

Cable TV

Adult TV programming debated in Scotts Valley

By MARIA GAURA
Sentinel staff writer

SCOTTS VALLEY — Saying that children are now at risk of seeing pornography on television, a group of city residents protested the recent introduction of pay-for-view "adult programming" at Wednesday's City Council meeting.

But Stewart Butler, general manager of United Artists Cable Television of Santa Cruz, said parents have plenty of tools to keep children from seeing inappropriate programs. Not only must a customer call and request adult programs, but devices issued by the cable company allow parents to "lock

out" certain channels with a four-digit secret code.

And if a wily teen-ager somehow manages to discover his parents' secret code and order a racy movie, an extra charge will appear on the cable bill at the end of the month, ensuring discovery, Butler said.

"It's an issue of choice," Butler said. "I've also gotten complaints about the religious programming we show. I've had people come up and ask, 'Why do you show that garbage?' But I feel that no one's forcing you to watch it."

Pay-for-view adult programs became available to Scotts Valley cable customers July 2, Butler said.

The Playboy and Rendezvous adult-oriented channels are two of a number of new offerings made available by recent upgrades in the area's cable system.

Resident Lynne Rodriguez claimed that security devices to restrict television viewing are not enough to protect children from adult programming.

"There is no absolute protection from pornography" on cable television, she said. "Children can be exposed when they're not in their own home."

Resident Noel Smith said Scotts Valley could pressure the cable company to remove adult programming from the entire county cable

system.

"Since it's a countywide system, this is a marvelous opportunity for Scotts Valley to provide protection for the county as a whole," said Smith. "If we can bar (adult programming) here, we can bar it from the system as a whole."

Mike Shulman, an engineer and city planning commissioner, called the group's demands censorship.

"I object to this censorship," Shulman said. "Perhaps it's risky to stand up here and support this, perhaps it implies that I participate in these activities. But I believe I represent a silent majority. I believe that this can be resolved in a business manner. If there are in-

sufficient subscriptions to this service, they're going to drop it."

City Councilman Joe Miller dismissed charges that banning adult programs is censorship, and said that pornography encourages violence against women.

"We can't regulate what you show, unfortunately," Miller said.

Butler agreed that the council has no power to force changes in programming, but he said he would take community concerns under consideration. But he added that so far, Scotts Valley residents seem to be pretty interested in adult programming. Between July 2 and 17, city residents have called in orders for 136 adult-oriented

programs, he said.

"We'll drop it if there's no interest," he said.

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