



August 19, 2011

CABLE TV SHOW PROFILING SERVICES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, EDUCATION TO PREMIERE

“Catawba Communities,” a monthly show which will feature information about programs and services provided by local governments, school systems and associated agencies across Catawba County, will premiere on Charter Communications’ Government Channel (Channel 3) on Tuesday evening, August 23, 2011, at 8:00 p.m.

The program, which has been in development for the past six months, is a fast-paced look at services, and will include four main features in each episode, with smaller segments in between the features.

The first program will include information about economic development and job creation in the county; the use of “smart manufacturing” by a Hickory company to compete in the global economy; the parks systems in Hickory, Newton, and the county; and suggestions on how parents can support their children’s education as school begins from Lamar Mitchell, Executive Director of Champions of Education.

Although the idea for such a show has been discussed by local governments for many years, momentum for “Catawba Communities” began in late 2010 when officials with Charter Communications’ Hickory staff offered to provide assistance to create an interesting program in a very cost-efficient manner. A group of the managers of the cities, towns, and county government collectively asked Dave Hardin - Public Information Officer for Catawba County, Gary Herman - Public Information Officer for the City of Newton, and Mandy Pitts - Communications Director for the City of Hickory, to fully explore the idea and create pilot programs.

“We’re all very excited to bring ‘Catawba Communities’ to the air and we believe it’s going to be a fantastic avenue for bringing citizens information about what governments are doing, the various things that create the quality of life we have here in our community, and upcoming events,” Hardin said. “It really wouldn’t have been possible without a lot of hard work by Chris Sykes, Creative Services Director for Charter Communications in Hickory, who has already put in many hours advising us on the best ways to structure the show, and shooting the segments and editing them together into the final program.”

Newton PIO Gary Herman said the program is another useful method of communicating with local residents.

“We continually strive to improve our communications and customer service, and this television program is an enhancement to our efforts,” Herman said. “I encourage residents throughout Catawba County to tune in and learn more about our great communities.”

Most of the city and town governments in the county have expressed an interest in being included in future shows, as have the public school systems, CVCC, the Catawba County Economic Development Corporation, and the Greater Hickory Convention and Visitor’s Bureau.

Hickory Communications Director Mandy Pitts said she believes the public will truly enjoy this new program as they learn more about the communities within Catawba County.

“I feel confident that Catawba Communities is going to be a show that citizens of all ages will enjoy,” Pitts said. “There is an endless list of topics, services, programs, events, and initiatives that we want to highlight to our community and I am certain that it will become a ‘must see’ every month.”

“Catawba Communities” will air each week at 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday evenings on Cable Channel 3 in Catawba County. Charter Communications will also air the program at random hours around the clock each day to ensure that citizens will have ample opportunity to view it.