


Location:

Omaha, NE

Challenges:

- Streamline newsgathering operations
- Deliver cost-effective live coverage of breaking news and events

Benefits:

- Cost effective
- Simple to use
- Wireless hotspot
- Superior customer service

“Our use of the TVUPack has been a big part of our strategy of reducing the complexity of getting news to air as well as the cost of doing so.” – Ed Bok, Chief Engineer, KPTM

KPTM

Delivering Live News in a Cost-Effective Manner

Challenge: Delivering a Cost-Effective Live Newscast

KPTM, a fully-licensed Fox affiliate based in Omaha, Nebraska, has spent the last two years transitioning its nightly newscast to a streamlined HD broadcast model. As part of the process, KPTM began identifying unique solutions to cut costs while still delivering quality news coverage to its viewers.

“In the interest of better serving our viewers while being cost-effective, we made changes to our News strategy in September of 2010. We increased staff to eight reporters and a videographer locally at the station, while we utilized the production facilities of INN in Davenport, Iowa to produce the live newscast,” said Ed Bok, KPTM Fox 42 Chief Engineer.

In addition to redesigning their newscast production, KPTM was looking for less expensive alternatives to its microwave trucks. “Running a cost-effective newsgathering organization is one of our primary goals both in the short term and the long term. As part of that strategy, we want to rely less on microwave production trucks. We own two trucks, but operating them requires extra engineers to be on duty at the truck and at the station, and that can be costly,” explained Bok.

Solution: Reduce Cost of Live Shots with TVUPack

KPTM deployed TVUPack as part of its overall strategy to streamline production costs while maintaining the ability to deliver live breaking news to its viewers. “Our use of the TVUPack has been a big part of our strategy of reducing the complexity of getting news to air as well as the cost of doing so,” said Bok.

Since deploying TVUPack, the station used has used the system to go live from a number of live events in the Omaha area, including high school football games and the College World Series. A high power weather system that hit the 2011 College World Series provided the backdrop to one of KPTM’s more memorable live shots.

“We used the pack to cover breaking news during a severe thunderstorm with high winds live from the stadium, which would have been impossible with a microwave truck. The backpack worked perfectly, letting us go live on location with the news as it happened,” explained Joe Meldrum, broadcast IT engineer, KPTM. “There have been a couple of situations that we’ve been able to go live with the backpack in high wind, which is something that you can’t do with an OB van.”

Benefits

Since deploying TVUPack, KPTM estimates that the station will be able to realize considerable cost savings in its newsgathering efforts. "Long term, it's going to show up in not having to replace our microwave trucks as they age. If we eliminate even one truck, that's a savings of \$100,000 or more down the road," said Bok.

KPTM has been especially impressed with the system's portability and ease of use. "The fact that the TVUPack only has one button makes it extremely easy to use for the reporters in the field. The interface on the receiver end lets someone with more knowledge on the receiver end to diagnose any issues," Meldrum explained.

Another major positive is TVUPack's built in wireless hotspot feature, which enables KPTM to use TVUPack's optimized wireless connections to easily move data back to the studio. "One of the added benefits of the pack is its WiFi hotspot capability. We use the pack as a hot spot and allow our reporters to edit their stories in the field and then upload them through the pack. The multiple cards in the backpack enables the data transfer to go much faster. Being able to FTP stories from the field is a huge benefit to us," he said.

Additionally, TVUPack's customer support team has "The TVU support team rocks. We haven't had any major issues, but when we have needed to work with support, they answer the phone and take care of the issue right away," Bok said.

According to Hart, TVU's strong customer support was another attractive feature of using the TVUPack. "The customer support for TVUPack is outstanding. Being in broadcasting my entire life, anytime you look at technology, nobody expects it not to have issues. If there's ever any kind of problem with the pack, the customer support team goes above and beyond to resolve the issue. It's rare to get the kind of service they deliver," said Hart.

About TVUPack

Already in use by hundreds of broadcast organizations around the globe, TVU's award-winning TVUPack gives broadcasters satellite/microwave TV truck or van functionality in a lightweight backpack. TVUPack is powered by TVU's proprietary Inverse StatMux technology, which dynamically segments a live video signal and transmits the segments through multiple independent 3G/4G connections. TVUPack is simple to use and provides broadcasters with low-latency, HD quality signal that enables them to broadcast live at any time and from any location.