



# EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

## 2009 Progress Report Introduction



By Peter Ludé

The past year has been a challenging one for many in our industry, with economic turmoil and uncertainty, tight budgets, and increased unemployment testing our resolve. Despite this, technological innovation is continuing at a brisk pace. This edition of the *Motion Imaging Journal* presents SMPTE's annual Progress Report—a snapshot of yearly accomplishments—that has been a SMPTE tradition since the founding of the Society in 1916. This year, it appears that in some areas, progress has been constrained by the adverse economic climate. For example, as explained in the report on D-Cinema, the tight capital markets have slowed the conversion of theaters to digital projection systems from legacy 35mm film. Still, new momentum in 4K systems and 3D cinema has created a recent surge in deployments, and optimism for the next year.

It was only a few months ago, on June 12, 2009, that analog terrestrial television was terminated in the U.S. (of course, with the exceptions of translators and low-power stations, still operating in analog). By most accounts, the transition went remarkably smoothly. Now, as reviewed in the ATSC Standards Work Update report, attention is turning to new services, including mobile DTV, nonrealtime delivery of content over terrestrial DTV, and other next-generation services.

Stereoscopic 3D continues its upward momentum. The modern revival of 3D imaging started in 2004 and 2005 with the theatrical

release of *The Polar Express* and *Chicken Little*. Since then, approximately 20 films have been released in 3D, with additional interest in stereoscopic coverage of sporting events and concerts. But will future historians look back on this latest flurry of 3D activity as another cyclical fad, as was previously experienced in the 1950s and again in the 1980s? Or is 3D here to stay this time? Our update report on 3D will provide insight into the current industry progress.

This year's Progress Report covers many other important topics, including the emergence of new hybrid imaging platforms that capture either still or motion pictures, the continued trend in file-based workflow, and continued proliferation of codec and metadata variations. You will also find summaries of the substantial standards work accomplished this year within the SMPTE Engineering Committees. This standards work is the result of the efforts of hundreds of volunteer SMPTE members who participate in regular engineering committee meetings. I hope you will be inspired by the important tasks now in progress, and will consider joining in these committee efforts.

Once again, we are indebted to the contributing authors of this 2009 Progress Report, all experts in their respective fields, who expended substantial efforts to share their insights and observations. As always, your feedback is appreciated.