

Judge grants Dearborn's request to stop Comcast switch of CDTV from Channel 12 to Channel 915

Dearborn Comcast customers can keep watching CDTV on Channel 12 while legal case is pursued

DEARBORN, Mich. – Dearborn Comcast customers can keep watching CDTV (City of Dearborn TV) on channel 12, a federal judge decided on January 14.

The judge put on hold Comcast's intentions to move CDTV to digital channel 915, which would have required Comcast customers to obtain additional equipment or purchase digital service to view CDTV and other public, educational or government (PEG) channels.

U.S. District Court Judge Victoria A. Roberts granted a request made jointly by the City of Dearborn and Meridian Township for a court order to prevent Comcast's planned switch of PEG channels.

Comcast had planned to make the switch in channel locations for PEG channels in the two communities today (Tuesday, Jan. 15).

"We feel this is a victory for those Dearborn Comcast customers who would have been negatively impacted by Comcast's plan," said Mayor John B. O'Reilly, Jr. "I'm pleased that the status quo will be maintained while we make our case in court that Comcast's actions are not acceptable."

The City of Dearborn opposed the plan by Comcast to move CDTV and other PEG channels from their current locations to channels in the 900 range. That's because it would require many Dearborn customers to take additional steps in order to watch CDTV programming, such as City Council meetings.

To view CDTV on Channel 915, Dearborn Comcast customers need to subscribe to Comcast's digital TV service, have a newer TV that can accept digital signals or get a digital converter box to enable their older TVs to get channels in the 900 range. Customers would need a converter box for every TV for which they wanted to watch PEG channels on.

Comcast said the converter boxes would be provided free of charge of the first year. It is unknown what the cost would be in the future.

Dearborn's legal case argues that this is unfair and would be especially difficult for many senior citizens and low-income residents, who can least afford the financial impact of the change.

The City of Dearborn also opposed the move because it would interfere with the timely distribution of information to residents. CDTV is the primary means the City communicates with its residents who do not have easy access to the internet and who rely on the TV channel for critical news, like when the City declares a snow emergency.

The order temporarily prevents the change in channel locations until the court case is fully adjudicated. Both sides will continue to present arguments to the court. CDTV will remain on channel 12 on Comcast during that process.

The City of Dearborn will keep residents informed about the status of CDTV and other PEG channels on Comcast while the court case proceeds.

Note that some Comcast customers can watch CDTV on channel 12 and channel 915 while the court case continues.

Customers of WOW cable television service are unaffected by this issue, and can continue to watch CDTV on WOW channel 10.