



WCM recognizes Olin Fimreite's lifelong dedication to Trempealeau County

WCM is recognizing Olin Fimreite's lifelong contribution to public access television with the 2016 Friend of Access Award. For well over 30 years, Olin has participated in every aspect of Trempealeau County Community Television and has advocated for community-based media. For the last twenty years, Olin has used his cable access television show, *Discover Trempealeau County*, to talk about the county he knows so well.

"Olin was born and raised in Trempealeau County. He raised his own family here, and as a soil conservationist he came to honor the people and this land from one end to the other, said Wade Britzius, the first director of TCCTV. "His love for this county combined with an endless curiosity and affable personality have made him an ideal host for the show." John Kelly, the current director of TCCTV notes that the popularity of the show has made its catch phrase, "29,000 people in Trempealeau County with 29,000 stories" a familiar saying around the county.

Olin was on hand when, in the words of Kelly, "the first cameras rolled into the studio in 1981." Besides being the driving force behind numerous fundraisers over the years, Olin has encouraged his friends and



Olin Fimreite interviewing Northwoods Brew Pub founder and owner Jerry Bechard for *Discover Trempealeau County*

neighbors to make shows about topics that matter to them. The energy and excitement that Olin has shown for access television through the years has been one of the reasons TCCTV has enjoyed its long-lasting success.

The WCM banquet is being held on Thursday, April 28 at the Sheraton Hotel in Madison. The event begins at 5 pm with a reception. Tickets are \$45 and can be obtained through WCM's website.

WCM thanks legislators for supporting the PEG access television bill

When the State of Wisconsin took over responsibility for local cable franchising in 2008, it eliminated much of the support local governments were getting from cable companies to produce local programming. **SB 783 and AB 1007** introduced this session by Sen. Kathleen Vinehout (D – Alma) and Rep. Gary Hebl (D – Sun Prairie), restores the ability of local governments to decide whether they would like this support and once again asks cable companies to take on more responsibility for supporting access channels.

WCM would like to thank the following 21 sponsors of the "Restoring Wisconsin PEG Channels bill:" Senators Vinehout, Mark Miller (D – Monona), Chris Larson (D – Milwaukee), Julie Lassa (D – Stevens Point), Bob Wirth (D – Kenosha), Fred Risser (D – Madison), Representatives Hebl, Robb Kahl (D – Monona), Andy Jorgensen (D – Milton), Dana Wachs (D – Eau Claire), Chris Danou (D – Trempealeau), Katrina Shankland (D – Stevens Point), LaTonya Johnson (D – Milwaukee), Evan Goyke (D – Milwaukee), Chris Sinicki (D – Milwaukee), Terese Berceau (D – Madison), Debra Kolste (D – Janesville) and JoCasta Zamarripa (D – Milwaukee).

Among the remedies, the bill empowers local governments to assess a dedicated PEG fee on cable subscribers to pay for production equipment and facilities. The legislation requires operators to carry channels without "material degradation" and to list PEG channel programming in the Electronic Program Guide so viewers can find, record and view shows later. Expenses that the current law has shifted to local governments would be shifted back to cable operators such as paying for the cost of transmission equipment. The bill also enables many cities to request a PEG channel from their cable service provider even if they did not have one in 2008.

Significant Community Program

“Mock Crash” helps students tell the story behind preventable accidents

By Deb Brunett, Operations Manager
Merrill Productions

The show and event, *Mock Crash*, is a cooperative community effort that raises awareness about preventable car accidents. The



Merrill Area High School student actors in the show *Mock Crash*.

target audience is young drivers. The production crew is high school students. Merrill Productions, the City of Merrill’s PEG cable access station housed in Merrill Area High School, has produced this show every other year since 2003.

We begin planning meetings early in the school year. These include the students working on the show and members of the Merrill Fire Department, Merrill Police Department, Lincoln County Sheriff’s Department, and staff from the school district. This year we chose the topic “responsible choices behind the wheel” and the program featured a guest speaker, Roger White from Oregon, Wisconsin. Roger’s son was killed in a horrible car accident; he had made the choice to ride with a known bad driver and compounded that bad decision with another – he didn’t put on his seatbelt.

The group discussed various scenarios that could illustrate the consequences of poor decision-making. As planning continued we solicited input from the student and adult actors we had chosen. Several more community agencies became involved to tell the story including Ministry Good Samaritan Health Center, Spirit of Marshfield Airflight, Waid Funeral Home, Lincoln County Coroner, and the Merrill EMT Services.

Merrill’s mock crash production events have brought to the forefront the consequences of drinking and driving, speeding/racing, inattentive driving, and texting and driving. The lessons learned here by the students who wrestle with how to tell an effective story to their peers is a great example of the power of community programming. Over the years, we hope that *Mock Crash* has changed the lives of at least a few. 🍷

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Dan Kummer elected to WCM Hall of Fame

Wisconsin Community Media has elected Dan Kummer, Director of Marshfield Community Television, to the WCM Hall of Fame. This honor is being awarded posthumously to Dan, who passed away earlier this year.

Dan began managing Marshfield Community TV for the City of Marshfield in 1991 with his small business, Vidcom, a production company he formed with a partner, Jay Holbrook. Dan wasn’t always a professional videographer. Until 1985, Dan worked as a physician assistant. According to his wife, Juanita, he had “always had a passion for photography and videography” and finally decided to make a career change. His work as the media director at Faith Christian/Believer’s Church and as the producer of the Word of Life television programs put him in contact with public access television and led to the position he is best known for today, Director of Marshfield Community TV. Dan was a great ambassador for access and the driving force behind MCTV’s move to the Community Plaza II Building, where the studio was able to expand and serve the production needs of the community better.

Dan served seven years on the WCM Board of Directors and enjoyed getting to know and help other access managers. In a letter nominating Dan for the award, Tom Loucks, Director of River Cities Community Access in Wisconsin Rapids and a newcomer to access television said, “Dan invited me to the Marshfield station and from that moment on, he took me under his wing. I am very grateful for the assistance he has given me over the past five years, which led to a great friendship.”

Besides hosting conferences and judging video fests, Dan set an example of political activism, shepherding city resolutions in favor of state and federal bills to gain greater support for PEG television. He also invited legislators to use community TV to talk to their constituents. Over the years, MCTV has interviewed Reps. Bob Kulp (R – Stratford) and John Spiros (R - Marshfield), Sen. Terry Moulton (R – Chippewa Falls), Congressman Sean Duffy (R - WI-7), Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch, and Governor Scott Walker.



Dan Kummer (at right) goofos around with Tom Loucks.

WCM is very proud to welcome Dan into the Hall of Fame. He will be greatly missed. 🍷 📺 📺