

**THE VERMONT
ASSOCIATION OF
BROADCASTERS**

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**"YOUR VOTE YOUR VOICE"
WINS VERMONT AWARD**

Television station WPTZ was a recipient last month of a special award from Vermont Secretary of State Deb Markowitz. The station was honored with a National Association of Secretaries of State Medallion Award for the "Your Vote Your Voice" series. The station was cited for "educating citizens about their civic obligations." Other winners included former State Sen. Don Collins of Franklin County and Montpelier schoolteacher Kristie Bush.

**VT FM FREQUENCY TO BE
AUCTIONED IN SEPTEMBER**

The FCC has released a public notice seeking procedural comments on plans to auction off 122 FM frequencies this coming September. One of the frequencies is in Vermont: a Class A FM at Channel 233 (94.5 mhz) designated for Albany, VT in the Northeast Kingdom. Short form applications from potential bidders are likely to be accepted starting this May. The commission has posted the starting bid for the frequency at \$30,000.

CORRECTION

In the February "VAB Voice," in an article on recent cut-backs in the broadcasting industry, we erroneously reported that Fran Stoddard of VPT had been laid off. VPT reports Fran and her talk show, "Profiles," is only on temporary hiatus and new programs are in the works. We regret the error.

The VAB Voice



March, 2009

FEW GLITCHES AS VERMONT GOES ALL-DIGITAL

At midnight on February 17, 2009, analog TV broadcasting came to an end in Vermont.

Two stations, WCAX-TV and WPTZ-TV, will continue to offer an analog news and DTV information service until April 19 as part of the FCC's 60-day "expanded nightlight" service. VPT will offer a similar analog service through March 20.

At 5 a.m. on Feb. 18, a local call center started receiving questions from the local viewing area. In its three full days of operations, the call center handled approximately 2000 inquiries.

Many of the callers were wondering why they could no longer receive Channel 3. A host of volunteers at the call center helped those callers re-scan their DTV converter boxes to find WCAX on a new frequency (UHF 22 instead of UHF 53).

Many calls came from Quebec, where analog viewers were wondering where they could get converter boxes. Luckily, a number of stores and online sites now of



fer the boxes in Canada, where the digital transition will take place in a few years.

Also, many viewers needed advice on how to set up the boxes and their antennas.



Some viewers, sadly, were no longer able to get a channel they could before in analog mode.

For those viewers, recommendations were made on trying different types of antennas and different positions for the antennas they already have.

A few realized they would need cable or satellite access to continue getting their favorite programs.

Also, many Vermonters are still waiting for their DTV \$40 coupons. The government ran out of the coupons but will be clearing the backlog soon now that the stimulus package has been

signed into law. As of Feb. 5, there were 1450 over-the-air-only households in the Burlington/Plattsburgh market still waiting for coupons.

All told, more than 60,000 coupons were ordered in Vermont, and more than 30,000 coupons were actually used.

The call center was a joint venture of Vermont Public Television, WCAX and WPTZ/WNNE. WVNY and WFFF decided to handle their calls in-house.

Special thanks go to Ann Curran of VPT for getting all the stations to work together in the overall transition effort. Her persistence, patience and creativity were major factors in making the transition run as smoothly as it did.



SENATE BLOCKS RETURN OF FAIRNESS DOCTRINE

The U.S. Senate last week voted 87-11 to prohibit the FCC from resurrecting the so-called Fairness Doctrine. The Fairness Doctrine was shelved 22 years ago by the commission on concerns the doctrine “actually inhibits the presentation of controversial issues of public importance to the detriment of the public.”

Originally designed in 1947 to promote a balance of opinions on a limited number of radio and TV stations, the doctrine’s quest for diversity of opinion was superseded by the explosive growth in the number of media outlets, including cable and internet programming.

Nonetheless, some politicians have recently been yearning for the old days of government-proscribed programming. Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) recently told a reporter the failure of progressive talk radio to find an audience was reason enough to bring back the doctrine.

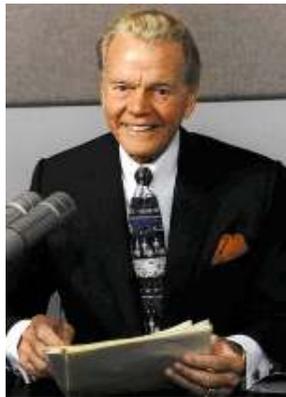
The amendment to prohibit the Fairness Doctrine was offered by Sen. Jim DeMint (R-SC) and was attached to an unrelated bill on voting rights in the District of Columbia.

PAUL HARVEY 1918–2009

“Hello Americans, this is Paul Harvey! Stand by for News!”

With those words, radio commentator Paul Harvey commanded the attention of millions of listeners every weekday, becoming the most listened-to reporter in the history of radio.

Harvey passed away Feb. 28 at the age of 90. In 2000, he had signed a ten-year, 100 million dollar contract with ABC, now part of Citadel.



For more than 51 years, Harvey’s daily news and comment reports informed and entertained millions (an estimated 25 million listeners per week at his peak).

His delivery was stentorian and folksy at the same time. He said he wrote his news stories with his Aunt Betty in mind. If the story was too confusing or dull for her, he’d toss the story altogether.

His “Paul Harvey News and Comment” segments were broadcast from Chicago and aired on ABC network affiliate stations throughout Vermont. As elsewhere, the segments traditionally garnered high ratings.

He was a heartland conservative who supported Joe

McCarthy in the 1950’s and supported Richard Nixon in the 1960’s. In 1970, however, Harvey famously scolded Nixon over the bombing of Cambodia.

In the 1970’s he began his popular “Rest of the Story” feature, which typically included surprising facts about famous people. The identity of the famous person, of course, was not revealed until the end of the five-minute feature. Among the more famous stories was his tale of a young boy who received a gift of money from FDR...would you believe Fidel Castro?

Born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Paul Harvey Aurandt was only three years old when his father, a police officer, was shot and killed on the job. Later in life, Paul Harvey became a leading fundraiser for families of slain law enforcement officers.

In 1933, he was an unpaid gofer for a Tulsa radio station. He was working at a station in St. Louis when he met a local teacher who would read social notices on the air. Paul and Lynne Cooper, known as “Angel,” were married in 1940.

After a short stint in the army, he worked as a reporter at a local station in Chicago, WENR-AM. The station was located in the Chicago Merchandise Mart. Eventually, Harvey became friends with the owner of the building, who helped him get the job with the ABC Radio Network. Who was that person? Why, it was Joseph P. Kennedy, father of JFK. And now you know the rest of the story!

- Jim Condon

DAVID REHR TO ATTEND 2009 VAB CONVENTION

NAB President and CEO David K. Rehr will be the featured luncheon speaker at this year’s VAB convention, scheduled for May 7 at the Capitol Plaza in Montpelier.



Rehr was named to the NAB top job in 2005. Prior to his appointment, he had served as President of the National Beer Wholesalers Association and as Executive Director of House Affairs for the National Federation of Independent Business. He has consistently been ranked as one of Washington’s top lobbyists and has been a tireless and successful defender of over-the-air TV and radio stations.

The Commercial of the Year Awards will also be presented during the luncheon. Morning and afternoon seminars will feature Chris Lytle, Valerie Geller and Jeffrey Hedquist. The convention will run from 8:30—5:30. Our Hall of Fame dinner will be held later this year, on November 7, at the Inn at Essex.

Keep an eye on your mailbox and our website (vab.org) for convention program and registration information!