

Cape Town TV plans great leap forward

Cape Town TV, the mother city's community television station, will be blasting into the national media space later this year with a radical expansion of its reach.



From September this year the channel will have a stronger signal in Cape Town and it will also be available throughout the sub-continent on DSTV.

Perfect timing

September is a fitting date for the channel's broadcast expansion because it will be exactly five years old when it launches on the second frequency and on DSTV.

Says Station Manager Karen Thorne, "These developments are a real boost for Cape Town TV and will be a breath of fresh air in the media landscape, which is dominated by conventional and commercially-driven television channels.

"Our content is fresh, innovative and people-driven. It is often controversial and pushes boundaries in terms of form and content. CTV's programming promotes debate and creates a rare space for authentic voices to come through in a sea of media mediocrity."

Community participation is a core part of CTV's mandate and the channel encourages Capetonians to get involved in the production of programming that meets the needs of the community. This results in content that is locally relevant, fresh and innovative.

CTV also sources some of the best international documentaries that help people to understand the complex challenges which confront humanity today. Says Thorne, "We promote freedom of expression and access to information in our programming, which enables our audience to make informed decisions on relevant issues."

The fact that ICASA has awarded CTV a second frequency is a significant victory for the channel because in March 2012 CTV was moved to another frequency to make way for digital terrestrial transmission (DTT). The station was shifted to a higher frequency (channel 67), which resulted in many viewers no longer being able to tune in without an outdoor, wide-band aerial.

Says Thorne, "ICASA has now acknowledged that channel 67 was not viable from a reception point of view and has given us a second frequency (channel 32) which is lower in the spectrum. This will enable many more Capetonians to pick up our free-to-air signal with any aerial type."

Broadcasting from Tygerberg

Cape Town TV broadcasts from Sentech's transmitter site on Tygerberg, so households which have line-of-sight to Tygerberg can receive the signal. The station will now be running two transmitters on Tygerberg, each transmitting on different frequencies.

In addition to its local footprint, Cape Town TV has also signed an agreement with Multichoice for the channel to be carried on DSTV bouquets in the southern African region. The station will be available on the Access pack and above (including the Family bouquet), on channel 263.

Comments Thorne, "This is a great step forward for Cape Town TV as the channel will be reaching many more viewers and

it will be accessible both nationally and in our neighbouring states. This does not mean, however, that we will be losing our local focus and relevance. On the contrary we see this as a great opportunity to showcase the city and all it has to offer to the country and the region."

In preparation for its September re-launch Cape Town TV has been refreshing its image with new on-air branding. The channel will be embarking on extensive community outreach and marketing in the weeks leading up to the September deadline.

CTV is also working hard to produce and source more content, especially locally-produced videos and the thought-provoking documentaries for which the channel is already well-known.

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