory system works and make the JCARR process more efficient.

JM: What accomplishments are you most proud of during your years of public service?

KF: You know, most of what I tell people in the district about what a legislator does is rarely focused on the bills you pass. I remember in my freshman year as a state representative I had more bills passed than anybody else in the General Assembly that year, and I was pretty proud of that. And a lot of what you do as a member is stop bills from being passed that would hurt Ohioans. But the most important thing you do is constituent services – helping people make government work for them in their homes and communities. There's one story I always tell people about. A couple from my district was adopting a baby that was being born in Florida. This baby came 4 or 6 weeks early. The couple had done most of what they needed to be certified for the adoption, but a background check through the Department of Jobs and Services had not been completed. They were in the queue, but were told it would be two to three more weeks before the check was completed. We got involved and, with the help of then-Governor Strickland, were able to get that expedited. It was no easy task and required a number of what I call 'come-to-Jesus meetings' with bureaucrats. Knowing they could bring their baby home, and that we were able to help them complete that process was one of those moments that stand out. I've always emphasized to staff it's easy to get lost in the glamour and glitz of passing a bill and having a bill signing, but the day-to-day work we do to serve our constituents in those seven counties is what counts. That's where the job really is. The other stuff might be the sprinkles, but the cake is the stuff we do every day.

JM: Do you have any questions or advice for our industry?

KF: I think the most important thing your readers can do is make sure they get to know their legislators. Your government affairs staff does a good job pointing out what we need to know about how things are going to affect your industry, but it's important that your readers get to know their legislators and have a chance to communicate with them directly. Because that relationship is very helpful when things come up in the regulation of the industry; they can call their member and say this is how this will affect our business, how it will impact our employees. One of the things I always encourage is to build those relationships early on so that when an issue comes up, I already know about your business and how it works because we've talked before. That interaction is key.



Cable Calendar

CSG 2013 National Conference

www.csqmidwest.org

When: September 19-22, 2013
Where: Kansas City, Missouri

WICT Leadership Conference

www.wict.org

When: October 7-8, 2013
Where: Marriott Marquis
New York, New York

NAMIC - 27th Annual Conference

www.namic.com

When: October 8-9, 2013
Where: Marriott Marquis
New York, New York

SCTE Cable Tec Expo 2013

www.scte.org

When: October 21-24, 2013
Where: Georgia World Congress Center
Atlanta, Georgia

WICT Executive Development Series

www.wict.org

When: October 23-25, 2013
Where: Austin, Texas

NAMIC Leadership Seminar

www.namic.com

When: November 13-15, 2013
Where: Los Angeles, California

NCSL Fall Forum

www.ncsl.org

When: December 4-6, 2013
Where: Marriot Wardman Park
Washington, DC

ALEC States & Nation Policy Summit

www.alec.org

When: December 4-6, 2013
Where: Grand Hyatt Hotel
Washington, DC

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