

# **Standard Operating Procedures for Rockdale 23**

*Rockdale County Government Access Channel      February 2013, Updated July 2014*

## **GENERAL INFORMATION & BACKGROUND**

Rockdale 23 is a government access channel that broadcasts government-related content to educate and benefit the public. A government access channel is a non-public forum and is not a public access channel (please see below for related information). Rockdale 23 is available through a multi-year agreement with cable television operator Comcast.

Rockdale County's Department of Community Affairs & Innovative Programs (CAIP) operates the channel on the County's behalf. The department produces, films, edits, and airs programming 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Rockdale 23 is available to county citizens who subscribe to Comcast. Residents who are not Comcast subscribers can still view the content online at [www.vimeo.com/rockdale](http://www.vimeo.com/rockdale).

There are various channels that correspond to different programming aired on Rockdale 23. For example, the "Board of Commissioners Meetings Channel" shows the recorded Board of Commissioners meetings. Other examples of programming regularly aired on Rockdale 23 include government meetings, emergency alerts, government-sponsored town halls and forums, community news, and event announcements.

The CAIP Department Director oversees the content, editing and programming schedule. If, for any reason, the Director is unavailable or unable to make a decision, the County CEO, Chief of Staff or designee may make needed decisions for these aspects of the channel.

Rockdale 23 staff and resources are for the exclusive use of Rockdale County, provided the Director, in their sole discretion, may allow use of Rockdale 23 staff and resources by other government agencies including municipal, school district, other counties, state and federal agencies subject to the availability of facilities, equipment, staff, time, and funding.

All Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules and regulations pertaining to government access television will be followed with Rockdale 23 operations.

### **PURPOSE of ROCKDALE 23**

- Provide helpful and timely information that educates and engages the public about Rockdale County
- Help the public better understand government processes
- Encourage attendance at government-related activities, meetings and events
- Promote other government-related activities Rockdale County partners with to host such as with local cities, neighboring counties, the state and school district
- Highlight interesting government-related programs, initiatives, employees, etc., as well as partner organizations and groups in the Rockdale County community
- Air public service announcements created in house and from partner public agencies, the Ad Council and other reputable sources
- Ensure the community is quickly informed of emergency alerts and proper actions to take

### **PROGRAMMING**

Programming is selected to benefit the overall Rockdale community. The hope is the program will cause the viewer to be enlightened, better engaged or moved to take action such as attend a festival or testify at a public hearing. The producers of Rockdale 23 strive to keep topic diversity in the program line up.

Rockdale County has complete editorial control over all services and programming on channel 23. The County shall not be liable for the broadcast of any inaccurate information.

Programming that does not meet acceptable video and/or audio broadcast quality standards will not be aired.

A program guide is regularly broadcast on the channel. If there is a topic a citizen would like to see covered on Rockdale 23, they should suggest that idea in writing to the CAIP Director at [customersatisfaction@rockdalecounty.org](mailto:customersatisfaction@rockdalecounty.org).

All official government meetings are aired in their entirety “gavel to gavel,” meaning uninterrupted or edited, except for closed meetings under the Georgia Open Meetings Act. If there are technical issues with the audio or video of a meeting where an aspect of the meeting is not shown or audible, that will be noted on the screen, but not edited out. FCC regulations may require some editing to stay in compliance with applicable federal and/or state regulations.

The CAIP Department does, in some cases, accept pre-packaged video and other information from other government agencies and nonprofits to broadcast at the CAIP Director’s discretion.

Submissions for programming must be provided to CAIP at minimum 7 business days prior to the desired date of broadcast. CAIP reserves the right to broadcast submissions received less than seven days prior to the desired date of broadcast.

Programming, video and announcements from private individuals, religious and for-profit entities are not accepted.

General information from an unbiased nonprofit source, such as election-related from the League of Women Voters for example, may be considered if it is for a neutral, countywide, educational purpose.

Rockdale 23 is not intended to be used as a political or campaign forum or as a medium for building support for any particular policy, program, person, or issue.

The only election-related materials allowed on Rockdale 23 will be general information for the public, such as for voter registration deadlines, polling place locations and official election results. CAIP will only air results the Board of Elections & Voter’s Registration provides. The CAIP Director, in consultation with the Director of the Board of Elections & Voter’s Registration, will decide when to take down results from Rockdale 23.

Typically, programming from external sources will be aired twice in two weeks.

Based on federal guidelines, obscene material such as explicit or vulgar language and nudity, are not allowed on Rockdale 23.

All County original programming either produced internally or purchased for production is under copyright control of Rockdale County. Submitted programming containing, or suspected to contain, copyrighted material must include written proof of permission to broadcast.

County staff will not be responsible for inadvertent erasure of or damage to submitted materials. The submitter should keep a copy of the material so that a

duplicate recording can be made and broadcast in case there are technical difficulties or other problems.

## **FILMING**

CAIP does not take external, private requests to film shows using County staff, equipment or other resources.

Instead, external nonprofit or government organizations must handle the filming of their own activities and events to then submit to Rockdale 23 for airing consideration in a basic DVD format. Nonprofit organizations must be registered with the County and in compliance with all municipal, county, state, and federal laws establishing their nonprofit status. Proof of this may be required.

Submissions become the property of Rockdale County.

Once a request to air is submitted in writing, the CAIP Director will review it to ensure there is wide public appeal for the event topic, the video is of top quality in sound and visuals and the event or activity preferably occurred in Rockdale.

The CAIP Director may ask for additional information from the requestor to help arrive at a decision. All County-related requests for airing take precedent.

Generally, Rockdale 23 will not film debates, candidate forums and other election-related activities to ensure the channel is an unbiased source of information to the public. However, in special cases, a nonprofit, as described on Page 3, must sponsor the event to be taped and it must be free, held in a public space and open to the public. Again, the CAIP Director will consider these types of requests on a case by basis and in reference to the aforementioned policies.

There is no guarantee any event taped externally or submitted to CAIP for airing will be aired.

Finally, use of Rockdale 23 staff and equipment to use for any private, external, non-County activities or events for personal, commercial or other non-governmental use is prohibited.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS /ADVERTISING**

Submissions for the Rockdale 23 digital bulletin board must be provided to CAIP electronically in a completed, camera-ready format at least 7 business days prior to the desired broadcast date. The CAIP Director reserves the right to broadcast submissions received less than 7 days prior and determine the exact broadcast date.

CAIP Department staff may edit announcements as necessary for length, clarity and to maximize the message's efficacy.

The CAIP Director will have discretion to select and schedule announcements as programming priorities dictate. The County does not warrant that any submission will be aired at any particular time.

Rockdale 23 is not intended for commercial purposes, and therefore paid or unpaid advertising from the private sector or an individual is not accepted. For instance, the channel does not accept advertisement for private fundraisers or from political candidates.

For business advertising needs, contact Comcast Spotlight at (770) 559-2170.

## **PUBLIC ACCESS PROGRAMMING**

Comcast, through Studio 25, offers a full service production and post-production studio for public use. It is located at 3425 Malone Dr., Chamblee, GA, 30341. Some examples of services for a fee on this public access channel include on-location taping, animation and video graphics.

Studio 25 also offers shooting, editing and production courses, including for college and high school students. Programming created through Studio 25 is aired on its channel.

A person must first become a member in order to access Studio 25 services.

To learn more, call (770) 559-2277, email [scheduling@comcaststudio25.com](mailto:scheduling@comcaststudio25.com) or visit [www.comcaststudio25.com](http://www.comcaststudio25.com).

*The managing department of this SOP is Community Affairs & Innovative Programs (CAIP). These guidelines will be reviewed and potentially revised periodically. The Chairman & CEO will give final approval to any changes that the Director of CAIP recommends.*