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High school hosts new cable studio

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Anyone who has been secretly daydreaming about starring in his or her own television show will soon have the perfect chance to make good on those fantasies.

Next week, the town's new cable television renewal license with Comcast will take effect. The centerpiece of the contract is that Comcast will provide 2.7 percent of its gross operating budget or \$1.5 million to the town so it can operate its own cable studio at the new high school.

George Dague, chairman of the town's cable Advisory Committee, has been negotiating contracts with cable companies since the late 70s and he seems pleased with this round and what Comcast is offering.

Prior to this, the town's public access studio was run by Comcast and it wasn't much to speak of. But under the new contract, the town will set up a non-profit organization to run the studio and hopefully enlist some local talent to fill the time.

Dague remembers the days when Bill McEvoy hosted a trivia show and when other locals took to the airwaves to share the thoughts and opinions.

"Hopefully this will be a more active and vibrant studio than what was operated by Comcast," said Dague.

In addition to the yearly budget to keep the studio running Comcast has also agreed to spend \$196,000 on equipment to furnish the new studio with new equipment.

While it all sounds good, Dague has consistently reminded people that there are no free lunches anywhere, even on cable.

Although Comcast's rates were never part of the discussion, Dague and others who worked on the contract said North Andover's 8,880 cable subscribers will see rates rise at the usual rate.

Dague plans to be at the New High School during the move later this month and to make sure the new studio is up and running as soon as possible.

NORTH ANDOVER CITIZEN

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