


## SUN20TV Readies For Its Debut As Southampton Town's Newest Public Access Channel, With Assist From LTV



 Michelle Trauring on Feb 19, 2021

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After a years-long journey, Southampton Town is finally on the verge of launching its second public access television channel — trading largely irrelevant, countywide programming for broadcast content created by local residents for the community.

The new station, SUN20TV — an acronym for “Southampton User Network” paired with its future channel number — will launch in about two weeks in partnership with LTV Television, which will feed its current slate of programming to the burgeoning channel as it gets off the ground, according to its executive director, Connie Conway.

“It will be a community treasure,” Ms. Conway said of SUN20TV. “When you have your own community or public access channel, it really says a lot about the community because we know that families get involved, schools get involved, kids get involved, and this is really their way to communicate. So this is their channel and it’s been sitting there, and we’ve decided to make use out of it.”

Initiated by Southampton Town Supervisor Jay Schneiderman several years ago, the station is inspired by LTV’s use of its own channel 20 for more cultural programming, which will air in Southampton under the ALTICE Cable television line-up following a recent contract signing with the East Hampton station that extends through the end of the year.

“They’ve got a terrific programming schedule, so we’re happy that they’ve allowed us to do this,” Ms. Conway said. “This is a terrific opportunity for them to showcase their material, too. They have a whole new audience now, when they’re tapping into the Southampton audience.”

The expanded breadth for LTV is not lost on its executive director, Michael Clark, who said he is “more than happy to welcome Southampton with open arms.” That’s what public access is all about, he added.

“The community lines are only drawn on paper. We’re two separate towns, but one community — we’re the East End,” Mr. Clark said. “Frazer Dougherty, who was the founder of the station, his vision way back when, 35 years ago, was to have it be for the East End, and that never came to fruition. I think he’ll be very happy — God bless him, 99 years old and living down in Florida — he’ll be happy to learn that Southampton is part of this East End television.”

In time, SUN20TV will break away from LTV with its own original programming, supplementing — if not entirely replacing — the East Hampton-based slate with content submitted by Southampton residents, Ms. Conway explained.

“We’re looking to see what we find from other people,” she said. “There are a lot of people with a lot of time on their hands during this pandemic, so now’s the time! Go out and shoot something, and let us see what you got.”

Until SUN20TV has a television studio — Ms. Conway is eyeing a few locations in Southampton Town Hall, she said — LTV will open up its Wainscott studio doors to Southampton residents looking to record shows of their own starting March 1, for a small fee and with strict COVID-19 protocols in place, Mr. Clark noted.

But shooting in a studio isn’t necessary to make the cut, Ms. Conway said. She encourages locals to get out in nature, or share a piece of Southampton history, or whip up a new recipe in their kitchens at home — which can all be done right on a cell phone.

“Hopefully, there aren’t too many ‘Wayne’s Worlds,’ but that might be fun, too,” she said with a laugh. “Take us somewhere that we’ve never been and tell us stories that we’ve never heard — and lots of people will see it. Look at your audience, it’s three times the size right now because of the pandemic. This should be everybody’s showcase.”

Southampton residents will be able to submit their accepted videos, free of charge, through a cloud-based service, while non-residents must pay \$100 and have a local sponsor, Ms. Conway said.

“There might be lots of creative people out there who say, ‘If only I had an outlet to put this on,’ and now you do,” she said. “Once we get the word out that we’re doing this, we’re hoping that we’re flooded with material.”