

Disney adds new \$1 hike in cable rate

Paul Glasser

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The Frankfort Plant Board approved a monthly rate increase of \$1 Tuesday as part of a plan to add the Disney Channel to basic cable programming.

The board approved an agreement negotiated by the National Cable Television Cooperative that would add Disney to basic cable and renew the contract for ABC Family. The agreement would also require the Plant Board to offer SOAPnet and Toon Disney on digital cable, but no rate increase was necessary.

A recent customer survey indicated that 85 percent of families with children under the age of 13 would support a rate increase to add Disney to basic cable. Cable Superintendent John Higginbotham said ABC Family premiered "High School Musical 2" on Friday, which received the highest-ever ratings on basic cable. More than 17 million viewers tuned in to watch the TV movie.

The board had previously approved a rate increase of \$1.25 for Fox Sports South and the monthly cost of basic cable will rise to \$32.70 on Nov. 1. A public hearing for both rate increases is scheduled for the next board meeting on Sept. 18.

Effective Sept. 1, Plant Board customers will be able to subscribe to a broadcast basic programming tier for \$19. The option will include local broadcast channels from Lexington and Louisville, as well as weather, QVC, Cable 10 and video classifieds.

The Plant Board also adopted a net metering policy for customers who wish to install their own solar, wind or hydroelectric power generator and connect to the power grid. Net metering is one of the standards required in the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and a public hearing on the issue will be conducted at next month's Plant Board meeting.

Chief Electrical Engineer Vent Foster said customers will need to submit a completed notification form 30 days before they plan on connecting to the grid. Generators under 15 kilowatts will be reimbursed at the retail rate. Generators over the limit will be examined on a case-by-case basis and reimbursed at the wholesale rate.

If customers deliver more energy to the grid than they consume, they will receive credit on their next monthly bill. However, Foster said the Plant Board is not required to convert credits into cash.

The city of Berea has offered net metering since 2003 and only three customers are participating. The highest annual rebate for a customer in Berea was \$66.

"These systems are not money makers," said General Manager Warner Caines.

Customers who wish to connect a generator to the power grid will also be required to carry \$100,000 in liability insurance. Board attorney Hance Price initially recommended \$1 million in coverage, but board member Ann Wingrove expressed concern that such a policy might not be included in normal homeowner's insurance. "You never know how much insurance is enough until something happens," Price said.

Board member Mike Dudgeon said the insurance requirement should be comparable to the \$100,000 limit enforced by Berea. Requiring \$1 million liability

**insurance could have a chilling effect, he said.
"It could make the cost prohibitive," he said.**