

**THE VERMONT
ASSOCIATION OF
BROADCASTERS**

500A DALTON DRIVE
COLCHESTER, VT 05446
(802) 655-5764
VAB@TOGETHER.NET
WWW.VAB.ORG

RUTLAND BLOOD DRIVE
BREAKS N.E. RECORD

Hats off (and sleeves up) to Rutland radio stations WJJR-FM and WSYB-AM for helping to smash the one-day New England blood drive record. The Catamount Radio stations broadcast live reports throughout the day December 23 from the Paramount Theatre as "The Gift of Life Marathon" collected 849 pints of blood for the American Red Cross. The old record of 772 pints was set last year at Boston's Fenway Park. The first pint was donated by WJJR's Nanci Gordon.

**WKOL RAISES KOOL KASH
WITH CAMP TA-KUM-TA-THON**

A weeklong fundraiser by Burlington's WKOL-FM raked in more than \$112,000 for Camp Ta-Kum-Ta, surpassing the station's goal. The summer camp for kids with cancer is in the process of moving to a new location on Lake Champlain. WKOL's Jon Brooks and Mark Knight interviewed scores of campers, parents and camp volunteers during the week before Christmas. The effort by the Hall Communications station will ensure children suffering from cancer will still have a place to go have fun and make new friends every summer.

WBTV-AM GOES TO SCHOOL

Where will our future broadcasters come from? Commercial non-profit community station WBTV-AM in Bennington is betting on the North Bennington Graded School. The station has installed a low power Part 15 transmitter at the school and the students are now broadcasting their own show. The "Kids Rock Radio" show will be re-broadcast on the parent AM each week. Station Coordinator Brian Dempsey says the goal is to have a low power transmitter at every school in Bennington by late 2009.

The VAB Voice



January, 2009

DTV ACTION FAST AND FURIOUS AS DEADLINE NEARS

There's been a flurry of activity regarding Digital TV as the February 17 switch-over date approaches.

On Christmas Eve, the FCC announced proposed rulemaking for the so-called "nightlight" service which will allow some but not all TV stations to broadcast DTV information and emergency bulletins in analog for an extra 30 days after the transition. An extraordinarily brief comment period of eight days was established, meaning any stations not on the initial list of nightlight eligible stations will only have until Jan. 5 to file comments.

Locally, three area stations were included in the initial eligibility list: WCAX (analog channel 3, post-transition digital channel 22); WPTZ (analog channel 5, post-transition digital channel 14) and VPT's WVER in Rutland (analog channel 28, post-transition digital channel 9).

And, the FCC introduced a new service to fill in gaps in the service of a digital television station - permitting television stations to immediately apply for Special Temporary Authority to

construct digital translators.

Translators rebroadcast the signal of a full-power station, but operate on a channel different than the main station they retransmit. The Commission has already authorized stations to operate on-channel low-power facilities in the Distributed Transmission Service (DTS) proceeding.



The digital translators, however, will only be authorized to serve areas that had received analog service from the television station but which will lose that service when the station goes fully digital.

The new translators would operate on Channels 2-59 and would be authorized as part of the main station license, would be renewed as part of the main station license, and could not be sold except with the main station.

Applicants receiving an authorization for this service will be given a construction permit - and the Commission asks if that permit should be limited to a period of six months so that service to the public will be initiated quickly.

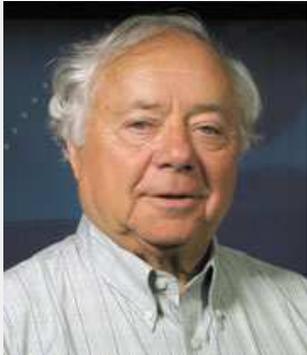
The Commission has released maps of predicted coverage areas for digital station operations, comparing those signals with the station's current analog operations. Most television UHF stations replicate their analog service in digital. Many analog VHF stations however, show areas of lost service if they are operating on a UHF channel after the transition. Seemingly, these stations will be the most likely to need to use these digital fill-in translator stations.

On Dec. 16, all the local TV broadcasters ran a "soft test" of the digital transition. An estimated 200 viewers called in to phone banks in Colchester and Plattsburgh. VPT will take more calls Tuesday, Jan. 6 during a special one-hour broadcast of "DTV and You" at 9 p.m.

- Jim Condon and David Oxenford contributed to this story.

NORTH COUNTRY NEWS LEGEND LADUKE RETIRES

Jack LaDuke has covered every major story in the Adirondacks for nearly 40 years, but now the big story is LaDuke's retirement from WCAX-TV.



Jack LaDuke

The Saranac Lake resident began his career as a UPI photographer in Spain. He later helped establish a TV network in Guatemala.

He began as a freelancer for WCAX in the late 1960's and was named full-time Plattsburgh bureau chief in 1991. He has won many awards, including helping the WCAX magazine show, "Dimensions," win a New England Emmy in 1979.

He served as audio-visual director of the 1980 Winter Olympic games in Lake Placid. In an interview on Channel 3, LaDuke said the Olympics and the closing of the Plattsburgh Air Force Base were the two biggest stories he covered.

LaDuke isn't ready to mothball his camera just yet. He plans to contribute occasional stories to Mountain Lake Public Television in Plattsburgh.

FCC DOLES OUT EEO FINES

At the end of 2008, the FCC didn't hand out any year-end bonuses; Instead, the commission handed out a cluster of notices of apparent liability to radio and TV stations for alleged EEO violations.

The FCC sent Cumulus a \$14,000 NAL related to its stations in the Macon, Georgia area. The FCC claims the company failed to comply with record-keeping rules as well as requirements on EEO initiatives, information on recruitment sources, interviewees, self-assessment and the public file. The notices were the result of random station audits conducted in 2006.

Also in Georgia, Dickey Broadcasting received an NAL for \$7,000 for alleged violations at stations in Atlanta and Marietta. In New York, Urban Radio received an NAL for \$8,000 for alleged EEO violations at WLIB-AM and WBLS-FM.

Fox Television Stations received an NAL for \$20,000 for alleged EEO violations at its stations in Washington, DC.

Other EEO NAL's were sent to W.S. Communications in Colorado and Puerto Rico Public Broadcasting, which received an \$8,000 NAL for its TV and radio stations. After receiving the notices, the broadcast companies have 30 days to

either pay the fine or file an appeal to reduce or cancel the fines.



Commissioners Michael Copps and Jonathan Adelstein issued joint comments on the matter, saying enforcement lately has been "inconsistent" and as a result, "employment in broadcasting does not reflect America."

"Having a communications industry that reflects our nation's diversity could best serve a wide range of consumer and societal interests," they said, adding, "It is not only a legal obligation, it is also the right thing to do."

In 2009, the VAB will again engage the services of inspector Robert Shotwell of Spectrum Investigative Services to conduct the AIP program.

The VAB helps to subsidize the ABIP fees, saving our stations hundreds of dollars per call sign.

Once ABIP-certified, our stations can avoid surprise FCC inspections and they can rest easy, knowing they're in compliance. More information about the ABIP program will be sent to VAB member stations soon.

SAVE THE DATE!

VAB CONVENTION SET FOR MAY 7

The 2009 VAB Convention will be held May 7 at the Capitol Plaza Hotel & Conference Center. We're delighted to offer morning and afternoon seminars with three great speakers: Sales trainer extraordinaire Chris Lytle, Morning Show coach Valerie Geller and sales and copywriting wiz Jeffrey Hedquist! Watch your mailbox and www.vab.org for more details.



Chris Lytle



Valerie Geller

Also, official entry forms for the Commercial of the Year Awards will be arriving in your mailbox soon. The awards will be presented during the luncheon at our May 7 convention. The annual Hall of Fame dinner will become a separate event this year, and will be held in the Fall with the date and place to be announced.