



**Communications Advisory Commission**  
**Aug. 1, 2022, 6 p.m.**  
**Regular Session**  
**City Council Chambers, 1 Quail Creek Circle, North Liberty, Iowa**

This meeting may be accessed live by the public on the internet at [northlibertyiowa.org/live](http://northlibertyiowa.org/live), on Facebook at [facebook.com/northliberty](https://facebook.com/northliberty) or on YouTube at [youtube.com/northliberty](https://youtube.com/northliberty). Meetings are rebroadcast on cable and available on-demand on [northlibertyiowa.org](http://northlibertyiowa.org).

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Election of Chair and Vice Chair
4. Public Comment
5. Staff Report
6. Discussion of Public Access and Cablecasting
7. Old Business
8. New Business
9. Adjournment



To **Mayor, City Council, Communications Advisory Commission**  
CC **City Administrator Ryan Heiar**  
From **Communications Director Nick Bergus**  
Date **July 29, 2022**  
Re **Communications Staff Report**

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## Blues & BBQ

We hosted the 14<sup>th</sup> North Liberty Blues & BBQ on July 9, spending significant staff time planning, setting up, executing, and cleaning up the event along with members of Parks, Police, Fire, Library departments, dedicated community members in key leadership roles, hundreds of volunteers. Blues & BBQ saw 20,000 attendees, ran smoothly and feedback was positive. Centennial Park needed some extra care following heavy rain during Friday morning's set up, and our appreciation to Guy Goldsmith and his team for working so it's ready for the next community event. Blues & BBQ will return – for a 15<sup>th</sup> (!) time – on July 8, 2023.

## City Slate

With July's focus on Blues & BBQ, the number of events slowed from June's deluge, but added seven more in addition to the festival: Ranshaw House Concert Series dates (July 1, 15, 22, 29), Swimming with Princesses (July 17), Tween Night at the Pool (July 23) and Swimming Storytime (July 29). To date, City Slate programming has been attended by more than 36,000 attendees. Meanwhile planning for the Summer Send-Off (Aug. 20) and other fall programs continues. All events on the Slate are free to attend with details available at [northlibertyiowa.org/cityslate](http://northlibertyiowa.org/cityslate).

## Neighborhood Ambassadors

We were notified that the International City/County Managers Association awarded the Neighborhood Ambassadors program its Community Partnership Award in our population category (there are three and North Liberty falls in the middle). The award will ceremony is at the annual conference in September. The ICMA Local Government Excellence Awards Program highlights creative contributions and are evaluated by an independent, 13-person panel of ICMA members. We're excited to see others recognize the work of our Ambassadors and the work Jillian has put into developing the program. This program helps us build trust, gain insight, share information and strengthen neighborhoods. Additionally, it was cool to see this program highlighted in the Better Together 2030 vision for a shared future. Jillian had recent conversation with Iowa City and Coralville staff about our program as well.

## Centennial Park

Nick and Jillian worked with Shive-Hattery and other members of staff to further shape the master plan for Centennial Park and develop costs and renderings for the showcase pavilion, splash pad and events space. Hosting Blues & BBQ in a similar configuration was helpful (and encouraging!).

## Ranshaw House

Micah and Nick are working to refine a proposal to furnish the Ranshaw House as it grows to be a social service and community hub, exemplified this year by Summer Lunch & Fun, United Action for Youth's SPARK program and drop-in art workshops and the City Slate concert series. It's exciting to see the house used through the summer, which has helped us better understand what it can be going forward. This month, we have conversations with agencies who were awarded grants in the current fiscal year to learn what opportunities they saw in the space, and what they would need to accommodate their use.

## Other Items

Staff met with staff of The Englert to discuss programming opportunities in North Liberty.

We produced City Council meetings and submitted them to the Iowa City government channel.

We posted news releases about Neighborhood Ambassadors, the city's bond rating, ICMA award, City Slate events, recreation programming and more.

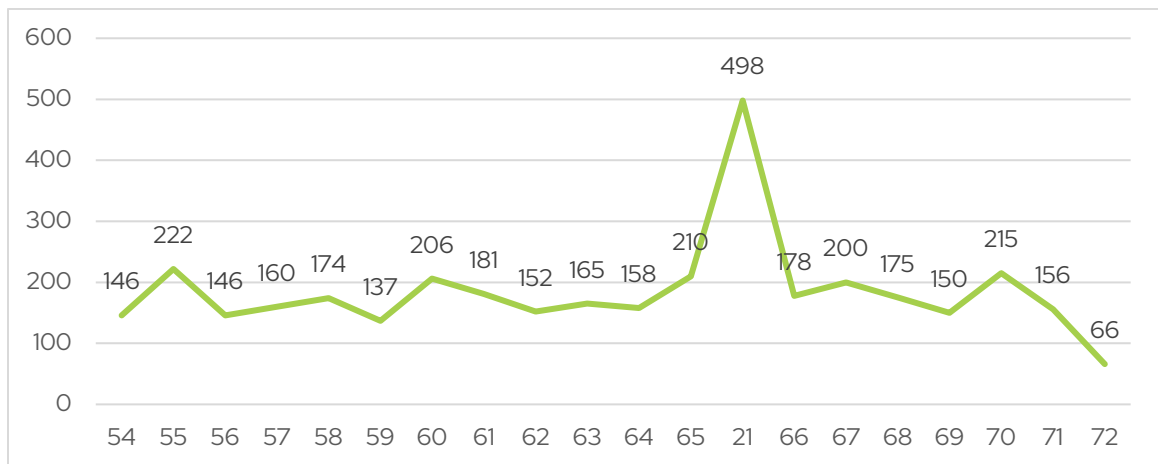
## Completed Videos

Title	Requested By	Completed	Duration
<b>Planning &amp; Zoning</b>	Administration	July 5	0:52
<b>Parks &amp; Recreation</b>	Administration	July 7	0:52
<b>City Council</b>	Administration	July 12	0:27
<b>Tree &amp; Stormwater Board</b>	Administration	July 13	0:24
<b>Social: Blues &amp; BBQ</b>	Communications	July 15	0:01
<b>Eye on: Welcome, Colonys</b>	Communications	July 22	0:06
<b>City Council</b>	Administration	July 26	1:59
<b>Total completed productions: 7</b>	<b>Duration of new video: 4.7 hours</b>		

## 52317 Podcast

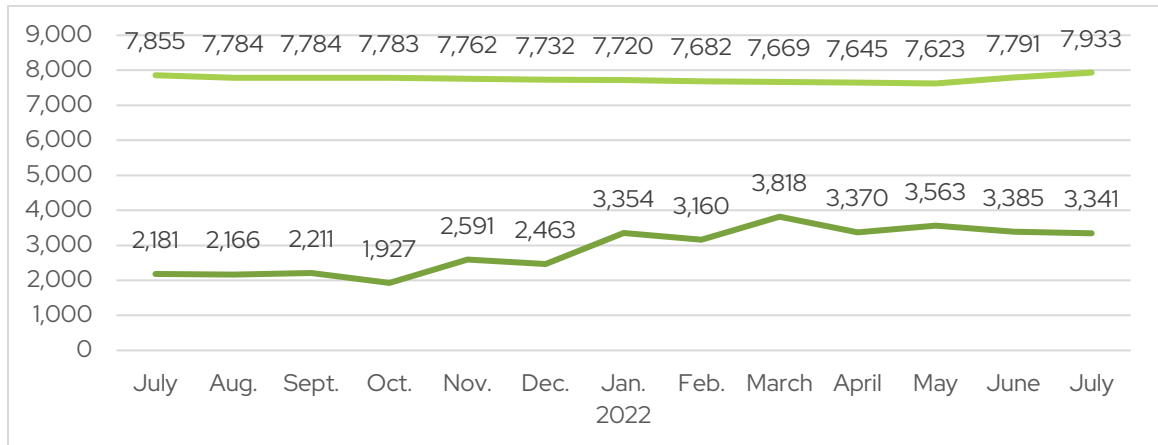
Episodes release every three weeks and can be found at [northlibertyiowa.org/52317](http://northlibertyiowa.org/52317).

**Our podcast host encountered issues with its stats service at the end of July, so stats are inaccurate until the issue is fully resolved.**



**Downloads** is the number times the podcast file was downloaded to a player, including a podcast client, webpage-embedded player or other device since its publication. Numbers are as reported by service provider LibSyn as of the date of this report. **Episodes** 72: Maryam Thompson Photography; 71: Spotix; 70: Johnsy's Liquor; 69: Vertronic Aerospace; 68: North Liberty Coralville Softball Baseball; 67: Soiree; 66: Illuminate; 21: Heyn's; 65: LaLa Boutique; 64: Kirkwood Workplace Learning Connection; 63: Leash on Life; 62: Chomp Delivery; 61: Speedy Mike's Carwash; 60: Flip Salon & Spa; 59: Rock Valley Physical Therapy; 58: NASA; 57: Animal Kingdom; 56: Concha Audiology; 55: Silver Rooster Tattoo; 54: Aero Performance and Physical Therapy

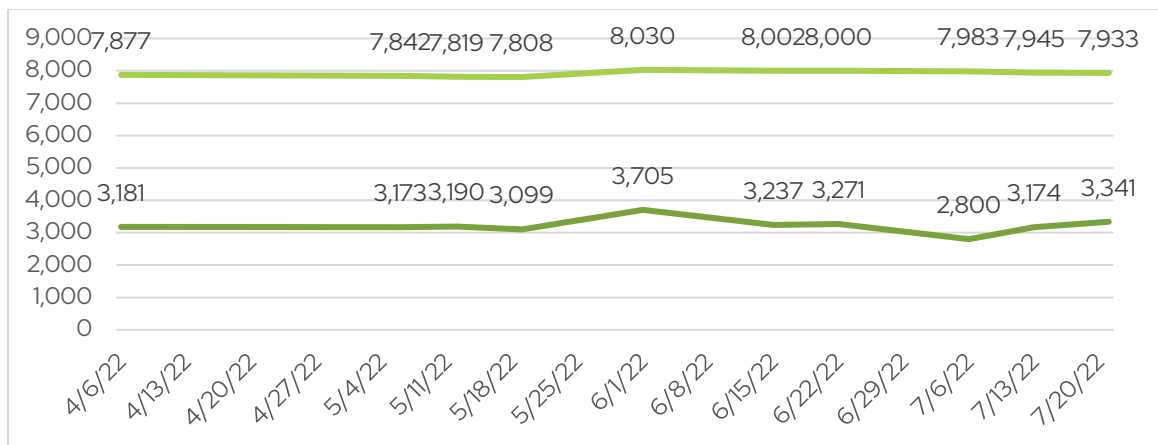
## North Liberty Bulletin Email Newsletters



**Recipients** is the number of email addresses to which an issue of the Bulletin was sent and is represented by the top line. **Opens** is the number of unique recipients who opened the Bulletin and is represented by the bottom line; the standard open rate for government is 25.4%. Numbers are as reported by service provider Mailchimp. **Subject lines** July: Years in the making; June: A full slate; May: Taking time for two wheels; April: Mud, trash and poop season; March: The Thaw; Feb: Save the dates; Jan: Tomorrowland; Dec: Conspiring, to eat cookies, by the fire; Nov: Not sure you know how psychologically healthy that actually is; Oct: Pumpkin spice spooky decorative gourd season; Sept: My fall plans vs; Aug: Summer send-off 🍁 July: My dog hates fireworks

## Know Before You Go Emails

These emails focus on free, large-scale community and leverage the city's email list. It is a key marketing channel for City Slate events.



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## Website Statistics

Month	Sessions	Users	Pageviews
July 2022	26,101	19,342	50,030
June 2022	27,985	20,537	55,721
May 2022	25,781	19,174	48,930
April 2022	27,396	20,578	52,648
March 2022	25,815	19,113	49,629
Feb 2022	22,876	16,286	41,437
Jan 2022	26,218	20,351	47,444
Dec 2021	17,011	13,056	33,502
Nov 2021	20,196	15,122	39,415
Oct 2021	17,041	13,190	32,858
Sept 2021	22,849	14,800	44,285
Aug 2021	29,557	21,990	54,762
July 2021	32,559	24,967	63,686

**Sessions** is the number of time-bound user interactions with the website. **Users** is the number of unique devices loading the site in that month. **Pageviews** is the total number of pages loaded or reloaded. All stats are monthly.

## Social Media

Month	Facebook		Twitter		Instagram	Nextdoor
	New likes	Reach	New follows	Impressions	Followers	Members
July	121	83,190	7	13,100	2,764	5,645
June	114	31,235	-3	14,900	2,738	5,617
May	122	33,811	23	17,700	2,712	5,585
April	57	37,226	-11	17,500	2,667	5,531
March	62	47,317	22	19,500	2,648	5,497
Feb	47	47,939	17	18,100	2,620	5,448
Jan 2022	139	209,293	7	40,500	2,600	5,411
Dec	32	19,971	11	23,500	2,575	5,383
Nov	14	20,182	9	30,400	2,570	5,361
Oct	50	35,617	2	20,600	2,537	5,279
Sept	60	26,516	11	21,900	2,521	5,237
Aug	59	26,710	15	40,100	2,497	5,178
July	80	21,523	3	34,600	2,471	5,114

**Facebook new likes** is the net number of new users following the city's Facebook page; it does not include new *followers*. **Facebook reach** is the number of unique users who saw any of the city's Facebook content, reported on a 28-day period. **Twitter new follows** is the net number of new users following the city on Twitter. **Twitter impressions** is the total number of times a tweet from the city was shown to a user. **Instagram new follows** is the net number of new users liking the city's Instagram account. **Nextdoor members** is the number of verified North Liberty residents who are users and able to receive our agency messages.



To **Communications Advisory Commission**  
CC **Additional recipients' names**  
From **Nick Bergus, Communications Director**  
Date **March 2, 2022**  
Re **Public Access and Cablecasting**

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Since North Liberty Television began as a public, educational and government access channel in the 1990s, the legislative landscape, the modes for the distribution of video programming and use of public access by producers have changed drastically.

The Communications Department continues to invest staff time into receiving, transcoding and scheduling, and with the need to eventually replace the hardware necessary to automate playback, staff is seeking direction from the Commission on the future of its public access and cablecasting operations.

### Legislative & Policy Background

Under the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984, or Cable Act, local municipalities could negotiate local franchise agreements with cable providers. Cities, including North Liberty, were able to collect per-subscriber PEG fee to help fund public, education and government access operations. Local governments, including North Liberty, were also able to collect a franchise fee of 5 percent on gross revenues.

In 2008, the Iowa Utilities Board began issuing franchise certificates following legislation enacted the previous year. This change reduced the authority of local government to negotiate franchise agreements with providers and, while cable providers would still pay franchise fees, eliminated the per-subscriber support of PEG fees. The law also shifted the cost burden of cablecasting from cable providers to cities.

In April 2013, the city's franchise agreement with Mediacom expired and was converted to a state-issued certificate, and South Slope converted its local franchise agreement to a state certificate for competitive reasons, eliminating PEG fee support.

### Changes in Video Distribution

North Liberty's cable channel, North Liberty Television, operated as a public, educational and government access channel under the Cable Act. The Cable Act and our policies allowed the public to provide video for playback provided it met certain technical standards and some basic, legally permitted, content standards, such as prohibiting the channel's use for commercial activity or obscenity.

This First Amendment-protected cablecasting service was critical to making sure members of the public had the ability to distribute messages to a wider audience when cable TV was a dominate form of mass media and the only real avenue available to small or independent producers looking to disseminate programs.

North Liberty doesn't have subscriber numbers from its local providers. The number of subscribers nationwide has declined; Pew Research found a 20-point decline from 2015 to 2021 with the decline being most pronounced in younger adults.

The internet is now a major, if not the dominate, mode of video content distribution for producers of all sizes. In 2019, YouTube, perhaps the most popular platform for medium- and long-form content on the internet with more than 2.3 billion users, hosted 500 hours of new video every minute. Facebook provides free, high-quality video streaming and hosting, as do myriad other services. These services allow producers to build communities around their interests.

## Public Access Producers

Since its inception, North Liberty Television's schedule has included programming provided by local educators and school districts, residents, regional providers and others who sought out public access channels.

While North Liberty doesn't track historic producer numbers, staff notes the decline in producers, albeit slowly, over the years. We currently have three local producers who provide programs. Each also distributes their videos online. Coralville's CoralVision reports similar declines and currently has zero program providers.

The local landscape has changed, too. Public Access Television in Iowa City, a dedicated public access channel and non-profit that provided production assistance and cablecasting, ceased operations in 2019 and its successor, Media Arts Co-op, which is part of Public Space One, provides access to production tools but does not offer cablecasting.

## The Future of NLTV

As we look ahead to moving our media production to a new city hall in 2024 and consider our now 6-year-old automation hardware and other needs against this changing background, now is a reasonable time to assess our policy of cablecasting as well as providing public access services so we can plan our future services and resource needs. I look forward to discussing this with the Commission.