WESTALLIS CITY 25

Profile

A Wisconsin video franchise law enacted in 2007 gave AT&T® the opportunity to secure a statewide franchise and launch its U-Verse® residential IPTV service in communities across the state. As it rolls out U-Verse in Wisconsin municipalities, AT&T is required to provide the same public, educational, and government access (PEG) television programming available on its service as is available through each city's incumbent cable operator. In most cases, this programming includes locally produced content, as well as programming supplied by state and federal agencies, and features information about state and city services, community events, and coverage of city council meetings.

The burden of delivering PEG content in a format compatible with AT&T's U-Verse technology rests on the shoulders of municipalities, most of which currently provide a cable feed to the headends of operators such as Time Warner® and also now must invest in IP-based solutions for video delivery. Therefore, when AT&T decided to bring its U-Verse residential IPTV service to West Allis, a city of 60,000 in Milwaukee County, the city began to look for cost-effective encoding solutions that would deliver video for the U-Verse platform while requiring very little intervention and maintenance.

Industry

City Government

ViewCast Corporation

3701 West Plano Parkway
Suite 300
Plano, TX 75075-7840
800-250-6622
www.viewcast.com

ViewCast Encoder Gives Milwaukee Suburb Simple, Cost-Effective PEG Delivery

The Challenge

Choosing the Right Encoding Solution

When Jerry Musial took on the position of video and cable coordinator for the city of West Allis, he became involved in the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA) and its representation of the communications needs and interests of local governments and their advisors. He also took part in the municipal conversations held with AT&T prior to passage of the state video franchise law. As a result, when AT&T was granted the right to offer its services in West Allis, Musial already understood the changes that would be necessary in order to make PEG programming available via both cable and IPTV services. To find out more about how to handle streaming of content for U-Verse, he turned to a neighboring Wisconsin municipality, the city of Milwaukee.

The Solution

Next-Generation Streaming Solutions from ViewCast

To port its government access programs to U-Verse, Milwaukee had invested in a Niagara® streaming media encoder from ViewCast. Musial visited the Milwaukee site and decided to do likewise, knowing that the Niagara encoder had set up easily, was a sound piece of equipment, and would be equally well suited for encoding and streaming PEG programming from West Allis to AT&T's network, and onto U-Verse.

Musial elected to install a Niagara encoder within his city's broadcast facility. The Niagara can encode and output multiple streams simultaneously in the most-common viewing formats such as Windows Media®, Flash®, RealVideo® and features analog and SDI inputs, digital AES/EBU audio inputs, and accepts all popular worldwide video and audio standards. To enable plug-and-play simplicity for cities like West Allis – that need a reliable, low-cost encoding solution for U-Verse programming – all Niagara encoders on the market feature AT&T's PEG streaming specifications pre-programmed as a encoding profile.

The Result

Simple, Reliable Delivery of PEG Programming, and a Satisfied Cable Coordinator

The Niagara system now installed at the city of West Allis encodes PEG video for transport over the network to the U-Verse system, which began serving the West Allis viewing area in February 2008. Since the system was placed online, it has required no maintenance. The encoder operates around the clock, allowing the city to expand its reach via new IPTV services without requiring the time and expertise of the city's video and cable staff.

"Thanks to ViewCast, we're able to bring our government access programs to an even broader audience via leading-edge IPTV," says Musial. "The Niagara system was extremely easy to adopt, and its budget-conscious pricing played a big role in our choice. As a non-technical person, I really appreciated the excellent support and assistance we received from ViewCast, which enabled us to get up and running quickly and smoothly."

Niagara streaming media encoders from ViewCast are an ideal solution for municipalities that are seeking a robust and cost-effective method to meet their PEG initiatives. With its Niagara system in place, West Allis is positioned to take advantage of IPTV video delivery as awareness of and demand for such services continues to grow.