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USER REPORT

Smart 'Alien' Installs New KPVI Transmitter

by Nick Davidson
Transmitter Guy
KPVI Television

POCATELLO, IDAHO

It was my first contact with a really smart alien! That's how I felt when I met Mark Hills of s2one. I learned more from this guy in one week than I have learned during many years in the school of hard knocks. I've been working in engineering at KPVI television here for the past 20 years and have been mostly on my own, with just a few people around that I could ask for advice.

HELP ARRIVES

I was told that some "English guy" was coming to Pocatello to help with the installation and proof of our new HDTV transmitter. I hoped that he knew what he was doing, because I certainly didn't feel qualified to do the job.

Mark arrived in a big pickup truck, stopped off at Home Depot with a shopping list, and then was off to the transmitter for several hours of thoughtful contemplation and discussions about the work to be done. Finally he broke out a laser level, bubble level and pry bars.

Our new transmitter was carefully leveled and its cabinets bolted together. Then Mark broke out a torch, flux, solder, pipe cutters, rags and numerous labor saving tools needed

to transform a bunch of 20-foot copper lines into a variety of precisely cut interconnecting sections.

A REAL PERFECTIONIST

The mask filter, combiner, reject load and dummy load were all assembled into an impossibly small footprint. In the process, we saved a whole bunch of floor space. The process required more time than other installers might have taken; however, all the parts fit perfectly and Mark didn't charge us more for taking longer with all of the extra work. This guy is a real perfectionist. He would never take any shortcuts, even when I begged him to because I was so tired.

After the torch cooled off and the dummy load was connected, Mark set to work on the really important stuff. First he calibrated all of the test equipment and then he proceeded to sweep all the lines, combiner, load and antenna. At each step he was careful to document his work.

I've yet to see VSWR problems from any of the work he performed in connection with getting our new transmitter on the air. However, we did discover one bad flange connection. Guess who made that connection? (Hint: it wasn't Mark.)

Mark was very generous with his knowledge and was willing to explain things and walk me through procedures that others would find hard to articulate. After a complete transmitter proof, which required some cali-



Nick Davidson with the mask filter installed by s2one's Mark Hills.

bration and post-factory tweaking, he provided us with a professionally done detailed report. As it turned out, he was involved with much of the design of this particular piece of equipment and knew just about everything there was to know about it and passed a lot of his insight along to me.

I'm looking forward to working with s2one on future projects.

Nick Davidson is in charge of transmitter operations at KPVI television in Pocatello and has been with the station for 20 years. He may be contacted at ndavidson@kpvi.com.

For additional information contact at s2one Inc. at 800-270-7050 or visit www.s2one.com.