

Dielectric to Cease Operations; Orders Accepted on a Limited Basis



SPX Communication Technology (formerly Dielectric Communications), based in Raymond, ME, is discontinuing its broadcast TV and radio antenna operations and will instead focus on more profitable areas of its manufacturing business for other industries (like medical and the military).

Dielectric has been a main supplier of broadcast antennas to network and local stations across the country for more than 50 years and, according to its website, has served more than 1300 broadcasters ever since. Among a number of high-profile Dielectric installations, the main mast antenna atop the World Trade Center's 1 World Trade Center (the North Tower) was a 360ft Dielectric antenna, which had been rebuilt in 1999 by Dielectric Inc to accommodate digital

television broadcasting. (That very mangled antenna is now on exhibit at the Newseum in Washington, D.C.) A Dielectric antenna also tops New York's Empire State Building and is now home to most of the NYC-area broadcasters.

Dielectric's antennas have found a home on many of the most high-profile TV transmission installations, like NYC's Empire State Building and the former World Trade center.

In a letter to customers on Friday, April 18, written by Mark Fichter, general manager of the Dielectric division (Broadcast and Wireless Antenna Operations), the company said that parent company SPX Communication

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Dielectric *continued*

would instead focus on its Flow Technology business, which helps streamline manufacturing and other types of operations.

The letter, obtained by Broadcast Engineering, states:

"After careful consideration, SPX has decided to discontinue the broadcast television and radio and wireless antenna operations of its Dielectric Communications business unit worldwide, due to extremely difficult global economic conditions in the broadcast marketplace," Fisher wrote. "We have made the impacted Dielectric employees in the U.S. aware of this difficult decision."

This clearly means layoffs, but no specific information was made available and no one was available for comment.

"While you are likely anxious to understand more specifics in how the discontinuation of Dielectric's broadcast and wireless antenna operations may impact your company, we respectfully request your patience and understanding over the coming weeks as we work through the many complex steps associated with this decision. As a result, please be aware that Dielectric broadcast and wireless antenna personnel will be unavailable during the week of April 22nd as we focus on coordinating next steps. We anticipate that by the early part of the following week of April

29th that we will be able to directly respond to your inquiries."

The letter also states that Dielectric broadcast and wireless antenna will continue to operate in a limited capacity through the end of June 2013, "with the primary focus on completing outstanding orders while also conducting the necessary steps to close the business."

Dielectric said it would continue to accept orders on a limited basis for in-stock inventory items. However, it said, "orders for such items may only be accepted if payment is received up front and in full and delivery is taken on or before May 31st."

An answering machine recording at the company's headquarters confirmed as much.

Dielectric was founded in 1942 to support WWII radar systems and later migrated into designing and marketing TV broadcast transmission systems and related equipment. Much later on, in 2000, the company bought the assets of Harris Broadcast's TV antenna business. For a time, it was the largest manufacturer of TV and FM broadcast antennas in the U.S. Jampro Antennas, in Sacramento, CA, is among the few that remain. ■

Article courtesy of Michael Grotticelli from broadcastengineering.com.

Richmond, Danville Broadcast Stations Honored

CHARLOTTESVILLE WRIC-TV in Richmond and radio station WBTM-AM in Danville are the big winners in the 2013 Virginia Associated Press Broadcasters contest. Each took home Outstanding News Operation of the Year in their respective categories. In all, 12 broadcast stations across the state were honored at the VAPB awards luncheon at The Boar's Head Inn in Charlottesville on April 13.

VAPB also honored Jim Shaver with its Robert Gallimore Distinguished Service Award. The longtime news director at WDBJ-TV in Roanoke led the fight for television and radio access to courtroom cases in Virginia decades ago. The award, named after The Associated Press Chief of Bureau in Richmond between 1967 and 1985, is presented annually to someone who has made significant contributions to the broadcast industry in Virginia. Shaver began his journalism career in 1965 at the Floyd Press in Southwest Virginia. After college and a stint as a reporter at *The Roanoke Times*, Shaver joined the staff at WDBJ-TV as an assignment editor in 1975, becoming news director in 1977 and vice president of news and programming in 1991. ■

Virginia Supreme Court Ponders When to Let Cameras in Courtrooms

The Virginia Supreme Court is considering whether judges have a right to bar television cameras in the courtroom without giving a reason, a controversy that stems from last year's high-profile murder trial of University of Virginia lacrosse player George Huguely V.

Charlottesville TV station, WVIR, is suing the state over a decision by a Charlottesville circuit court judge to ban television news stations from recording the trial of Huguely, the U.Va. student-athlete convicted in 2012 of murdering his former girlfriend, 22-year-old Yeardley Love, in May 2010. The VAB is participating in this appeal.

The broadcasters allege that Judge Edward L. Hogshire barred cameras from the courtroom without providing a reason because he believed he had "unfettered discretion to prohibit the use of a camera during the sentencing" of Huguely, the group said.

"The trial court erred in holding that WVIR's newsgathering and reporting activities via electronic media were entitled to no protection under the First Amendment ... or the Constitution [of] Virginia, including its denial of Virginia Broadcasting's request to use a camera to acquire the news while allowing the print media to use the primary tools of its trade."

The law itself is somewhat hazy on when judges have a right to kick cameras and reporters out, and the Supreme Court ruling may provide greater clarity. One part of Virginia Code says that judges may "solely in its discretion permit the taking" of photographs, audio and video, but another says they must have "good cause shown" to do so.

At the time, Huguely's attorney, Francis



Lawrence, and Charlottesville Commonwealth's Attorney Warner Chapman both asked the court to not allow the cameras. In a court motion, Huguely's counsel said the cameras would "interfere with the conduct of the trial." There was also a concern that the courtroom structure would make it difficult to avoid filming jurors, a violation of courtroom rules.

The broadcasters said it was a mistake for the judge to rely on his "own speculation and the speculations of counsel" in denying the request.

The next opportunity for the Supreme Court to rule on the case is during its June session.

Huguely is now serving a 26-year sentence for second-degree murder. ■

Article courtesy of Steve Contorno from The Washington Examiner.

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Have News for the VAB Newsletter?

Send your news and announcements along with any photos to Marci Malinowski at marci.malinowski@easterassociates.com.



In this issue, the VAB takes a closer look at four members from this year's Best of the Best Leadership Program class.

Meet the VAB's Best of the Best



Jeff Rimmer

Where did you grow up/go to school?

I grew up in DC and all over Virginia.

What was your first job in broadcasting?

I was a board operator for a ClearChannel cluster in Harrisonburg, VA.

What is your career goal?

To retire! But seriously, I want to always work in broadcast in some form or fashion. I love the digital side of things and that is really where my heart is. I can see owning a digitally-based client solution company.

What are you most looking forward to learning/taking away from the Best of the Best Leadership program?

To learn more about myself and my approach as a leader. I want to become a more effective leader. I don't just want to be another manager—I want to inspire, create and achieve.

What do you like to do in your free time?

Anything involving music and my family! Going to concerts and watching my kids put on their make believe "mini-concerts" at home.

If you could have dinner with somebody from the past, present or future who would it be and why?

Steve Jobs. He is the greatest innovator and one of the most effective (and sometimes controversial) leaders of our time. He inspired people to create and achieve. He lived by the simple philosophy that if you are crazy enough to believe you can change the world then you are the one who will actually do that. He gave us tools that have completely changed the way that we interact and communicate with one another.



Alan Mower

Where did you grow up/go to school?

I grew up in Woodstock, New York and graduated from SUNY Geneseo.

What was your first job in broadcasting?

I was an account executive.

What is your career goal?

To lead a team of business development professionals.

What are you most looking forward to learning/taking away from the Best of the Best Leadership program?

To learn about successes and failures from industry peers is priceless. Our time together will only improve each other's skills.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I enjoy spending time with my wife and daughter ... whether it is having fun, relaxing or getting into trouble.

If you could have dinner with somebody from the past, present or future who would it be and why?

Because I think this is in our future, I'd like to have dinner with the person who is going to invent and bring to market holographic TV-with the potential for any number of individuals to simultaneous view separate programming in the same space. That person or Albert Einstein.



Where did you grow up/go to school?

I grew up in the “Mitten” – West

Michigan! I graduated from Central Michigan University, and also studied at Azusa Pacific University in California and Edith Cowen University in Australia.

What was your first job in broadcasting?

I had graduated from college and had no idea what I wanted to do with my degree when I heard my favorite radio station was looking for a morning co-host. I went out for the auditions just for the fun of it, and out of 100 girls, they chose me! That was six years ago, and I've stuck with radio ever since.

What is your career goal?

I have a passion for leadership and mentoring. I'd love to take what I learn in the Best of the Best program and use it to find and cultivate broadcasting talent. Whether that means a GM position or a corporate position, I'm not sure, but I've been enjoying finding my way!

What are you most looking forward to learning/taking away from the Best of the Best Leadership program?

I hope to improve myself as a leader in my professional and personal life. I really enjoyed the leadership style assessment (the DISC profile), and have been enjoying learning about myself and leadership in every session!

What do you like to do in your free time?

I'm a big movie buff and love to go movies. I'm also passionate about investing in the community, so I volunteer every chance I get. So far in Richmond I've been able to get involved with Communities in Schools, the Special Olympics, and Susan G Komen. I love it!

Watch for additional Best of the Best class members in upcoming issues of the newsletter.

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