

Chamber sounded on cable TV

Aptos Chamber of Commerce members took a ho-hum attitude Thursday as to what features a rebuilt cable television system ought to provide, but reacted emphatically to a proposal by county supervisors to register cable TV lobbyists.

Chamber members listened politely to Tom Karwin, who was hired by the county and the city of Santa Cruz to find out what the public's desires are in television programming, explain the franchise renewal process now underway with Group W Cable. Group W acquired the system in northern Santa Cruz County as well as Aptos and La Selva Beach from Teleprompter last spring.

Karwin said the franchise is, potentially, a lucrative one and could produce more than \$200 million in revenue during its 15-year-year life.

Directors said they would consider sending a letter to Karwin supporting a "state of the art" system.

Past Chamber President Bob McKenzie succeeded in getting directors to oppose a proposed county ordinance that would require any representatives of Group W or competing cable companies to register with the county as lobbyists and file periodic financial disclosure statements.

"It seems ludicrous," McKenzie said, "that a supervisor can't trust himself or a fellow supervisor."

Karwin told the Chamber that the county ordinance is modeled on an ordinance in Palo Alto where several companies are competing for a new franchise in that city. He said there have been cases in other cities where representatives of several companies competing for franchises have been accused of questionable practices.

Realtor Hugh Hudson said there was no need for the registration ordinance here since there isn't a competitive situation among companies as in Palo Alto.

Others in the audience said they felt it was a anti-business, punitive measure aimed by the board at Group W.