

Napa Valley TV Puts the Power of TriCaster® TC1 into Hands of Community Members

California's Napa Valley TV is a public, education, and government (PEG) channel serving the Napa Valley, California region. "We're like YouTube for the community," said Napa Valley TV Executive Director James Raymond. "If you're in public access, you're not in it for the money. You're in it for the love of free speech and giving people a media platform that they can use to communicate and express themselves."



Free Speech on a Budget

Even with its mix of cable TV PEG dollars, \$20 annual membership fees from community members, and production service revenues, Napa Valley TV has a very tight operating budget. Given that managing a broadcast TV studio takes a lot of capital investment in ever-changing equipment, Raymond and his Programming Manager Justin Bernard, think long and hard before plunking down hard-earned money on equipment.

Smart Upgrade Solution

Napa Valley TV recently decided to upgrade its broadcast production facility/studio from SD to HD/4K. Its challenge was to do this in a manner that was capable, cost-effective, and user-friendly. **"It took us seven years to save up for this upgrade," said Raymond. "We had to get it right and select a system that would serve us for many years to come."**

Napa Valley's solution was to modernize its facility using the NewTek TriCaster TC1 production switcher as its HD/4K anchor. The TC1 won Napa Valley TV's business by offering the features the station needs in a single integrated and affordable package.

"The TC1 is immensely important to the success and viability of our station as it's really the ONLY switcher option that checked off all of the boxes when we were looking for to upgrade to HD/4K," said Bernard. "I seriously doubt that we'd be able to perform as well without it, as other systems we were



NAPA VALLEY TV

Awesome Firepower

When it comes to video production equipment beyond the TC1, Napa Valley TV has their members covered in the studio, control room, and field. Besides the greenscreen wall and lighting grid, the studio features three Black Magic URSA Mini Pros on E-Image pneumatic tripods complete with studio viewfinders, tally lights, and Fujinon XK6 20-120mm servo zoom lenses. There's also a Skaarhoj camera control unit (CCU) for remote control of black levels, iris, color settings, and other camera controls, along with Black Magic SmartScope Duo 4K screens for preview and program waveform monitoring. For audio, the studio offers a complement of microphones, including four Shure SM58 wireless handhelds, four Shure QLXD1 wireless lapels, and six DPA 4080 cardioid wired lapels.

Members can shoot in 4K-quality in the studio, which is equipped with NDI®, (NewTek's Network Device Interface), which is used to bring the 4K camera sources into the TC1 via two NewTek NC1 Input/Output (I/O) units. The 4K signals then go into any of three Black Magic Teranex Mini 12G-to-Quad-3G converters that convert them to the quad-split 3G SDI format.

From there, the quad-split feeds go into either of two NC1 I/O units where each quadrant of each camera signal is pieced back together into a single image. These NCI camera signals are then available as sources that the members can switch between within the TC1.

“Being able to bring those 4K signals into the TC1 over NDI made that high-end capability possible, while still being cost-effective.”

— Justin Bernard, Napa TV's Programming Manager

considering at the time wouldn't have allowed for the simplistic workflow we needed for our members.”

Easy To Learn

As a PEG channel, Napa Valley TV relies on its dues-paying community members to produce its content. After these members pay their annual \$20 membership fees, they attend three production classes before being given access to Napa Valley TV's powerful broadcast production infrastructure. Two of the classes are conducted by Justin Bernard, who teaches the basics – proper use of the equipment, camera terminology and framing, micing, lighting, and other production techniques, including editing, graphics, and field production. The third class is the Policies and Procedures course taught by James Raymond, which teaches ethical public access guidelines.

Of course, the most important part of running Napa Valley TV is learning how to use the TC1 switcher. Thanks to its ability to support pre-configured processes, this is easy to accomplish.

“With its rows of lighted buttons and multiple images on its multiviewer, the TC1 can be intimidating at first. But we quickly teach our novices a few key button-pushes with which they can accomplish most of what they want to do during their productions,” said Bernard. “After the orientation and some hands-on experience, they quickly become confident and self-sufficient, although technical assistance is available should they need it.”

Since Napa Valley TV has come up with easily modifiable templates for graphics, intros and outro credit rolls, there's no need for members to learn multiple programs (such as Photoshop and/or Premiere) to create their graphics. The templates make it possible to do everything they need right from within the TC1.

With these templates, which Napa Valley TV created using a combination of the TC1's Live Text program and Adobe Photoshop, members can easily modify and import graphics (such as lower third supers) into the switcher. Users who would prefer to create their own graphics from scratch can import those just as easily.

That's not all: Thanks to TriCaster TC1's built-in virtual set system, set assortment, and LiveMatte keying functions, members can change-up the looks of their sets easily. This includes keying graphics onto virtual on-set monitors within the electronic set.

The Bottom Line

By choosing the TC1 to anchor their HD/4K upgrade, Napa Valley TV is achieving professional quality video production on a budget, while using community members as the core of its operation.

“Here at the station, almost all of our members—including show producers, directors and camera operators—are non-professional, non-tech-savvy people, so the overall production process needs to be as simple and efficient as possible for them to bring their vision to life,” said Bernard. “Because it's an integrated system rather than a long chain of devices, the TC1 completely simplifies the workflow, the signal path, and the potential troubleshooting as nearly everything feeds directly into it.”



Symbiotic Relationship

Anyone living or working in Napa County can use Napa Valley TV's 4K studio and HD field equipment to produce TV shows on any topic they're passionate about—all for an annual fee of just \$20. This includes full access to a NewTek TC1 production switcher, 4K TV studio with virtual set and graphics keying capability, and a full Adobe Creative Cloud editing workstation.

In return, Napa Valley TV gets to run that member-produced show on all of its cable channels, which include: Comcast 27 (Educational) and Comcast 28 (Public Access), and UVERSE Channel 99. This same programming also streams both live and on-demand through their website —and soon in high-definition.

With a reach that spans five Napa Valley municipalities—Napa, Yountville, St Helena, Calistoga, and American Canyon—as well as the region's Unified School District, Napa Valley TV reaches almost 30,000 households via local cable, and a global, online audience.



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