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City TV, for the Aging, the Hip and the Frugal

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Even as the networks roll out their big-budget fall lineups, a local cable station is trying to compete with the new shows on everything from fashion trends and hip musicians to issues facing older New Yorkers.

And it is all happening courtesy of your city government.

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg yesterday announced the fall schedule for NYC TV, the official television network of New York City. It will include the debut of five original programs, and the return of shows like "\$9.99," which features city activities costing no more than \$9.99.

The expanded programming is part of the city's continuing efforts to transform the previously dull world of government television with shows even the mayor can stand to watch. (Mr. Bloomberg has made no secret of his distaste for television.)

Mr. Bloomberg has put his support behind reinventing the city's cable station, a venture that embodies some of his favorite themes, like accomplishing more with less, im-

proving services through technology and giving New Yorkers a glimpse of the inner workings of government.

In a press release, the mayor said the new programming was "a continuation of my commitment to using NYC TV as an innovative window into city government, and giving New Yorkers information they can really use."

NYC TV, which replaced Crosswalks NYC this summer, consists of five channels that are available to 1.8 million cable subscribers in the five boroughs. Besides the new shows, it also broadcasts conventional government fare, like mayoral press conferences and City Council meetings.

Arick Wierson, the station's general manager, said the central theme of the programs was city government and its services. "By showcasing all aspects of local government, viewers will not only be able to follow the events at City Hall, but the services that the city provides," he said. "Our mission is to educate New Yorkers about their city and encourage them to take full advantage of it."

Jonathan Werbell, a spokesman for the mayor, said that most of the new shows cost relatively little to produce because they take advantage of city resources or city-based events, in some cases in partnership with city agencies.

For instance, one new show called "Inside the Archives" will display photographs culled from the city's Department of Records and Information Services. Many of the photos will be available to the public for the first time, and the show will provide information on how to buy them.

"Fashion in Focus" will show interviews and other material previously shot backstage during the city's annual Fashion Week, and will include discussion of issues facing the fashion industry, while "New York Noise" will showcase music from upcoming New York-based artists. In "Coming of Age," Edwin Méndez-Santiago, the commissioner of the Department for the Aging, will be the host of discussions about aging issues.