

Salem, NH, Online and on Cable with Sony Broadcast Technology

Customer:

- Town of Salem, New Hampshire

Industry:

- Broadcasting

Challenges:

- Serve school, citizen, and community needs via three programming streams available via cable TV and online
- Introduce high school students to broadcasting using professional technology
- Provide cost-effective remote access to public meetings
- Offer access to candidates for NH presidential primary

Solution:

- Full range of Sony's HD broadcast technology, including BRC-H900 remote HD PTZ cameras, MVS-3000 multiformat HD switcher, and Optical Disc Archive

Benefits:

- Delivered superb full HD broadcast-quality imaging via the BRC PTZ cameras with minimal control staff required
- Trained students on pro equipment like MVS switcher and XDCAM® HD camcorders
- Brought to life 40-year archive from legacy tape via Optical Disc Archive



The town of Salem, New Hampshire, is home to one of the oldest cable access television studios in the country. Since the early '70's, it has provided the public with a view of the state's first-in-the-nation presidential primary for more than 10 election cycles. Now, a full range of Sony's professional HD broadcast equipment, including the BRC-H900 full HD PTZ robotic cameras, an MVS-3000 multiformat switcher, PMW-320 and PMW-200 XDCAM HD camcorders, and an ODS-D77U USB 3.0 Optical Disc Archive drive, will enable a team of volunteers, professionals, and students to capture the upcoming political campaigns as part of creating content for three 24/7 cable TV channels as well as online streams.

Salem's channels serve three different groups: the Salem School District, Salem Community Television, and the Government Channel. According to Tom Giarosso, Executive Director, Salem Community Television, the decade-long project of making the transition to HD has been completed.

"Sony has played a crucial role in our transition from SD to HD, and our investments in Sony equipment have proven to be wise ones. The BRC-series PTZ robotic cameras have carried us through

this evolution with nine BRC-H900's with full HD now in service," he reported.

The first BRC cameras arrived in Salem back in 2004 with the initial installation of the SD BRC-300 in Salem's Town Hall. Then four more SD BRC-300 cameras were added to the school's auditorium. These quickly proved their utility in covering a wide variety of events, including plays, concerts, town meetings, and community events. Soon another four were installed in the school gymnasium. A total of 13 BRC-300's were eventually used for various applications, with HD up-conversion of the 16x9 widescreen imaging to extend life into the HD era. Then in 2008, the auditorium was upgraded to HD with Sony's BRC-H700 HD cameras replacing the BRC-300's. Two





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years ago, Sony’s BRC-H900’s PTZ came online replacing the SD cameras in Town Hall. Meanwhile, the TV studio has gone through a similar evolution with the arrival of BRC-700, then BRC-H900 cameras, plus PMW-320 cameras in a studio configuration.

The Sony camera’s durability and longevity have proven to be a great longterm investment. As the more advanced cameras arrived, the older models have been repurposed for use elsewhere. Finally, after more than a decade’s service, the reliable BRC-300’s are moving from active production to back-up status. Equipment expenditures from more than a decade ago are still available for replacement use if a catastrophic event happens. The older cameras may be able to be deployed in some innovative application. One possibility? Mount inside weatherproof domes to serve as roof-mounted weather cams. Such weather cams have proven quite popular during snowstorms on the streaming website and community message board system.

For Giarrosso, the power of the BRC robotic cameras is their ability to deliver the most with a skeleton crew.

“We are able to do more with less personnel with the BRC cameras. You never have as many volunteers as you want. For a basketball game, you have two announcers in the stands, one camera operator for live-assist, a graphics operator, and one person running multiple BRC cameras. We’re able to do a good job with just five people instead of ten,” Giarrosso said.

This is also crucial when it comes to covering the innumerable town meetings

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Bob Berthel,
Salem School District
Media Coordinator



for the Government Channel. With Sony robotic cameras installed, a single person is able to serve as both camera operator and director at the control room adjacent to the studio.

The arrival of the BRC-H900 cameras has been a real bonanza for Salem High School students who get hands-on experience with broadcasting, according to Bob Berthel, Salem School District Media Coordinator. The HD studio is equipped with Sony PMW-320 XDCAM HD cameras outfitted for studio use, and the new robotic cameras are an excellent match since they utilize the same sensor.

“We pride ourselves on keeping up with the latest technology so our students have access to what the professionals are actually using. The PMW-320 is what they’re using down the road from us at the network TV affiliate and is perfect for teaching the basics of camera work. The BRC-H900’s are tremendously convenient working right along with these. We can look like the Big Guys easily,” said Berthel.

The town of Salem is pushing the edge in production technology to reach back into their history, too. The Sony ODS-D77U USB 3.0 Optical Disc Archive drive and content management software is helping make Salem’s rich archives easier to access. Now that the transition to HD is accomplished, Salem is looking ahead to utilizing 4K technology in the near future.

“As teachers in an area with constantly changing technology, we are constantly learning. As we did with HD, we look to Sony as we look forward to the new frontier in production that is 4K,” said Berthel.