

# **DOLORES COUNTY BROADCASTING NETWORK**

## **D C B N**

### **Development Progression**

**By Dan Fernandez**

**Dolores County DCBN Manager**

Through the CSUCE Communities in Economic Transition program (Nov. 1995), a community business development evaluation was conducted with the community of Green River, Utah, and members of the Western Dolores County Economic Development Council. During the visit, the Council viewed a demonstration of the use of the Public Access Cable Channel in Green River, Utah. The following are the steps that were taken to develop our own TV station.

#### **Phase 1**

- a. Contacted the local cable company (TCI Cable of Durango now AT&T cable) on accessing the Public Access Channel. Checked the cable company contract with Town of Dove Creek (all towns that have cable must have a contract with the local cable supplier) to see if supplying the necessary equipment (by

the cable company)to access the channel was in the contract. In our case it was not. 1995

b. Secured grants to purchase a character generator, modems and access module. The cable company supplied the music for the channel. 1995

c. From the Extension office, the scrolling system was utilized as a community events calendar and information media. TV Cable is only available in the Town of Dove Creek and serves 125 households and businesses. We started with 12 information pages in 2001 we now (2015) have over 150 transmitting 7 days a week, 24 hrs.a day. 1996

## **Phase 2**

a. Working with the cable company, we developed a plan to access their main transmitting station in Dove Creek (or head-in room) for live transmissions on cable. This required the installation of a shielded cable, either underground

or overhead, to the head-in room. We chose the underground method for the 1,400 feet of installation. 1996

- b. Grants were secured for the live line installation and rudimentary studio equipment including a video camera and VCR for video tape transmissions. An FM tuner was also purchased so that we could choose our own music. Within a few weeks, we started a live evening news program with the 4-H kids - six 4-Her's in the program. 1997

### **Phase 3**

- a. Investigated the possibility of installing a transmitter and tower for expanded coverage. The key contact was the local TV translator company (SW Colorado TV Translator Association). They supplied the technical information and contacts for the "DC TV" expansion. 1998
- b. Secured grants for a 100ft. tower, 100 watt transmitter, lightning protection, engineering, signs, tower installation, anti climbing device, studio equipment including new camera, tv monitors, wiring, etc. Cost "extras," contingencies and overages were

extensive and needed to be more fully explored prior to grant submission.  
1998

- c. The TV translator company applied for and received the FCC license to operate the transmitter. This is a huge contribution because of the time and expense usually needed to secure a license. We were also lucky in that the FCC had opened an application window for licenses just as we got serious on the project. The TV translator company also supplied the broadcast antenna that sits on top of the tower -another large savings. 1998
  
- d. "DC TV" transmits simultaneously on cable channel 20 and on UHF channel 32 with the community calendar and educational information pages 24 hours a day. With a UHF broadcast radius of 30+ miles, "DC TV" reaches into all of western Dolores County, western San Miguel County, northern Montezuma County and Southeast Utah. Our estimated viewing audience is 5,000 people. "DC TV" Programming consists of satellite transmission re-feeds, video tapes and live transmissions with interviews, call-in shows, news

reports, 4-H News at Noon, (ended by the high school in 1998) and the 4-H Evening News programs. All live transmissions must originate from the Extension office or the courthouse courtroom. Twenty five 4-Her's are now involved in the program. 1998

- e. "DC TV's" transmitter was originally located in the TV studio. It was noisy and gave off a significant amount of heat leading to system shut-downs. Working with the Dolores County Social Services department, funds were secured to relocate the transmitter to a vacant room and install a commercial cooling system. The present transmitter room with cooling system has the capacity to hold an additional 6 transmitters if "DC TV" decides to expand program offerings. 1999
  
- f. Through the help of a local computer specialist, an additional live transmission site was established in the gym of the High School which is next door to the courthouse. This provided live programming possibilities for sports and cultural events. Also a grant was secured for a weather station which is programmed into the scrolling

system giving instant local weather conditions. 1999

- g. Working with Southwest BOCES, a grant was secured to install a receiver antenna on the tower for Vo-Tech and adult education classes. These classes are then rebroadcast to area residents saving considerable travel time and expense 1999.
- h. Using the "DC TV" tower and facilities, SWTV Translator Association installed a transmitter for the All News Channel (ANC) on UHF channel 30 for area residents. 1999
- i. Through two grants from the 4-H Youth Fund and the CSU Cooperative Extension 4-H Program, funds were secured for 2 new studio cameras and a part-time assistant for Station operations. The Dolores County Commissioners have also granted permission for "DC TV" to move to larger quarters as soon as the offices are vacated in the courthouse and developed a County Line Item in the budget to support "DC TV" operations. Forty 4-Her's are now involved in the program. 1999

- j. Additional grant money has allowed us to construct and purchase a remote transmission unit for live remotes within a 10 mile radius of the station. The microwave unit is very portable, can operate off of a car battery and transmits an excellent signal. A rotating receiver antenna has been installed on the tower to receive the signals. 2000
- k. Working with Southwest TV Translator Association and Colorado Public Radio, an FM radio feed of Colorado Public Radio/National Public Radio feed is now being broadcast to area residents. This is a satellite re-feed and can be found on 88.7FM. 2000
- l. As "DC TV" is now only one segment of our TV & radio system, the name has been changed from "DC TV" to the Dolores County Broadcasting Network (DCBN) which includes "DC TV" on cable & UHF, ANC on UHF, and NPR satellite FM radio refeed. 40 4-Her's involved in the program. 2000

#### **Phase 4**

- a. With the help of SWTV Translator Association, A satellite refeed of PBS on UHF channel 34 was added to our broadcast lineup bringing the total to 5 signals being broadcast from DCBN. 2001
- b. Through a grant by the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, a new studio was built for DCBN. 2001
- c. A surprise After School Grant from The Colorado Trust (\$93,000) enabled us to fully update all of our studio equipment. The grant also allowed us to hire part-time a technical director, daily program director and 3 student assistants for our 4-H Evening News Program. 2001
- d. The High School has started using the station once a week with a communications class. 2001 - 2007

## **Phase 5**

- a. With the help of SWTV Translator Association, we added a second FM radio refeed of Colorado Public Radio/National Public Radio on 89.5FM in 2002. Due to licensing issues we had to drop the Public Radio Music feed but we have continued with the Public Radio News feed. 2003
  
- b. Using equipment funds from the Colorado Trust Grant, we installed 2 state-of-the-art teleprompters. The impact on the 4-H Evening News Program was immediate as the kids' on camera news delivery and poise have dramatically improved. 2002
  
- c. A grant from the Department of Local Affairs for Courthouse improvements has included a new room for our TV translators and a badly needed air conditioning system for the studio and control room. 2003

## **Phase 6**

- a. The new transmitter room has allowed the installation of transmitters for

rebroadcasting of all major networks including ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, WB and The Farm Channel. 2004

- b. With some equipment approaching 10 years of service, major equipment upgrades were initiated including studio cameras, video mixer, soundboard, in studio communication system and additional TV monitors. 2005
- c. Installed automated video/CD system which has increased our program offerings. This computerized system allows us to store hundreds of hours of educational and community videos and CD's then schedule automatic broadcasts of selected videos at specific times on our two Public Access channels. A weekly schedule of these programs is printed in our local newspaper. Videos/CD's include anything from Pruning Workshops to senior citizen exercise videos. 2006-2007

## **Phase 7**

- a. The digital world arrives! Because of a mandate from the FCC, DCTV had to begin a lengthy process to convert all of our analog equipment to digital.

This included our transmitters, cameras, and control room equipment. Fortunately for DCBN and DCTV, the SWTV Translator Association supplied all the new digital transmitters and modulating equipment. DCTV over the next few years changed all the broadcast equipment. 2008-2011

- b. One major addition to our 24/7 programming was weather data. We placed a new Davis Scientific weather station on the courthouse roof for local weather conditions and included National Weather Service regional weather radar, maps and forecasts. 2008-2011
  
- c. SWTV also expanded our transmission points including Cavenus by Mancos, CO, Cold Springs on the Blue Abajo Mountains in Utah and our tower in Dove Creek. Cortez Cable also carries our signal. We estimate our viewing audience demographic at 35,000 people in the 4-Corners region. 2008-2011.
  
- d. During this time period, Dolores County significantly stepped up to support the DCBN operations by

increasing the budget enough to fully sustain operations, equipment and personnel.

- e. DCTV also began a sponsorship program to generate funds for operations. Yearly sponsorships range from \$25 to \$150 and have generated approximately \$5,000 yearly from 50+ sponsors from the 4-Corners Region. Hopefully, the High School will eventually assume a more significant role with the TV Station - this has been, and continues to be, one of the principle goals of this Extension program. A live webcam was also added on the courthouse roof which has the ability to automatically rotate to view the Dove Creek area and the Blue Abajo Mountains. 2008-2015
  
- f. A major improvement in our studio communications equipment was the installation of wireless communicators that use ear phones and small microphones eliminating the bulky headsets we used for over 10 years. 2015

### **The Future**

In 2015 and beyond, DCTV will continue with system upgrades and diversified

program offerings for children and adults. It is hoped that eventually we will install live radio equipment in conjunction with KSJD in our studio control room. Also, we are working with SWTV Translator Association to begin a News at Noon Program.

### **Special Program Recognition**

USDA 4-H National  
The Power of Youth  
4-H Centennial Edition 2002  
Programs of Excellence  
Exceptional People, Innovative Practices  
DCBN 4-H Evening News Program

Epsilon Sigma Phi National Honorary  
Extension Fraternity  
State Visionary Award for Dan Fernandez  
DCBN Manager and DCTV 4-H Evening News  
Program Director

**If you have any questions or comments, I can be reached at the DCTV studio at 970-677-4119.**