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Cable representative has few answers, no apologies

Charter Communications General Manager David Hudson had no apologies and few answers at Mt. Vernon's council meeting Monday night.

By: Richard Anderkin

Charter Communications General Manager Dave Hudson made no apologies and gave few direct answers to several residents complaining about their television cable service.

Charter has the franchise for T.V. cable in Mt. Vernon with 800 customers and they also serve over 500 customers outside the city limits in Rockcastle County.

The cable company has come under fire lately for poor service and huge rate increases.

Hudson told the 20 or so people in attendance at Mt. Vernon's City Council meeting on Tuesday night that Charter was working very hard to replace old equipment and completely upgrade and rebuild the cable system in Rockcastle County.

"We are making the changes necessary to make our cable system state of the art and all of our customers will benefit from the changes," he said.

Once completed Charter customers will have many more options, including internet capabilities, interactive television and some 170 additional digital stations.

Of course, all of the extras will cost. Hudson did not give a price list or a time frame for completion of the system in Mt. Vernon.

Customer Sharon Gentry told Hudson that she had checked with a friend in Berea who has basically the same service as Charters and that her cable was $32.00.

Currently Charter customers pay over $41.00 per month for 76 stations.

However, Polly Abney pointed out that several of those 76 channels are duplicated and that several of those channels, such as three, 16, 17 and 18 have nothing on them.

She also told Hudson that a service technician told her that channels two, three, four, five and six would always be bad.

Mrs. Abney also told Hudson that she knew Charter was losing customers every day.

"I know a lot of people who are going to satellite because of the poor reception and service," she said.

Mrs. Abney's mother, Zi Graves, told Hudson that he should also do something about the way customers are treated when they call Charter. "They are not very friendly sometimes," she said.

Hudson pointed out that Charter still had a basic service for channels 2-23 for $15.50 a month.

But several people including Curtis Miller pointed out that Charter had moved all of the good cable channels above channel 23 and the basic cable package was only the Lexington stations, a couple of Knoxville stations, shopping channels and Charter's own advertising channels.

Customers also pointed out that nothing is on channel 2, 3, 16,17,18.

"It's pretty useless," council member Gene Cromer said.

Mrs. Abney also told Hudson that the Rockcastle County High School used Kentucky Educational Television a lot in the classroom and could no longer get that station.

Hudson said that some cable customers currently get KET on channel two, but not everyone.

He asked Abney if the High School would be willing to work with Charter in order to get KET on a different channel.

Councilman Jack Renner also pointed out to Hudson that he had promised no rate increases during a former council meeting, and that Hudson had not lived up to his promise.

Hudson said that he did not recall making the statement.

Mayor Karen King told the council that Charter's franchise contract in section 3D says the city can hire an independant company to look at Charter's system and make sure they are doing all they can to provide quality service to their customers.

"If the independent company decides Charter is not living up to the requirements of the franchise we can take steps to revoke the franchise," King said after the meeting.

Councilman Joe Mullins asked Hudson when the upgrade would be completed in the city, but Hudson never gave Mullins a straight answer.

City Attorney John Clontz, who had looked over Charter's franchise agreement with the city, suggested that the city wait until Charter's upgrade was finished and had been inspected before they hire an indepen-

(Cont. to A-10)

Mother Nature surprised Rockcastle County residents Wednesday, when she dumped well over an inch of snow on the county in a short time. School was dismissed at 2 p.m., but as is evidence by the above photo taken at 2:15 p.m. only a handful of buses had made it to Mt. Vernon Elementary School. Students have missed only four days of school this winter.

J. Paul Long will face Danny Ford

Former two-term Lincoln County Attorney J. Paul Long, Jr., a Democrat, announced Friday he is a candidate for the state House of Representatives. Long, 46, filed papers in Frankfort that pit him against 10-term State Rep. Danny Ford, R-Mt. Vernon, in the November election. Neither candidate has opposition in his party primary.

Long said that serving in the state legislature has long been a dream of his, having been involved in politics at the local and state level most of his life. He said the configuration of the district after the legislature reapportioned the districts last Thursday made him believe that this is the time for someone from Lincoln County, the biggest county in the 80th district.

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J. Paul Long is a Democrat candidate for State Representative in the 80th District.

In Lincoln County

Two die in mysterious shooting

By: Tom Moore
Interior Journal

Police and the community are puzzled over a motive and the identity of four masked men who stormed into a Hubble mobile home in Lincoln County on Friday, killing two well-liked young men and wounding two teenage girls.

The shooting of 18-year-old Harold "Bo" Upton, III, of Halls Gap and Ryan Keith Shangraw, 20, Friday evening at Shangraw's rented mobile home has shocked the county and sparked a massive State Police investigation. Police are giving few details of where their investigation stands.

The teenage girls, who suffered superficial shoulder wounds in a hail of at least a dozen gunshots, provided eyewitness accounts, telling police that four black men, wearing bandanas and ski masks, kicked in the door of the mobile home and started shooting.

Three of the men fired shots, investigators say, and one of the three guns believed used in the attack was located Sunday.

Trooper Bill Collins found a military-style M-1 carbine thrown into a deep ditch in the Hubble area. The rifle was sent to the Kentucky State Police Crime Laboratory in Frankfort on Monday to check for evidence. Investigators also found two ban-

(Cont. to A-12)

Mayor King files for re-election

Mt. Vernon Mayor Karen King has filed for re-election.

King, 48, filed her papers last Wednesday, joining three other hopefuls, who have also filed for the November General Election.

King, who served on the council for several years before being elected Mayor in 1998, said she was seeking re-election in order to make sure some unfinished business started during her administration was completed.

"I feel like the City of Mt. Vernon has made progress and I would like to

(Cont. to A-10)

Mt. Vernon Mayor Karen King has filed for re-election.

Mt. Vernon spent $352,000 more than budgeted

During the fiscal year of 1999, which ended on June 30th the City of Mt. Vernon spent $352,000 more than they had budgeted, according to local CPA Joe Clontz.

Clontz presented a rough draft of the 1999 budget to the Mt. Vernon City Council on Monday night.

During the 98-99 fiscal year the city took in $120,000 from property taxes, license and permits generated $43,314, $70,500 was realized from franchise fees, $14,000 came from the state, $39,000 in grant money came in and $29,650 was received from interest and other sources.

However, the city spent $88,000 on general government expenses when they had budget only $45,500.

They also spent $266,403 on the city park on Williams Street when they had budgeted nothing.

The city also spent $339,000 in the police department when they had budgeted only $275,500.

The city also spent $11,000 on the fire department when they had not budgeted anything.

Clontz said the city made ends meet by borrowing $390,000 for the park and using the difference between the $266,000 and $390,000 to make their books balance in 1999.

The audit also showed the water and sewer department with a balance of $562,000 in their unrestricted fund and $1.2million in the restricted fund, which is used for debt retirement and operations.

The city currently owes over $5 million dollars on water and sewer projects.

"That money was eventually paid back to the park loan," he said.

Councilman Joe Mullins asked that the council get a copy of a monthly financial statement from city clerk Kaye Rader, at each meeting.

"We really never know what comes in and what goes out - it would be nice for a change," he said.

Mayor King and Rader agreed to provide the council with a monthly financial statement beginning at the next meeting.

Hayes gets 12 months

James E. "Bubba" Hayes, 20, of Brodhead, was convicted in Rockcastle District Court Monday, and sentenced to 12 months in the Rockcastle County Detention Center.

According to County Attorney Jeffrey T. Burdette, Hayes entered guilty pleas to Obstructing Governmental Operations, Receiving Stolen Property and Possession of a Controlled Substance Second Degree in court on Monday.

Hayes was arrested last week after Officer Barry Adams of the Mt. Vernon Police Department received a tip that Hayes was responsible for interfering with Emergency 911 operations by use of a police radio.

Kentucky State Trooper Lafe Owens arrested Hayes after observ-

(Cont. to A-10)

Rockcastle County Judge-Executive Buzz Carloftis presented Mrs. Anna Rose Mullins with two plaques on Tuesday night in recognition of her 30 years of service to the county. Mrs. Mullins has worked as Administrative Assistant under five county judges: Charles Carter, Hubert Thacker, Bob Jasper, Roland Mullins and Carloftis. During her 30 years, Mrs. Mullins has never taken a week long vacation. Several people attended a reception in her honor.