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SUGGESTED HEAD: Professional Communications Systems Rebuilds WMFE-TV To Six Channels in Orlando

National broadcast systems integrator, Professional Communications Systems (PCS), has completed the installation of a new digital broadcasting facility for Orlando's leading PBS television station, community-owned WMFE.

Long-range planning by the station and integrator, plus developing technology, made possible the transmission of six independent channels, one more than was visualized at the outset of a quite ambitious design.

The original plan for WMFE's new facility called for broadcasting four standard-definition (SD) channels in daytime, and, at night, one high-definition (HD) and one SD, plus a feed for cable and the original analog outlet, Channel 24. Specifications for the physical building and the electronic system allowed for these five channels—with the new digital systems in a new area, and the upgraded legacy analog setup in another.

Thanks to technology developments during a number of unavoidable delays, and the flexibility of the design team, WMFE is able to transmit one HD and *two* SD channels at night, rather than the single originally planned SD channel. With the analog channel and cable, the new facility now operates six independent channels by day. Indicating the efficiency of the installation, the PCS-integrated 6-channel master control system can be operated from a single point.

PCS project manager, Larry Stephen, said, "WMFE is now a highly automated broadcaster, and one of the few in the country with the sophistication level of their graphics automation system."

A sampling of the capabilities employed in the system include three types of NVision switching, Evertz synchronization and keyers, Masstech data management, Snell & Wilcox "glue" and aspect

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conversion, Sony scaleable library and monitors, Sundance multichannel automation, and Tandberg encoding.

(Note: a more complete equipment listing follows this release)

PCS' Stephen also said, "The facility's automated process delivers a quality on-air product by incorporating traffic, master control, satellite ingest, graphics, production, asset management and routing."

A significant factor in the appointment of Professional Communications Systems to create the broadcast systems design and complete the installation was the PCS ability to see upgrade challenges from the perspectives of both the station operator and the systems integrator. As a division of Media General, PCS maintains a direct involvement in the day-to-day operations of dozens of TV stations.

The integrator first prepared a Scope of Work plan that—because public funds were involved—was used to solicit bids from competing integrators. Of that process, WMFE Director of Engineering, Mike Simmons, states, "PCS listened to what we said we wanted, went away and thought about it, then brought us a response that applied to our needs. Other integrators we talked to didn't seem to hear what we were saying. That's the heart of why we chose PCS."

The resulting digital system is fully automated and, if desired, could broadcast from the file storage server for five days without intervention. Other digital storage contains months of reusable programming. PCS also automated the analog station for WMFE by augmenting the legacy equipment and systems.

Because PBS stations across the country tend to offer more HD programming than their commercial counterparts, the PCS-designed HD capability was designed to prepare WMFE to be ready for all current hi-def offerings, as well as anticipated future developments in broadcasting.

In daytime, WMFE delivers its regular PBS programming three ways: analog and digital broadcasts, plus the transmission to the cable company. In addition, viewers with digital tuners can receive WMFE-ED, educational TV; WMFE-CFAN, featuring local / regional / government programming; and WMFE-Encore!, repeating prime time shows from previous nights.

After 8 PM, the primary channel broadcasts, and feeds to cable, the regular PBS programming in high-definition on WMFE-HD. If the programs are not received from PBS in high-definition format, the station converts them to HD. WMFE's "-ED" and "-CFAN" channels also are seen in evenings.

Orlando's primary public broadcaster does not claim to be unique among the nation's television stations, but relative to its commercial brethren, WMFE offers a much wider variety of channel selections, both day and night.

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Among the public benefits of the breadth of the WMFE array is that at almost any time of the day, children's programming is shown on one of the four different video streams available to viewers with digital sets.

The successful design/build upgrade, however, was not completed without an occasional setback. The new multichannel digital broadcast facility was to be located within what had been a two-story storage area in its existing building. Construction of the master control center was delayed when it was learned that the existing walls did not have the necessary concrete reinforcement to support a new second floor.

WMFE's Simmons said that having to start the installation later than originally planned required flexibility and accommodation on the part of the integrator. During postponements in the 2-year project, PCS stored the equipment they had procured for WMFE, and held off the installation until construction was completed and their client was ready to proceed on an accelerated schedule.

With hundreds of the nation's television stations moving to digital broadcasting in the same time frame, ambitious construction-and-installation projects frequently encounter daunting challenges. For WMFE, the in-process application of new and emerging technology by a seasoned systems integrator overcame the adversity of construction "surprises." As a result, the important Orlando market has received the rare bonuses of an additional nighttime SD channel, a rich schedule of TV shows dedicated to children, state-of-the-art high-definition broadcast capabilities, and extraordinary automation efficiencies.

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FACTS ABOUT THE PCS/WMFE INSTALLATION

EQUIPMENT LIST

Nvision NV8256 Digital Video Routing Switcher
- Handles both standard definition (SD) and high definition (HD) video signals
- WMFE's system is 96-in by 96-out, and is expandable to 256 x 256

Nvision NV5128 Multiformat Routing Switcher
- Modular 128 x128 routing switcher handles all current digital and analog signal formats
- WMFE's configuration is a 64-in by 64-out digital audio system

Nvision NV5128-MC Multi Channel Master Control Switcher
- Modular, multi channel master control switcher that supports either SD or HD operation
- A fully featured system providing mixing, multilevel keying, squeezeback effects, and logo storage

AJA HD and D series video conversion equipment
Cisco WS-C3750 series 24-port network switch
Dolby DP564, DP569 and DP 563 encoders and decoders
Evertz 5600MSC Master Sync system
Evertz X1200 series HD and SD switchers and keyers
Harvey Scenic custom MCR consoles
Leitch Velocity HD non-linear editing
Masstech Mass Store data management system
Middle Atlantic VRK series broadcast rack enclosures
Newpoint Technologies C-View SNMP monitoring system
Ross Video "Gear Lite" modular video and audio processing system
Snell and Wilcox IQ series modular glue system & up-down-aspect conversion
Sony CSM100L Petasite scaleable tape library and broadcast monitors
Sundance Titan multi-channel automation system
Tandberg E5780 and E5710 HD/SD encoding system video compression digital system
Tektronix WFM-700 series HD/SD test equipment video and audio measurement
Vertigo xMedia CG HD/SD graphics system
Videotek DDM de-modulators
Videotek VTM series HD/SD monitoring system
Viewsonic P, G and VE series flat-panel monitors
Wohler AMP1 and LM series audio & video metering and monitoring

DESIGN TEAM

WMFE-TV:
Mike Simmons, Director of Engineering
Phil Kuhn, Engineering Manager
Aldo Vivona, Vice President of Administration & Technology

Professional Communications Systems (PCS):
Dan Whitman, Design Engineer
Larry Stephen, Project Manager/Account Executive, Tampa HQ
Glenn Thomason, Director of Engineering
Troy Pazos, Installation Manager
Bill Blush, Vice President, Sales

FACTS ABOUT PCS

Professional Communications Systems, Inc. (PCS) has been a leading provider of consulting, systems integration and equipment solutions to the broadcast industry since 1985. Headquartered in Tampa, Florida, the firm is a division of Media General, operator of dozens of television, newspaper and Internet media properties in the southeastern United States. PCS is a member of PSNI, the Professional Systems Network International group of integrators, and has recently expanded its facilities in Tampa and Orlando.

Case studies of completed PCS installations are presented online at *www.pcomsys.com*, along with additional information about the company's products and services. Major installations include award-winning KCEN-TV in Waco, KWTV in Oklahoma City, Charleston's WCBD-TV, and WTVC in Chattanooga, along with WFLA-TV, Nielsen Media Research and Raymond James Stadium in the Tampa Bay region. WINK-TV in Fort Myers is another significant installation in progress.

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