

Give Your Residents a Choice of TV Providers
By Gary Langendoen, CPM

Cable TV rates increased by 36% while inflation increased 12% from 1997 to 2002, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Adelphia has increased their "basic" cable rate by 25%. These rate increases along with better picture quality and programming packages explain why satellite TV companies signed up over 20 million subscribers over the past few years, taking most of those subscribers from cable companies. In the first quarter of 2004, DIRECTV added 460,000 new subscribers bringing its subscriber count to over 13 million, as evidenced by satellite dishes popping up all over apartment buildings. YOUR apartment buildings!

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While these satellite dishes may be an eyesore to apartment owners, they are the result of decades of poor cable service. Now, there is a solution that lets the apartment owner get rid of unwanted dishes and allows an apartment property to offer residents the choice of the cable company or satellite TV service.

Placing one small satellite dish on any size property and using the property's existing cable wiring allows each unit to receive both cable and satellite TV signals. The property owns the TV wiring inside the buildings according to FCC regulations and the digital satellite TV signals are at a higher frequency range than cable signals allowing both signals to ride on the same wire and not interfere with each other.

There are companies that will add satellite TV to a property at no cost to the owner and it helps the property avoid problems like residents drilling holes in the roof voiding a warranty or putting holes in the property causing mold or asbestos concerns. Residents like having the choice of TV providers and they view satellite TV as a valuable property amenity. The property needs to review any existing cable company contract and see it prevents or allows competition. If the property doesn't have a contract that prevents competition, then the satellite TV service can be easily added. Once the property has a satellite system installed, residents can take their dishes down and their satellite TV programming using the property's dish. Also, satellite dishes need to face south to receive programming. There are many residents that want satellite TV, but don't have it due to their balconies facing north. Now, these residents won't have to move to receive this service.

The satellite companies continue to add subscribers because they offer digital quality local channels plus over 200 other channels including premium, pay-per-view and exclusive programming. Unlike a cable company where a resident rents their set top boxes, with satellite TV, the resident can take their set top boxes with them when they move and can receive free installation in their new home. In life, we learn that having choices is a good thing and dealing with monopolies is often unpleasant. Now, owners have the ability to provide residents with the amenity of satellite TV and giving them a choice of TV providers at no cost to the property.

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