

TV universe makes room for tiny St. Andrews

Last Updated: Monday, February 6, 2006 | 9:59 AM AT

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A handful of volunteers in St. Andrews are preparing to launch New Brunswick's first-ever low-power community television station.

The group is planning to broadcast 14 hours of programming every week on CHCT-TV from a tiny room in the back of the town's arena.

Station technical director Brian Dickson says volunteer producers, technicians and interviewers are already putting programs on local cable, but wanted to reach more people so applied for their own licence.

"Not everybody is on cable and so very simply when we get our transmission equipment anyone with a TV set has the opportunity to pick us up."

Dickson says the station, on UHF Channel 26, will have a power of 100 watts and the signal will cover St. Andrews and surrounding areas within a 12-kilometre radius. The shows will be all local and will include sports, cooking shows, church services and bingo.

Viewer and volunteer Lee Ann Ward says local information is often hard to come by, and people want to know what's happening in their own community. "People are interested and concerned about what's going on in St. Andrews and they want to be informed and they want to be entertained."

The CRTC has granted the group a broadcasting licence, but the volunteers still need to raise about \$18,000 to buy the transmitter and other equipment. The television station hopes to be on the air in the spring.