

# TVSea

## Year 2001 in Review

### **Awards:**

TVSea may never have a better year than 2001. It won the most prestigious award – **First Place for Overall Excellence in Government Programming** from the National Associations of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA). In all, TVSea won eight awards at NATOA: Overall Excellence in Government Programming was the big prize, but four other TVSea entries won first place honors, two were awarded second place and one finished third in its category. The NATOA awards recognize excellence in cable, multimedia and electronic programming developed by municipal agencies. TVSea was selected the best in competition with almost 1,000 entries from cities, counties, and towns across the United States. TVSea further distinguished itself by winning a number of awards in a second national competition for government programming, The Hometown Video Festival. Clips of the award winning shows are on the accompanying VHS tape and on the CD-ROM version of this report. The individual awards are listed at the end of this report.

### **Relocation and Improvement:**

TVSea relocated to the basement of the Municipal Building while the new Civic Center is under construction. Thanks to our contract engineers, JW Teltronics, and the TVSea staff, the move was accomplished with a minimum of disruption. The channel was off the air for only 4 hours and in less than two weeks all the equipment, staff work areas, and ancillary gear were in our new space. We also improved the engineering design of the channel facilities, added a separate control room for the studio, and created a larger studio space. The picture, sound quality and most importantly the reliability of our TV signal was vastly improved by replacing the obsolete microwave feed to our cable provider with a fiber optic feed. The frequency of video and audio interruptions and signal distortions such as rolling pictures and incorrect brightness levels has dropped to zero.

TVSea survived another kind of move: the February 2001 Seattle earthquake, which happened during our move to the basement. Thanks to the quick thinking of our staff, TVSea recorded footage of the council chambers during the earthquake. This footage was carried by local broadcasters and a number of international cable satellite channels in the days after the earthquake, and TVSea edited the footage into a promotional spot that won one of the NATOA awards.

## **Programming:**

Along with producing award- winning programs, TVSea met its mandate of providing gavel to gavel coverage of all Seattle City Council and Committee meetings, and most of the Mayor's press conferences. This is more than 400 meetings a year and includes meetings and press conferences that are taped in locations other than the Chambers or Mayor's Conference room. In particular, the Neighborhoods, Sustainability & Community Development Committee had all its monthly off-site evening meetings recorded and edited by TVSea staff. It should be noted that all these meetings are "gavel to gavel". While commercial broadcasting will devote a few minutes to a Mayor's press conference on a particularly controversial topic in front of the City Council, TVSea provides complete coverage so citizens can view the daily work of their city government.

In addition to covering "core" city government activities, TVSea also provides full coverage of a number of meetings of other civic groups and organizations around the city. One example of these meetings is the Elevated Transportation Company Council Committee which meets monthly to consider monorail options for Seattle.

## **City Events:**

TVSea covers civic, cultural, and political events within the city of Seattle. This coverage extends the audience for these events well beyond the numbers of people who can attend in person. Partnerships with other organizations such as TVW, Seattle Town Hall, and the Seattle Public Library provide access to events and, in the case of TVW, the opportunity to reach a state wide audience. Rather than list the more than 50 programs about city events carried this year on TVSea, I have provided a few examples:

### **Civic:**

- Town Hall Forum – "Terrorist Strikes, Seattle Engages". In collaboration with Seattle Town Hall and TVW, TVSea played "Terrorist Strikes, Seattle Engages" a series of public conversations with experts and community leaders about issues raised by the September 11 terrorist attack. Some of the topics covered were "America at War: Domestic Consequences," and "(Mis) Understanding Islam, How the West has Failed to Understand the Region and its Culture".
- America at its Best – Legacy of Nesei Patriots – A tribute to two Japanese American World War II veterans, with an introduction by Council Member Jan Drago.
- Human Rights Day – Highlights of the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Human Rights Day event. This year's theme was Global Humanity: A Personal Commitment and featured keynote speaker Loung Ung, author of "First They Killed My Father, a Daughter of Cambodia Remembers."

### **Cultural:**

- Maafa Suite “The Way Out is Back Through” In collaboration with the Seattle Office of Civil Rights, TVSea produced the video version of the Maafa Suite. “Maafa” is a powerful theatrical journey through the history of slavery. The live theatrical performance was recorded by the TVSea crew with three cameras switched live to tape for playback on the channel.
- 2001 McClennan/O’Donnell Living Literature Series, Charles Everett Pace recreates the life of Malcom X. Pace appears in costume and character, speaking as much as possible in the actual language of their characters. TVSea recorded his performance at MOHAI.
- Lessons from the Past: The Lost Elshin Murals – Jacob Elshin's lost WPA murals depict the historic Alki landing. These murals were recently found at West Seattle High School and were restored. TVSea produced a documentary about the restoration process in collaboration with Seattle Public Schools.

### **Political:**

- Video Voters’ Guide - A joint production with King County Civic Television. This primary and general election video guide provides a two minute statement from candidates for Mayor, Seattle City Council, and School Board positions. It is carried on all regional government channels.
- Mayoral and Council Candidate Debates – These debates in different venues around the city provide a close look at the candidates responding to questions from different constituencies. One of the most candid and illuminating took place at Seattle Children’s Theater in a joint TVSea production with Allied Arts of Seattle and Yes! For Seattle.
- Paul Shell: A Mayor’s Legacy – The Mayor and other city leaders look back at the accomplishments of Paul Schell’s term of office.

### **Regularly Scheduled Shows:**

TVSea provides a number of regularly scheduled program times for the following shows:

(Note: Program times are available on TVSea’s website, [www.cityofseattle.net/TVsea](http://www.cityofseattle.net/TVsea))

- Seattle Citizen:  
TVSea’s live viewer call in show with the Mayor. Its new host, Natasha Jones, conducted monthly interviews and telephone questions with Mayor Paul Shell. Seattle Citizen ended the year with Mayor-elect Greg Nickels joining Natasha for questions, comments, and a preview of the City of Seattle’s new administration.
- Seattle Insight:  
This show is also hosted by Natasha Jones and focuses on current events in the City of Seattle. One topic covered this year was “Communities of Color Speak Out” which

featured representatives of Native American, African-American, Filipino, and Latino communities discussing issues like racial profiling, economic opportunity, and neighborhood schools. Other shows highlighted the politics of Seattle's music scene, high school students discussing Mardi Gras and a look at the area's economic recession from a number of perspectives.

- **Seattle Focus:**

TVSea's video magazine ended its series with a November edition which celebrates Seattle's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday. This edition shows where and how the city of Seattle started at Alki point, the memorials at Alki Point now, the rediscovered WPA art, and the perspective of the Duwamish people. Other editions of the magazine covered Global Warming, Teen Music, the EMP, Transportation, Homelessness, and the archaeology of the Cedar River Water Treatment plant site.

- **Beyond the Badge:**

This successful collaboration with the Seattle Police Department continues into its third year with an emphasis on the Police Department's efforts to work with Seattle neighborhoods.

- **Book Talk and Meet the Author:**

These two shows are hosted by the well-know city librarian Nancy Pearl and avid reader Sharon Griggins. This show discusses a wide range of books including travel, poetry, biography and mysteries. Book Talk program times are publicized with a promotional bookmark which is distributed through the libraries.

- **Seattle Spotlight:**

While the shows in this series are too short (4 to 6 minutes) to be regularly scheduled, the shows provide TVSea viewers with timely information on often controversial topics. Produced by Kelly Guenther, who previously worked as an investigative reporter for King 5 TV, this series covered I-63, (the water conservation initiative) and the South Lake Union Development Project. Kelly also shined the Spotlight on many other topics this year including Dangerous Dogs, Pigs on Parade, the popular Tree Giveaway Program, Family Worker Benefits and the WTO Anniversary, just to name a few.

## **The Staff and the Work:**

The work of running a 24/7 cable station and video production unit is carried on by a Station Manager, Operations Manager, 6 video specialists, and a pool of temporary employees. This is a multi-tasking facility where eight people juggle a number of responsibilities on a daily basis. These include producing, shooting, and editing both field and studio programs; recording all council and committee meetings both on and off-site with accurate on-screen text information; programming the channel for playback; solving equipment problems; shooting and editing Mayor's and Council's press conferences; working with the Mayor's and Council's assistants; providing video

production services for internal clients like Seattle City Light and Seattle Public Utilities; monitoring and maintaining the webcasting of TVSea programming; and providing a tape dubbing service for citizens and city employees.

TVSea's station manager, Hap Freund, after putting in four ground breaking years as the first manager of the newly upgraded cable station and video production unit decided to end his tenure with the city. He fulfilled a long standing promise to his family to move to a warmer, drier climate. John Giamberso, Operations Manager now serves as Acting Station Manager. Cynthia Halterman, a seasoned television production professional, with a great sense of humor, was hired in September as a temporary employee to serve as Acting Operations Manager.

## **The Future:**

### **Management Decisions:**

Sometime in the next year, the City of Seattle will initiate a hiring process to fill the vacant Station Manager position.

### **New Look and New Name for TVSea:**

There will be a new look and new name for TVSea in the first quarter of the new year. TVSea will work with Pyramid Communications, a Seattle based Communications and Public Affairs Company to develop a name and look for the channel that better reflects TVSea's future plans to use new technologies to better inform and involve the public. This initiative is one of the recommendations of the Seattle Commission on Electronic Communication. This commission was empanelled by Mayor Paul Shell and Council Member Jim Compton to study how TVSea could use "technology to dramatically expand civic engagement and public discourse by transforming TVSea into a multimedia organization". We expect to implement other recommendations in the Commission's report as resources become available

### **New Facilities:**

TVSea is in an interim space. Once the new City Hall building is completed TVSea will move one more time into its permanent space in the new building. Design and planning work for the TVSea workspace, studio, control rooms, and cameras in the Council Chambers is taking place now. JW Teltronics, our engineering consultants, and the TVSea staff are providing input and direction to the architects. The actual move is scheduled for 2003.

### **More Live Program Streams:**

TVSea provides internet access to its daily programming at [www.cityofseattle.net/tvsea](http://www.cityofseattle.net/tvsea) and also maintains a list of selected programs available to internet users at the same website. In the next year we will add a live streaming of all council and committee meetings that take place in the Chambers to the website.

## **To Sum Up:**

TVSea continues to grow deep roots in the city it serves. Partnerships with many civic organizations are flourishing, which result in a diversity of programs not found on any other channel. The picture and sound quality of the programs on our channel is vastly improved now that we are using fiber optic transmission. Already recognized as the best government cable stations in the nation, TVSea plans to grow and expand into new areas in order to find the best ways to inform and involve Seattle citizens.

### **List of Awards:**

2001 NATOA Government Programming Awards:

Overall Excellence in Government Programming – For excellence in providing a diversity of programming that informs and involves the public in civic life

“Just Like Noah”, a 15 minute documentary chronicling the daily life of one particular homeless man, Noah Gray, won First Place in two categories: Documentary, Social Issues and documentary profile. In one of their categories, every judge gave it a perfect score

“Stuewe’youg W” captures the discovery of ancient Native American artifacts at the recently opened Tolt Water Treatment Plant and shows how archeologists worked hand-in-hand with Seattle Public Utility officials to preserve this important legacy. This program won First Place in the Documentary Event category.

“Experience This!” shared First Place in Documentary – Event category and Second Place in the Innovative category. This video offers viewers a dazzling visual tour of the Experience Music Project.

TVSea’s website (<http://www.cityofseattle.net/tvsea>) won second place for all government websites.

When the Feb.28, 2001 earthquake struck Seattle, TVSea was taping a city council meeting. TVSea utilized this footage in a station promo, which won third place in the station promo category.