Excellence in Public/Private Partnership Awards
Executive Summary
City of Germantown-Shelby County Schools-Comcast

A triple partnership among the City of Germantown (TN), Shelby County Schools and Comcast Cable funds a unique, award-winning community access television operation, a remarkable candidate for the Excellence in Public/Private Partnership Award.

Germantown High School Television/Germantown Community Television (GHS-TV/GC-TV) is a 24-hour community access and public education government (PEG) station, wholly operated by high school students. The GHS-TV students produce and live telecast the City’s Board of Mayor and Aldermen meetings twice monthly, along with monthly meetings of the Planning Commission and Design Review Commission. The students produce and tape the mayor’s monthly 30-minute Spotlight on Germantown show, as well as eight other community access programs each month. The students also produce commercial work, documentaries and news, providing superior service delivery to a small market community that could not otherwise manage or financially support such a service (See Supporting Document 1).

Begun in 1982, with initial funding from the local cable provider to establish a small educational channel, GHS-TV assumed additional responsibility for all PEG programming in 1984. The arrangement met the obligation of the cable franchise holder to offer community access programming, deferring the production responsibility to a student-run operation and providing the substantial equipment and studio investment to the school. Over the years, GHS-TV evolved into GC-TV and is in transformation now to an all-digital state of the art production facility/studio. It is also pursuing an ambitious plan to become a HDTV provider within the next five years.

The GC-TV model allows students to interactively learn the broadcast industry, meets needs of the City to communicate general government and public safety information to the public, and provides a depth of programming unmatched by other community access cable television stations. The innovative partnership demonstrates creativity of approach by completely integrating TV production and hands-on learning into the public schools curriculum.
The sophistication of the operation is evident by the advanced technology the collaborative provides to prepare students for real-world applications. The studio has seven Avid and Final Cut Pro professional editing suites and is acquiring a Storage Area Network (San) to allow editing from hard drives and eliminating the need for videotapes.

The competency of the students is apparent in numerous student Emmy Awards and a string of other prestigious honors, all reflecting a level of excellence and achievement not expected in a high school environment (See Supporting Document 2). GC-TV produces measurable results through success stories of students (Supporting Document 3).

Through the years, the partnership has demonstrated sound fiscal stability. Its funding mechanism was formalized by creation of the Germantown Community Television Foundation, composed of partner representatives. The Foundation creatively seeks broadened involvement to supplement its own resources for distribution to GC-TV (Supporting Document 4).

By embracing technological advances and sound financial planning, GC-TV is a sustainable community resource and exemplary for replication. It helps fund six full-time teachers/producers and offers paid internships to students during summer months and for special projects, a positive impact to the local economy and for preparing students for the adult work force.

GC-TV has initiated more than 10 international student exchange programs with school television stations in Russia, Austria, Republic of Georgia and currently with Germany. The exchange program has produced Germantown programming which aired in Russia, Georgia and Germany, promoting the community, tourism and international commerce and trade.

Numerous media report the success of GC-TV (Supporting Document 5).

The merit and value of the partnership among the City of Germantown, Comcast and Shelby County Schools is clearly demonstrated in the viability, success and longevity of GC-TV. The station, through effective collaboration, enhances the quality of life for Germantown residents, students and the larger community it reaches.