

Watsonville Community Television



Tarmo Hannula

John Burdick, video instructor at Watsonville High School, tests equipment, hook-ups and sound in the video control room Monday at Watsonville High School with his son, Kirk (on the screen). Burdick is also Chairman for Cable Television Committee.

Local cable programming kicks off tonight

By LIA MARTIN

STAFF WRITER

WATSONVILLE — Long awaited local community television programming will begin broadcasting today from 6 to 10 p.m. on Sonic Cable TV Channel 19 (EWTN).

"It's going to improve communication and understanding," said Carlos Palacios, interim city manager. "When they do the upgrade, there would be a possibility of more hours and programming being added."

The programming will start with an opening welcome from Watsonville Mayor Al Alcalá and John Burdick, chairman of the city's Cable Television Committee and acting station manager for Watsonville Community Television.

Following the introduction, three shows will follow — the

Watsonville Public Library's 1996 Ethnic Series, Watsonville High School graduating class good-byes, followed by the "Stars of the Future" musical that was presented in March at Watsonville High.

Burdick said that concluding the programming tonight would be an informational segment on the "nuts and bolts" of what the local TV programming would mean to the community. It will include information on how the public can take advantage of community network programming and how they can benefit from it.

For now, general public access is not available. But cable committee members hope that will become an option after a new 15-year franchise agreement between the city and Sonic Cable is completed. City officials expect to sign a new contract later this summer.

Programming will be videotaped

at the Watsonville High School Video Academy and will mainly consist of city informational shows and variety shows produced by high school students.

Down the road, Watsonville City Council meetings could be televised live, as other city councils do in the rest of the county, said city Mayor Al Alcalá.

When asked what he thought the local programming would bring to the community, Alcalá said, "People love to watch TV. There is quite a bit of information that our citizens need to see that will be available to them now."

Four hours of programming will be scheduled between the hours of 6 and 10 p.m. on Tuesday on Channel 19 and Friday on Channel 16 to give the city eight hours total programming a week.

The city council has passed a resolution banning nudity, foul lan-

guage and medical procedures in the programming.

Local viewers had complained last month that the local community shows would interrupt their religious shows on Eternal Word Television Network, Sonic Cable channel 19. In a meeting that lasted over two hours, residents, speaking in English and in Spanish, told Sonic representatives that they wanted their religious shows not to be interrupted.

After almost 50 local residents spoke out at the public meeting June 25, the city's cable television committee worked out a solution that limits the number of hours of broadcast and puts the programming on two channels rather than one.

While EWTN Channel 19 shows religious programs, Sonic uses Channel 16 to show C-SPAN and pay-per-view programs.