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USER REPORT

Digital Broadcast Drives WFFF Operations

by **Matt Servis**

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COLCHESTER, VT.

WFFF-TV, a property of Smith Media, serves major portions of Vermont, New Hampshire and upstate New York. We also have a significant portion of our viewing audience residing across the border in Montreal.

In 2007, the station embarked on a major project for revamping our existing master control operations, as well as launching a state-of-the-art HD news operation. The result is that today WFFF-TV boasts a fully automated master control department and was first in its market to air HD news. The core of both of these developments has been automation and servers from Digital Broadcast, specifically the MediaFire Automated Master Control System and the NewsBank Automated Newsroom System.

When researching master control systems, we looked for a system for automating the airing of three program channels. We chose Digital Broadcast's MediaFire system for a number of reasons. Price point was a factor, but the biggest advantage was MediaFire's interface with Pathfire and their delivery of syndicated programming.

PATHFIRE INTERFACING

In the past we had difficulty in obtaining a clean, streamlined interface to the Pathfire system. With Digital Broadcast's system, syndicated media from Pathfire transfers directly and automatically to the MediaFire servers,

ready for play-out without requiring format conversion, additional processing or segmenting. This has resulted in tremendous efficiencies and has significantly reduced the program processing workload for our master control operators, providing them more time to concentrate on quality control.

One of the great benefits of working with Digital Broadcast has been the assistance they've provided in helping us convert to the new Digital Broadcast servers. We had a lot of material on our previous server that would have taken an enormous amount of time and effort to dub individually to the new servers. Digital Broadcast engineers wrote software to speedily enable this transfer.

Additionally, Digital Broadcast produced software to allow us to run old and new servers simultaneously until the crossover was complete.

While we were upgrading our master control operation, we also prepared to create an HD news operation with Digital Broadcast's NewsBank system for the news automation. The system is the nucleus of this operation, integrating its servers with AP/ENPS, Panasonic P2 camcorders, Edius HD editing and Pathfire and iPUMP news delivery services. The NewsBank integrated network pulls all of these elements together into a streamlined system. It's also integrated with our Ignite production system to provide a fully automated HD news system.

Having Digital Broadcast equipment for both master control and news operations has



Digital Broadcast Customer Service Engineer Mike Regina prepares for operational training on a MediaFire system following installation.

been a great advantage for us. There's now a single point of contact, and this has been a real plus during our massive changes. When any problems developed, they were quickly resolved.

Digital Broadcast offers systems that are upgradeable and customizable. Their format and platform make these systems conducive to growing, expanding and incorporating new technologies as they develop. The advantage to us is that we don't feel we're tied to static systems. We know that as Digital Broadcast develops new technologies and enhancements, our systems will be able to incorporate them as well.

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For additional information, contact Digital Broadcast at 352-377-8344 or visit www.digitalbcast.com.