

**THE VERMONT ASSOCIATION OF
BROADCASTERS**

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The VAB Voice



CHAMP GOES ALL SPORTS

Fans of sports talk will have no shortage of choices in the Champlain Valley in 2011. Vox AM/FM's WCPV-FM (101.3 MHz licensed to Essex, NY) has dropped its long-time classic rock format in favor of ESPN sports.



Rich Haskell, who hosted the morning show with Mary Cenci, will now co-host an afternoon local sports show with Rob Ryan. Cenci will stay on the music beat by moving to Vox's WEZF-FM (92.9 MHz), licensed to Burlington.



Meanwhile, Champlain Communications Corp.'s trio of local AM stations (WCAT 1390 KHZ, Burlington; WRSA 1420 KHZ, St. Albans and WFAD 1490 KHZ, Middlebury) dropped ESPN in favor of Fox Sports Radio, which had been heard on weekends on Vox's WXZO.



Convergence Media's WNMR-FM (107.1 MHz, licensed to Danemora, NY) will continue to be the local affiliate of the Sporting News Radio network.

Sports will also likely be a common topic on the newly-reprised version of the "Corm, Coach and Lana" Show with local radio veterans Steve Cormier, Tom Brennan and Lana Wilder. The show is being carried as a webcast on Northeast Sports Net with a video simulcast on WCAX 3.2 (WCAX "Xtra"). Good luck to all!

January, 2011

RETRANSMISSION DEALS GO DOWN TO THE WIRE

The desire of cable and satellite companies to successfully negotiate transmission fees for local television stations is being questioned as dozens of stations around the country find themselves without the carriage they expected, at least for now.

Two of the cases involve local stations in the Burlington-Plattsburgh market.

Negotiations between Hearst Broadcasting and DirecTV went down to the wire, but a deal was finalized on New Year's Eve, a day before the agreements were due to expire. That means local viewers of WPTZ-TV in Plattsburgh and WNNE-TV in White River Junction will continue to receive the channels on DirecTV.

Hearst owns 29 television stations,

including 13 ABC affiliates, 10 NBC affiliates and two CBS affiliates. In all, it reaches about 18% of US television households.

Talks between Smith Media and Time Warner Cable, however, have not yet been resolved.

The contract between TWC and Smith Media involving local carriage of Smith stations in the Utica, NY and Burlington-Plattsburgh markets expired Dec. 15.

In the Burlington-Plattsburgh market, TWC customers in upstate New York are no longer getting local stations WVNY (ABC) and WFFF (Fox). Instead, TWC is showing ABC affiliate WUTR from Utica and low-power Fox affiliate WNYF from Watertown in the Burlington-Plattsburgh DMA.

In the Utica market, TWC has dropped the local Smith NBC station, WKTV, and is instead offering WBRE-TV from the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton, PA market to its Utica customers.

Utica Mayor David Roefaro says his city's residents have no interest in Pennsylvania news, and is threatening to terminate Time Warner's franchise agreement when it comes up for renewal in the near future. The mayor noted the failure to show the local stations could pose serious problems in the event of a local emergency.

TWC says Smith is demanding too much money, but Smith says its proposed deal is fair, and notes all other satellite and cable companies have agreed to retransmission deals with their stations.

PAUL HURD, LONGTIME BROADCAST ENGINEER, DIES AT 89



Paul Allan Hurd of Waterbury, Vermont passed away Sunday, Dec. 12, 2010. Hurd had spent a lifetime in broadcast engineering, including a stint at WDEV-AM and a longtime job of Chief Engineer of WHDH radio and TV in Boston.

He was born April 19, 1921, in Somerville, Mass., son of Robert O. and Hazel (Hyde) Hurd. He spent his boyhood in North Andover, Mass.. He studied radio and television engineering at the Massachusetts Television Institute in Boston, graduating in 1940. He was granted an FCC first-class radiotelephone operator's license the same year, and began his 45-year career in radio and television broadcast engineering at radio station WDEV-AM in Waterbury in 1941.

He married Leona R. "Toni" Culver May 14, 1942, at St. Andrew Catholic Church in Waterbury. She died Oct. 8, 1998, after more than 56 years of happy marriage. Their union produced nine children, five girls and four boys — two born in Vermont, five in Massachusetts, and two in Georgia.

During two years of active duty in the U.S. Naval Reserve during World War II, he earned the rating of aviation electronics mate first class.

Mr. Hurd left WDEV in 1947 to work at radio station WCCM in Lawrence, Mass., and was chief engineer at WHAV AM and FM in Haverhill, Mass., from 1948 to 1952.

Mr. Hurd worked for radio station WHDH in Boston during the summer of 1952 as engineer on the Boston Red Sox broadcast team, working with play-by-play announcer Curt Gowdy.

Hurd then spent four years as a field engineer for RCA, based in Georgia, but rejoined WHDH when Boston's TV Channel 5 was awarded to the WHDH Corp. He supervised construction of the WHDH-TV transmitting facilities, and the AM and FM transmitting plants were added to his responsibilities. He retired in 1986 as vice president and chief engineer of WHDH Corp. Hurd moved back to Vermont in 1999.

Donations may be made in Paul Hurd's memory to the Birds of Vermont Museum, 900 Sherman Hollow Road, Huntington, VT 05462.



SAVE THE DATE!

The 56th Annual VAB CONVENTION

Will be held

Thursday, May 19,
2011

At the Capitol Plaza
Hotel, Montpelier, VT

Featuring:

- The Commercial of the Year Awards Luncheon!
- Sales Seminars!
- EAS information
- Great Prizes & More!

Full convention details and registration info will be coming to your mailbox soon. Hope to see you there!

UNANIMOUS SUPPORT FOR LPFM BILL

Roadblocks that had stymied passage of legislation to increase the number of Low Power FM allotments suddenly vanished last month when the House agreed to a number of safeguards proposed by the NAB.

HR 6533 (The Local Community Radio Act) had been pushed by a group of community broadcasting advocates, including the Prometheus Radio Project. Concerns by full-power broadcasters that new channels would cause interference prompted a series of studies on the issue---and delays on action on the House bill and its Senate counterpart. But now the bill is now on its way to the Oval Office to be signed into law. What will it do?

Attorney David Oxenford explains:

The bill will eliminate third channel separation protection for existing FM channels. However, as part of the NAB proposal, it does away with all the introductory language in the original House bill that contained many findings about the value of LPFM stations, language that could have been used to justify FCC actions in the future that would be unfavorable to the interests of full-power stations.

It specifically forbids the FCC from amending the distance requirements between LPFM and full-power stations for first and second adjacent channel operations. It does allow for waivers of these separations, but requires LPFM's to cease operations if complaints of interference to a full-power station are received.

It makes clear that LPFM stations are secondary to full power stations, both as they currently exist and as they may be modified in the future.

The law specifically requires that the FCC treat LPFM and FM translators and FM boosters as being equal in status, and secondary to full-power stations (both existing and modified full-power stations) – thus seemingly ending some of the LPFM proposals that would allow LPFM stations to preempt existing FM translators.

For LPFM's that are located at less than the full distance from a full-power station set out by the LPFM rules, even on a third adjacent channel, the LPFM must provide the same protections that translators give to other stations under Section 74.1203, which includes the requirement that a new secondary station (like a translator or LPFM) cease operations if it interferes with the reception of any regularly used FM signal (even if the signal is outside of the existing station's primary service contour).

The FCC has not yet announced when it will begin accepting new LPFM applications or reviewing applications still on file from the 2003 window.