

## Rhode Island Division of Public Utilities and Carriers - - Cable Section

### 2009 Dockets

2009-C-1 AMMENDMENTS TO THE CABLE RULES

**(CLOSED)**

The Division proposed several rules changes for consideration that it deemed necessary in response to the growth of competition that has developed in the Rhode Island cable service market over the past several years. Additionally, some of the revisions are designed to modify or repeal existing rules that have been determined to be obsolete. The amendments generally relate to requirements associated with cable company regulatory assessments, the maintenance of business offices, mandatory service outage notifications, public access studios, Service Area Advisory Committees annual reporting requirements, State wide Technical Committees and prohibited practices.

A public hearing was advertised on October 20, 2009 and held on November 4, 2009. The Cable Advocacy Section rendered it's interpretation of the various rules changes and there was public comment from several individuals primarily relating to the issues of public access studio reorganization and cable provider business office reorganization.

The Administrator and Hearing Officer issued an order on December 9, 2009 largely approving the proposed rules changes the highlights of which include: the consolidation of public access studio locations from eight to six due to usage and cost containment issues; the allowance for consolidation of cable provider business offices to a minimum of three, larger more diversified retail centers to better address customer needs of the many, new and varied services offered; increased annual cable company license fees; new service outage reporting requirements; and modifications to the operations of the cable service area advisory committees.

2009-C-2 COX ANNUAL RATE FILING

**(CLOSED)**

On December 1, 2009 Cox filed their annual cable television rate filing. Given that the Federal Communications Commission has formally certified that all cable service areas in Rhode Island, except Area 7 is now subject to "effective competition"( meaning the Division has virtually no regulatory control over the Cox rate and equipment filings as long as they are below the federally mandated maximum permitted rate as calculated on the federal 1205 and 1240 forms), the submittal only includes Service Area 7 which is comprised of the following communities: Portsmouth, Jamestown, Tiverton, Little Compton, Middletown and Newport. Effective competition is defined as two or more full service cable companies licensed and competing in a service area. With the onset of the licensing of Verizon in nearly 80% of the State, only Area 7 currently has a single cable operator.

The Division scheduled and held a public hearing on the matter on February 3, 2010. Cox proposed no increased expanded cable service costs for the year of this filing April 1, 2010 through March 31, 2011. They did propose several reductions in costs for installation work.

From an information standpoint, however, Cox did advise the Division that it would be increasing the cost of expanded cable service for the already approved filing year of April 1, 2009 through March 31, 2010 from \$12.99 to \$16.99. This increase is below the aforementioned maximum permitted rate.

The Division issued an order on February 3, 2010 approving the filing.