



Newsbreak

INDUSTRY NEWS

Convergence Saves the Day(s) in Fredericksburg, VA

When four adults were killed at the National Boy Scout Jamboree in neighboring Caroline County, VA, this summer, and we were short-staffed with people on vacations and maternity leave, convergence helped us get the story.

The Free Lance-Star, the local newspaper that owns WFLS-FM, WWUZ-FM and WYSK-AM/FM in Fredericksburg, VA, had reporters on the scene. Our desk was able to pass along information from the station scanner that was not available in the field so reporters could ask detailed questions and verify information. In return, we got quick answers and could go on air and online with accurate information.

The Free Lance-Star is right downstairs. However, when I arrived here 16 years ago there was very little crossover between the daily newspaper and the four radio stations.

That started to change six years ago when the newspaper's website designer came up with a plan to put closings due to weather online, cutting down on calls to the radio news department while at the same time directing traffic to the website.

The online cancellations system was only the beginning. Soon, we were posting stories on the station website that would also appear on the



Radio news director Frank Hammon reviews the lineup for radio and newspaper during the daily convergence meeting, and writes an op-ed piece.

newspaper's site. In a market where there is no local television station, we were able to localize stories by putting video and pictures from breaking news stories on our website.

There are four stations in our group—none of them all news. Our flagship station, a full-service country format at 50kw on the FM dial, airs 12 daily newscasts starting at 5 a.m. While there are three full-time and three part-time people on the news staff, they are spread out over three of the four stations. The difference in format on all four stations means the news content and writing is different on each.

We've been able to provide reports for *The Free Lance-Star*, and their reporters have become beat reporters and videographers for our newscasts and website. When one of their reporters has a story we need, we get them to voice a 30- to 40-second summary. They add a plug and lockout such as "For more, read my story in today's *Free Lance-Star*. For WFLS News, I'm [insert name here]."

The relationship comes in handy when we're working on a major breaking story from the studio and can't get



Each day, we have an 11 a.m. meeting of the newspaper, web, radio and photo departments to go over the newspaper budget and what's coming up on radio and the editorial page. We discuss the possible use of "reefers" in the paper for any crossovers to radio or web.

anyone to the scene. On several occasions the newspaper has had a reporter there who could call in a scene setter or voicer. It takes a special kind of newspaper reporter to do this, one who can think outside the box and go with the moment.

Partnerships Prevail

Percentage of TV Stations Involved With Convergence Partners		Percentage of TV News Departments Providing Content to Other Media				
		Station website	Another TV station	Cable TV channel	Local radio	
Newspaper(s)	39.8%	All Television	70.4%	22.6%	11.7%	44.9%
Newspaper and radio	15.7	Big 4 Affiliates	73.4	22.4	14.0	47.7
Website(s)	14.5	Other Commercial	80.0	22.9	0	45.7
Radio station(s)	12.0	Market Size:				
Other	18.1	1-25	67.6	16.2	5.4	27.0
		26-50	68.8	27.1	20.8	52.1
		51-100	72.7	20.8	15.6	48.1
		101-150	71.0	32.3	4.8	46.8
		151+	70.0	14.0	10.0	44.0
Source: RTNDA/Ball State University Annual Survey						

Newsbreak

VA, through the gridlock.

Some of the newspaper reporters we've had on the air enjoy the notoriety of being on the radio and want to do more. And some of the radio reporters enjoy seeing their names in print when they've written for our colleagues downstairs. Most recently, I wrote an op-ed piece on the death of John Paul II, after speaking with my brother, a Franciscan priest who lives in Vatican City.

As we continue down this road of convergence, we're constantly thinking of ways to bring news to our listeners and readers. My wife, incidentally, will not be on the road with me—four hours sitting in a car in Ashland was her first and last assignment.—Frank Hammon, news director at WFLS-FM, WWUZ-FM and WYSK-AM/FM in Fredericksburg, VA, can be reached at fhammon@wfls.com.

That extra reporter can assist in getting more detailed information from the field, while the station shares the information obtained back at the studio. And that great photo in the newspaper? It'll work for website coverage, too.

The perfect scenario, where everything came together, occurred covering the sniper shootings in the fall of 2003.

When a shooting occurred

on a Saturday night just outside Richmond, *The Free Lance-Star* held the presses for the Sunday edition. My wife and I were returning home from eating out when we came upon a roadblock. Everything was shut down. My phone rang and it was the disc jockey on duty. He had received a call that there was a shooting at a restaurant that he thought was north of us. I called a for-

mer employee and anchor at a Richmond TV station and she filled me in some more.

I turned the car around, with wife Carol in the passenger seat, and took several back roads to the crime scene. I then hooked up with the sheriff's PIO and began filing live reports for our station. I also fed information to the newspaper as their reporter tried to get to Ashland,

INDUSTRY NEWS

Stations Support Hurricane Katrina Relief Efforts



Expecting to raise \$50,000 and load one truck with supplies for victims of Hurricane Katrina, WFLS-FM, WYSK-AM/FM and WWUZ-FM staff staged a one-day broadcast from a local shopping center in Fredericksburg, VA, on September 2.

The stations began broadcasting at 5 a.m. and planned to end the remote broadcast at 1 p.m. But as donations and press coverage from Washington stations WTTG-TV and WRC-TV increased, the fund-

raising continued until 7 p.m.

In all, news director Frank Hammon says the "community-oriented stations" raised \$460,000 for the American Red Cross and filled 12 tractor trailers and nine buses with bottled water, diapers, canned food and can openers.

KIII-TV in Corpus Christi, TX, also planned a one-day drive that was extended—in this case to four days. Staged to

benefit the Salvation Army, the live broadcast from the station parking lot raised \$165,000 and gathered one million pounds of bottled water and food, according to news director Richard Longoria. The majority of the supplies were sent to Baton Rouge, LA, and Pascagoula, MS. Some of the supplies were used locally when more than 2,000 evacuees relocated to Corpus Christi on September 3. Ten days after

covering the WFLS event, WRC held its own fundraiser in partnership with NBC News Washington, Safeway, SunTrust Bank and Clear Channel's WMZQ-FM and WIHT-FM. The day of events to benefit the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army culminated with a live in-studio broadcast and star-studded telethon. Willard Scott, Tim Russert and Lisa Myers helped take calls, bringing in a total of \$478,000.—Sarah Stump



RTNDF NEWS

Summer 2006: Educators Coming to Newsrooms

RTNDF's Educator in the Newsroom fellowships place broadcast journalism educators in radio and television newsrooms for four weeks each summer. Designed to improve the flow of information between journalists and educators, the program combines hands-on experience with learning about current practices, new technology and issues facing newsrooms.

The deadline for 2006 Educator in the Newsroom applications is December 16. For more information, go to

www.rtndf.org/resources/excel.shtml.

The 2005 class of educators shared these thoughts throughout the program, through a listserv:

Each day I would make a different mistake—and I would learn NOT to make them again. This fellowship has helped to re-energize me and inspire me to do the best job I can for my students.—**Jack Hodgson, Oklahoma State University (sponsoring station: 6News, Lawrence, KS)**

My final observation: TV news is hard work. Exciting, fulfilling

and important but tough!—**Deb Wenger, Virginia Commonwealth University (KPNX-TV, Phoenix)**

I am about to fall flat on my face because I am normally asleep around this time of morning [2 a.m.]. But I am hanging in there and getting the job done. I don't envy these guys at all.—**Phil Bremen, Ball State University (KETV-TV, Omaha, NE)**

Just like the good ole days, I am being told to cover two events happening at the same time. Some things never change! But I am still having a blast!—**Peggy Lewis, Howard University (News12 New Jersey, Edison, NJ)**

People will say this fellowship will teach you a lot. And it will. They'll say it helps get you back in touch with your newsroom skills. And it will. They'll say you will come up with many new ideas and new stories for the classroom. And you will. But the secret they may not tell you is this: The Educator in the Newsroom Fellowship will be the most fun you've had since you were a cub reporter chasing your first fire engine.—**Rich Landesberg, Elon University (KIVI-TV, Boise, ID)**

On my last day, the news director threatened to handcuff me to my desk so I couldn't leave.—**Mary T. Rogus, Ohio University (WCNC-TV, Charlotte, NC)**