



# A Century of Service Centennial

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## HISTORY OF THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Two-way communication between Clark County and its citizens has been important since the county's inception. In February 1997, the Office of Public Communications, an arm of the County Manager's Office, was formed to improve that communication and to interact with a proliferation of news media outlets and reporters requesting information. The Office of Public Communication coordinates the dissemination of information to the community and the news media about county activities, services and programs through media and public outreach, public information campaigns and other methods. The office operates Clark County Television (CCTV) Channel 4, oversees county Web site content, produces and disseminates electronic newsletters, builds capacity for and plans for effective communications with the community in the event of an emergency, and oversees the main county telephone operator switchboard. These activities support the county's Guiding Values and Principles, which stress traits such as accountability, integrity and "open and inclusive government."

## OFFICE OF PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS MILESTONES

- |                            |                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| July 21, 1981              | The County Commission enters into a Community Antenna Television System (CATV) franchise agreement with Prime Cable TV, the local cable provider.                                        |
| August 1990                | Communications students from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas begin taping and cablecasting recordings of the meetings of the County Commission on local cable television Channel 31. |
| March 1990 to January 1993 | Gregory W. Ferraro hired to oversee public communications as assistant to the county manager.                                                                                            |

June 1991	The County Commission formally requests Prime Cable TV to comply with contractual agreements entered into with the county to provide a government access channel and an emergency broadcast channel for county use. "We believe a dedicated government channel is essential to convey local government's actions to the people and to invite greater public participation in the democratic process," County Commission Chairman Jay Bingham says. "Additionally, it is critical we establish a functional and reliable emergency broadcast signal in the event of a major disaster in the area."
January 1993 to May 1996	Vicki L. Taylor hired to oversee public communications as assistant to the county manager. First crisis communication plan developed.
April 1993	Following the Rodney King jury verdict and subsequent civil unrest, a second federal trial was held. To improve dialogue with the community and prevent a repeat of the civil unrest, the first-ever "rumor control" program in which a telephone bank is set up to respond to citizen inquiries was created.
1995	A new orange-and-blue county logo is unveiled, coinciding with the opening of a new county government center. It supplements the county seal but is marketed as the primary symbol of county government.
March 1995	Prime Cable, forerunner to today's Cox Communications, provides equipment, including three video cameras, for the launch of a county cable television station.
June 1995	The county's first Web site is unveiled, featuring information about five departments – Administrative Services, Human Resources, Fire, the County Commission and the District Attorney's Office – and the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, a separate legal entity. Visitor counts reach 10,000 a month. Mike Wheeler is named the county's first Webmaster.
June 1996 to March 1999	Thomas "Tom" G. Warden, an anchor/reporter for KLAS TV Channel 8, hired to oversee public communications as assistant to the county manager. His title is changed to director in February 1997 with the formation of the Office of Public Communications.
October 1996 to January 2008	David Linder, formerly managing editor for KLAS TV Channel 8 and a longtime television newsman in major West Coast markets, serves as cable station manager, the station's first.
February	The Office of Public Communications is formed within the County Manager's Office. Tom Warden serves as its first director, reporting to County Manager Pat Shalmy, and its employees number six. The

1997	positions were the director, a public information officer, a cable station manager, a TV writer/producer and an administrative specialist.
February 18, 1997	The County Commission authorizes the activation of the Clark County Community Channel, called <i>C4</i> for short. The board directs staff to meet with representatives of the entities of the Regional Telecommunications Jurisdictions and the UNLV Hank Greenspun School of Communications to develop a contract whereby available time on the channel would be shared. The interlocal agreement with UNLV is completed and provides 14 hours of programming time per week, an allocation comparable to UNLV programming. Clark County hires three people to run the station under Public Communications Director Tom Warden: Cable Station Manager David Linder, TV Writer-Producer Randy Swallow and Cable Production Specialist Garrett Breit. Only one regularly scheduled program, "Clark County Chronicles," was produced initially. The "studios" were housed in 600 square feet of office space – roughly the size of a three-car garage – on the first floor of the county Government Center near the training rooms.
Early 1997	County Commission meetings are aired live on local television for the first time. This increased public scrutiny marks the first time that the meetings of a local government body are available live to a mass local audience.
May 27, 1997	A new world-class county Web site, designed under the direction of Public Communications and implemented from scratch by Information Technology staff, is unveiled at <a href="http://www.co.clark.nv.us">www.co.clark.nv.us</a> . It features a sandstone design revolving around 12 big buttons representing all county services, includes content from 30-plus departments, and features new online transactions, including the ability to search Assessor's Office information about parcels of land and Recorder's Office records. The new website wins multiple awards.
July 1998	The county's primary graphic artist, Diane Pink, is moved from the Department of Finance to the Office of Public Communications.
May 1999 to September 2001	Douglas "Doug" M. Bradford, former city of Las Vegas communications director and KLAS TV Channel 8 news reporter, serves as director.
June 1999	<i>Clark County Connection</i> , a live call-in show, debuts using UNLV television studios and communications students for outreach to the community.
July 1999	To improve communication with residents, a quarterly hard-copy newsletter called <i>Sandstone</i> is mailed to every household in the county.

August 1999	Clark County enters into an inter-local agreement with the Regional Transportation Commission and the Regional Flood Control District so that Channel 4 staff may use 1,900 square feet of the RTC/RFCD building, located next to the county Government Center, for a studio and office space. The county agrees to air RTC and Flood Control District programming as part of the inter-local agreement.
2000	In anticipation of major media coverage stemming from the trial for the murder of casino mogul Ted Binion, <i>Media Guidelines for High Profile Cases</i> is created as a tool for better managing courthouse media and enhancing the flow of information to the media and the public.
April 2000	Three new positions are filled at Channel 4 following the negotiation of an agreement in which the Aviation Department and University Medical Center provide funding in exchange for airing two new shows: <i>Flight Path</i> and <i>UMC Digest</i> . The positions exist so long as funding remains in place, allowing Channel 4 to leverage them for providing additional programming and video support to the organization.
About 2000	<a href="http://www.accessclarkcounty.com">www.accessclarkcounty.com</a> becomes the county's official Web site. Citizens may still reach the county Web site from <a href="http://www.co.clark.nv.us">www.co.clark.nv.us</a> .
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September 2001 to May 2002	Gwen Castaldi, former KVBC TV Channel 3 news anchor and longtime local journalist, serves as director.
January 2002	Channel 4 programming available for video-streaming on the county Web site for the first time. The limit to simultaneous viewings is initially 100. On-demand playing of video is already available on the county Web site.
April 2002	Closed captioning for the hearing impaired becomes available for all County Commission meetings being aired on Channel 4.
May 2002 to present	Erik Pappa, former Las Vegas Sun newspaper reporter, KLAS TV Channel 8 planning editor and city of Las Vegas public information officer, serves as director.
August 2002	County Commission meetings, for the first time, are cablecast in closed captioning for the hearing-impaired.

January 2003	The quarterly hard-copy newsletter that is mailed to every household in the county, Sandstone, is converted into a monthly electronic newsletter called Sandstone Online, which saves the county more than \$1 million annually.
February 2003	A community survey of 500 community residents showed that half of respondents watched Channel 4 and offered favorable ratings for its usefulness. When asked to rate the usefulness of the information using a 5-point scale where 5 was the most useful, respondents offered a mean score of 3.55. Over half (55 percent) of those who watched Channel 4 rated the usefulness favorably, as a four or five.
Spring 2003	A review of CCTV programming prompts several changes. A new award-winning show that tells people what's happening in their neighborhoods, called <i>In Your Neighborhood</i> , is launched and features county commissioners. A show about animals and Animal Control, called <i>County Critters</i> , is also launched. A parks and recreation show, called <i>What We Do</i> , is reformulated so that it focuses strictly on recreational and cultural amenities and events available to citizens.
Spring 2003	The name of the station is changed from <i>Clark County Community Channel (C4)</i> to <i>Clark County Television (CCTV)</i> , described as more accurately reflective of what the station is all about.
April 2004	County's two full-time and one part-time operator are moved from the Department of Information Technology to the Office of Public Communications.
2004	A countywide Emergency Communications Plan is created and unveiled.
June 2004	CCTV work space is expanded from 1,900 square feet in a corner of the Regional Transportation Commission building at 600 S. Grand Central Parkway to 2,550-square feet, which frees up bottlenecks in work flow and allows staff to operate more efficiently. The expansion includes six edit bays and space for offices and storage.
2005	Cox Communications reaches 759,174 viewers in 447,465 households across Clark County for 59-percent market penetration.
2006	Office processes more than 1,600 separate media requests and more than 600 requests from citizens. It also produces 95 separate television shows and 44 video projects used for training and other off-air purposes.
May 2006	CCTV recognized for third consecutive year for "overall excellence" and being the best station of its class in the states of California and Nevada. The recognition comes from SCAN-Natoa (States of California and

Nevada Chapter of the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors).

December  
2006

The county Web site sees 32.7 million hits and 460,000 separate visitors for the month. County Internet site features more than 7,000 pages and 9,000 files, which are viewed by an average of 22,000 unique visitors per day.

August  
2007

David Linder inducted into the Nevada Broadcasters' Hall of Fame.

2007

Bill to turn cable television franchising authority over to the state passed by state Legislature, paving the way for CCTV to moved to another location on the television dial.

September  
2007

An updated countywide Emergency Communications Plan is unveiled.

January  
2008 to  
present

Joseph "Skip" Kelley, a 1999 inductee into the Nevada Broadcasters Hall of Fame, serves as cable station manager.

February 1,  
2008

The county's Web Governance Committee, chaired by the director of Public Communications, issues an RFP for the redesign of the county website – the largest governmental site in Nevada with more than 7,000 pages and 9,000 files, viewed by an average of 22,000 unique visitors per day. The committee also develops Web site policies and procedures.