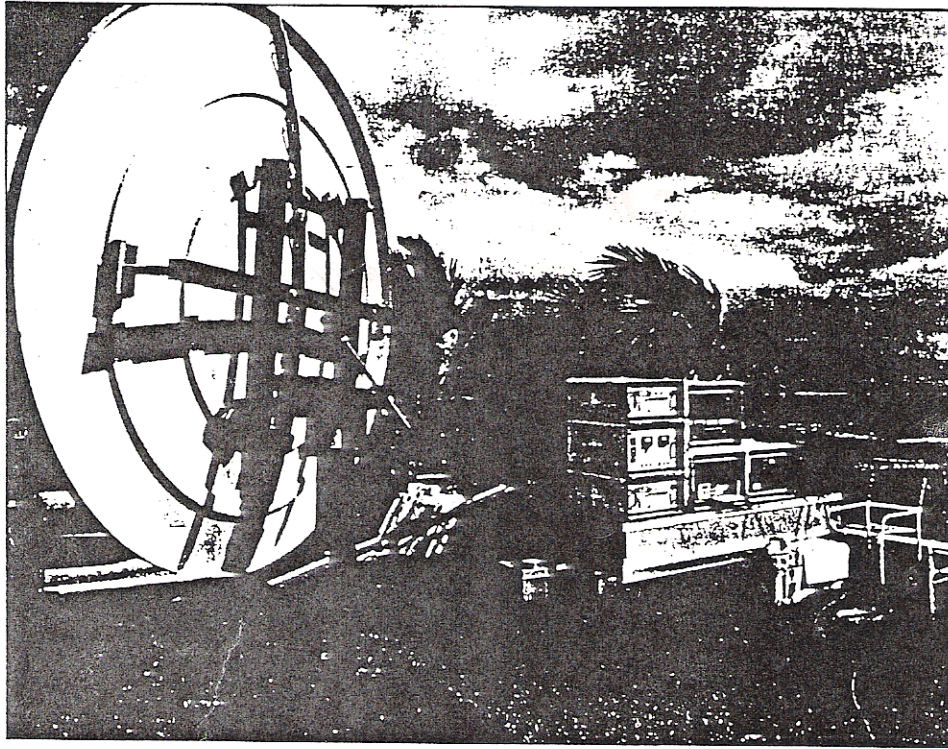


News Hawking In Hawaii



A customized flyaway has made inter-island news gathering and network coverage much easier in the 50th state.

By Craig Landis

It used to be nearly as expensive and time consuming to set up a feed from Hawaii as it was to organize international transmission from other parts of the Pacific Rim. Although C-band transportables were and are present in the islands, the frequency coordination requirements and logistics involved in shipping them by barge between the islands was a major production in itself. This made originating live sports and news from some of the most picturesque locations in the world such as Maui, Kauai and The Big Island quite complicated and very costly for producers.

Semi-trucks with five-meter anten-

nas were out of the question when rapid-deployment to a neighbor island was needed, so news from these spots was taped and flown to Honolulu aboard inter-island aircraft. Microwave was expensive, often unreliable and also required booking and planning weeks ahead. Several Honolulu TV stations were aware of Ku-band SNG technology but only knew of a few experiments with it in the islands. It appeared too costly and had been used to feed material overseas only. Some doubted the quality as well.

The use of a Ku-band flyaway to provide satellite uplink services in Hawaii took a new turn as Vision

Accomplished permanently based an "enhanced" flyaway system in Honolulu last year with several larger antennas on Oahu and on the neighbor islands. Using spot beam transponders and other available space segment primarily on the GStar satellites, this system has enabled Honolulu's KHON-TV to go where competing crews haven't been. This includes showing live lava flow from Kilauea for the first time to local TV audiences, providing election coverage direct from Kauai and conducting live golf interviews from out on the course on Maui.

Duncan McKay of Vision Accomplished describes the Hawaii hard-

ware: The "package features higher power phase-combined TWT amplifiers and several larger antennas." This, he says, provides more gain than conventional flyaway systems. It also offers redundancy and elaborate monitoring gear. Among the network broadcast events which have been covered are the last two ESPN Pro Bowl games from Aloha Stadium, CNN and ABC coverage of the lava flow on the Big Island, and many golf tournaments including the Senior Skins Game produced by Ohlmeyer Communications and aired on NBC.

Last April an Italian television special originated from Paradise Cove, site of a famous Hawaiian luau, and was fed directly, using GStar, to the east coast of the United States for turnaround to Italy. The show featured live hula dancers and included an interactive game-show segment where viewers in Italy spoke to the performers in Hawaii. A comparison of the budgets showed the Ku-band link saved the producers several

thousand dollars over either C band on-site or telco interconnected uplinking. Many also believe the on-site uplink adds to the reliability of the program transmission. A recent championship surfing event gained added publicity when same-day highlights were beamed to Australia, home of the winner of the event.

Ku band saved several thousand dollars over C band or telco interconnected uplinking

During the coverage of the lava flow and its destruction of the town of Kalapana, Vision Accomplished technicians had to check in hourly with civil defense officials who were conducting evacuations of the area and evaluating the safety conditions. The entire system was moved several times to avoid the lava flow, and

temperatures in the area became unbearable at times. The steaming, burning ground and glowing hot red lava were seen live in the 2 a.m. darkness (Hawaii time) on Good Morning America. A local resident was interviewed with her burning home in the background.

In addition to the ability to feed inter-island and back to the United States, other international destinations can be reached from Hawaii via Intelsat Ku to C cross-strapped transponders serving Pacific Rim nations. This may lead to even more widespread use of Hawaii as an origination by Japanese and Australian networks. Hawaii is being perceived more and more as a hub of Pacific Rim communications and its beauty will be seen live more often on the televisions of the world, much of it transmitted via the Ku band. □

About The Author

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