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Vermont Access Network Holds Annual Meeting at RETN and VCAM in Burlington

The Vermont Access Network, the organization of 26 Public Educational Government (PEG) media centers, held its annual meeting on May 6, 2016 at Regional Educational Television Network (RETN) and Vermont Community Access Media (VCAM) in Burlington. Fifty staff and board members from 16 stations and four industry vendors took part in the day-long meeting.

"It was a real treat to co-host the VAN annual meeting this year with our friends at RETN, and to see such an impressive turnout," notes Seth Mobley, VCAM Executive Director. Jess Wilson, Interim Executive Director for RETN adds: "RETN welcomed the opportunity to catch up with all our access colleagues from around the state. What a great opportunity for deep conversation and to learn from each other. As always, I was so impressed with the amount of great work going on at community media centers in Vermont."

The day started with a business meeting, including the approval of the VAN budget and election of officers. On the regulatory front, there was an update on VAN's efforts to keep PEG concerns at the forefront during Comcast's Certificate of Public Good renewal. There was a moment of silence for Mike Valentine, of PEG TV in Rutland, and Doug Dunbebin, of RETN, whose recent losses resonated in the VAN community. Scott Campitelli, longtime RETN Executive Director, was applauded for his years of PEG work, after being appointed into a new position at VT PBS. Two short films by the winners of the first-ever VAN Video Challenge were shown.

In the afternoon, there were vendor presentations and workshops on topics such as maximizing social media, VAN's regulatory work, the possibility of a regional/statewide network and live streaming tips. Companies Access A/V, Audio Video Corporation, TelVue Corporation and DNR/Tightrope Media Systems showed off their latest gear and broadcast platforms.

VAN community media centers attending the event included CAT-TV, CATV, CCTV, Ch37, CVTV, FACT, GNAT-TV, LCATV, LPCTV, MCTV, MMCTV, NEK-TV, NWA-TV, ORCA Media, RETN, SAPA-TV and VCAM.

VCAM's Seth Mobley concludes of the event: "It was clear throughout all of the breakout sessions and in many conversations that popped up around the studio that many people around the state are doing great work on behalf of PEG, ensuring our media centers are a go-to resource for our communities well into the future." The numbers back him up. There are now 66 Vermont PEG channels, with 39,785 original programs made in 2014.

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