

Getting the voice of the people out to the people...that is a huge part of public access television. But is it going away?

The governor and Legislature cut out franchise fees when they approved a bill in 2008 to let cable operators negotiate service agreements with the state instead of each local community. A-T-and-T pushed for the change, saying it would be easier for them to expand their T-V service, compete with cable firms, and drive down rates for everyone, something an area lawmaker says has not happened.

Senate Democrat Kathleen Vinehout of Alma says the loss of the cable franchise fees will mean fewer employees and a loss of service. Vinehout tried unsuccessfully in the last session to restore those fees.