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WisconsinEye inks long-term agreement with state cable provider

Contract with Charter Communications marks milestone in effort to extend support for nonprofit network

MADISON – A new agreement with one of the state’s largest cable television providers marks an important step forward for WisconsinEye, a nonprofit public affairs network dedicated to engaging citizens with public policy.

The new, long-term agreement with Charter Communications ensures three years of broadcast distribution for WisconsinEye content – including the network’s signature gavel-to-gavel coverage of state government, civic programs and policy-oriented events throughout the state. The previous agreement was an initial, short-term contract needed to secure channel assignments and begin broadcasting.

“We deeply appreciate Charter’s decision to step up in a highly challenging business environment and make this strong commitment to help ensure the future of the valuable public service WisconsinEye provides,” said Chris Long, president and CEO of WisconsinEye. “The growing viewership and public support we’ve received highlight the very real interest citizens have in accessing this kind of information. This is a key milestone in our development and we look forward to a long and collaborative partnership with Charter Communications.”

Tim Vowell, Wisconsin director of government relations for Charter, said the new agreement reflects the company’s commitment to public service programming and its

responsiveness to consumer viewing preferences. Cable television can play an important role in enriching the public dialogue and invigorating civic participation, he said.

“As active members of the communities we serve, our customers have long demonstrated an interest in public affairs programming and we believe WisconsinEye’s unique mission and content merit long-term support,” Vowell said. “During these challenging economic times, we are making every effort to demonstrate our value to our customers and our communities, and WisconsinEye represents an important aspect of our service.”

WisconsinEye broadcasts on Charter Channel 995, Time Warner Channel 163 and via the Internet at www.wiseye.org. Long said WisconsinEye is currently working to also reach a long-term carriage agreement with Time Warner Cable and seeks to provide broad access to the channel through other distributors statewide.

WisconsinEye began broadcasting in May 2007 and operates under a seven-year agreement with the Wisconsin Legislature. The network records all Senate and Assembly floor sessions, many legislative committee meetings, all Supreme Court oral arguments and executive branch events in their entirety and without commentary through 70 digital camera locations inside the state Capitol.

Outside the Capitol, WisconsinEye’s field crews cover news conferences, public hearings, civic events and other forums where public policy matters are discussed and debated.

WisconsinEye, a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation, is unique among the more than two dozen C-SPAN-inspired state networks in that it receives no direct or indirect state support, thus ensuring its editorial independence. In addition to funding from foundations, corporations, private individuals and commercial distributors, WisconsinEye intends to add program sponsorships to its revenue base.

The network’s strategic decisions are guided by the vision of a distinguished, bipartisan board. For more information about WisconsinEye, visit www.wisconsineye.org.