

Continental Electronics Corp. Hershberger gave a talk focusing on a number of digital things. He first gave an overview of how digital signal processing can be applied in the FM broadcast band. This was followed by a very unique proposal for utilizing digital transmission in the present AM broadcast. Hershberger's approach included a novel concept of having receivers continually "learn" new digital algorithms which are downloaded from the bit stream coming from the broadcast stations.

Hershberger and his fellow engineers believe that only about 10% of the available data would be needed to keep a receiver updated and still provide excellent stereo quality reception. He concluded by giving attendees a look at the application of digital techniques to video transmissions.—Fred Baumgartner, (Section Chair), TCI

Washington, D.C.

June 18, 1998

Engineering representatives from various Washington, DC television stations gathered at WUSA-TV9 for a digital television (DTV) roundtable to discuss their plans and schedules for implementing DTV. More than 80 people gathered for this unique SMPTE monthly session organized by DC Section Manager Ron Peters.

Jerry Agresti, from NBC-owned WRC-TV, spoke positively of the station's plans to begin transmitting network primetime HDTV offerings in the fall. According to Joseph Balkan, NBC, the network is geared up and ready to begin releasing its 1080i/16x9 programming, but has placed the burden of how to make this programming happen on its program suppliers. He predicted that the "Tonight Show" would also be produced in HD by the first quarter of 1999. NBC is not a fan of multichannel

DTV, thinking it not viable for business at this time. Section members from Sinclair Broadcasting in Baltimore probably had different opinions on this issue.

WRC's plant is the home of the model DTV station, WHD-TV. Dennis Wallace, WHD-TV, spoke briefly about the station's trials and victories as it approaches its third, and supposedly final, year of operation. The model station has been continuously broadcasting the new type of signals in varying formats (1080i, 720p, 480p, and 480i) in an effort to promote the technology to the public and government officials. The station is also experimenting with areas such as splicing compressed MPEG signals and helping vendors and set manufacturers work out their bugs. A big problem, discovered in their tests, was that of multipath interference in reception. WHD-TV said they are currently working with set manufacturers to resolve the problem.

Bill Beckner of Gannett's WUSA said his station was aiming for November to be on the air with its DTV signal in order to pass on CBS's HD feed in some form this fall. The construction of a new tower to hold both NTSC and DTV antennas for both WUSA and its neighbor, WJLA, will require the use of the Gannett station's older backup tower for a few days during the construction.

Mark Olingy of Albritton's WJLA, an ABC affiliate currently in purchase negotiations with the Walt Disney Co. according to the Washington Post, also says it is on track for implementation of its network's choice: 720p.

Steve James and Dave Lewis, both of Fox's WTTG, related that their decision to make their plant digital a few years ago is making things easier for the transition. Fox plans to broadcast all progressive, either SDTV 480 or HDTV 720.

Lew Zager of the PBS flagship WETA-

TV 26, talked about the problems the station experienced when they fired up adjacent experimental Channel 27. Suddenly, cable companies and community antenna systems discovered the need to filter out interference to prevent disruption of Channel 26's NTSC signal.

Stations other than NBC, CBS, ABC, FOX, and PBS are being more conservative in their game plans. Pedro Perez of Viacom's WDCB (a UPN station) said his company is exploring many options. The station is going to wait and see, and move very cautiously, watching first what happens elsewhere in the DTV arena.

John Handley of the city's WB affiliate WFIFY, said they were upgrading their master control and investigating the use of 480i and 480p, as well as 720p. They have the additional problem of their Georgia Ave. tower not being able to support an additional DTV antenna.

Willy Halla, DTV Express, said people all around the country were impressed when given the opportunity to see digital television and were amazed at the difference in picture quality. Consultants Garrison Cavell and Joseph Davis warned that stations need to keep an eye on deadlines, watch for areas where their signal can cause interference (such as hospitals and other medical facilities which the FCC now mandates they must contact), and make sure they keep up on PSIP (Program and System Information Protocol) which will be absolutely essential for DTV receivers in making program information available to viewers.

The evening proved interesting to all, including those who prefer retirement to Advanced Television implementation. Now the fun begins.—Jim Suthard, (Secretary/Treasurer), Communication Arts International

Calendar

SMPTE Activities

COLOGNE, GERMANY—1998 European SMPTE Conference on Imaging Media, Congress Centre, *September 17-19, 1998*

PASADENA, CA—140th SMPTE Technical Conference & Exhibit, Pasadena Convention Center, *October 28-31, 1998*

ORLANDO, FL—33rd SMPTE Advanced Motion Imaging Conference, Omni Rosen Hotel, *February 25-27, 1999*

NEW YORK, NY—141st SMPTE Technical Conference & Exhibit, *November 19-22, 1999*

For more information on these and other Society activities contact SMPTE Headquarters: (914) 761-1100, Fax: (914) 761-3115

September

International Broadcasting Convention Ltd., RAI International Exhibition and Congress Centre, Amsterdam U.K. Info: IBC Office, Savoy Place, London

WC2R OBL, U.K., tel: 44 0 171 240 3839, fax: 44 0 171 240 3724, e-mail: show @ibc.org.uk, Internet: <http://www.ibc.org.uk/ibc/>. *September 11-15, 1998.*

October

Rocky Mountain Film and Video Expo, John Q. Hammons Convention Center, Denver, CO. Info: Mark Cramer, ExpoMasters, Inc., 7632 E. Costilla Ave., Englewood, CO 80112. *October 14-15, 1998*