

NYC TV cooks up new spring lineup

By William Murphy
Staff Writer

April 15, 2004

Daily Variety probably did not hold the presses for this one, but the mayor has personally announced the city television channel's spring lineup.

Instead of "Emeril Live" on the Food Channel, viewers can tune in to NYC TV for "What's Cooking at Gracie," as in Gracie Mansion.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced the lineup Monday night at the mansion, the traditional home of the mayor, although he never moved into it and stays in his Upper East Side townhouse.

Viewers will have to settle for a chef and a mayoral press aide visiting food markets - a la Emeril - and showing dishes being prepared for special events at the mansion.

The spring lineup, which begins tomorrow, will have eight new shows, including:

Blueprint: New York City, which takes the viewers on tours of the mansion, City Hall and other landmark buildings.

NYC Football, which will air football games between members of the city's uniformed services - while off duty.

Block Party, a musical celebration of various city neighborhoods.

The Drama Desk Awards for work in the city's theater industry.

Among the returning shows are Council 51, which promises its usual gavel-to-gavel coverage of City Council forums, town hall meetings and other municipal matters.

"No one ever thought municipal television could be entertaining," Bloomberg said in a statement. "In just nine months, NYC TV has already received four New York Emmy award nominations, seen its programming air on PBS and signed deals with Delta Air Lines and E! Entertainment TV."

The shows air on NYC TV, channel 74 on cable. The other municipal channels are 71 for horse racing and Off Track Betting race telecasts; 73 for leased time and other OTB programming, and 93, which broadcasts NYC TV's Digital Magazine.

The city contributes about \$1.9 million toward NYC TV, mayoral spokesman Jonathan Werbell said.

He said almost all the funding for the system comes from outsiders who lease time, and the city cost was more than offset by increased betting revenue generated by the OTB telecasts.