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Scripps VP Engineering Mike Doback To Retire

Jun 17, 2013, 6:00 AM EDT by [Andrew Dodson](#)

Michael Doback knew he had a knack for engineering as a fifth grade student when he built his first transmitter using instructions published in Popular Electronics magazine.

"A local ham operator stopped by the house and said if I was going to continue to use it on the air, I better get a license," says Doback, who retires June 28 as VP of engineering at the E.W. Scripps Co. "And that's when everything started for me."

Doback is trading in his 42 years of broadcast engineering service for a retirement spent on the inland lake at his home in Waterford, Mich., and in the short term, helping plan his daughter's October wedding. Ray Thurber, chief engineer at WXYZ Detroit, will fill his position.

"I want to be there for all of the family stuff, and it'll be nice not having to get up early in the morning and run to the airport," says Doback, adding that he worked a number of years that required one or two major trips via airplane per week.

Doback's professional career started in 1971 as director of ENG operations at WXYZ, which was then owned by ABC. Scripps bought the station in 1986 and Doback was promoted to assistant chief engineer, and eventually director of engineering. In 2000, Scripps tapped him to work at corporate as VP of engineering.

One of Doback's first big projects in his corporate role was bringing uniformity to the technology and equipment used at all stations across the group.

"Scripps had essentially siloed the stations," he says. "There was a fair amount of geographic uniqueness to each of the operating units and there wasn't an overall plan."

Under Doback's leadership, all Scripps-owned stations now use JVC cameras, Chyron graphics and Mac Pro computers and Final Cut Pro software for editing.

"A uniformity of equipment between Phoenix and Detroit and Palm Beach is absolutely necessary if we're going to make effective use of that technology and bring coverage to our viewers quicker and easier," says Doback.

Doback is also active in the development of mobile DTV and ATSC 3.0, of which he recognizes both sides of the argument if the next-generation standard should be non-backwards compatible.

"I think it's great that we're thinking about the next-generation of television," he says. "The folks on the ATSC 3.0 committee are good people and smart thinkers. Whatever it looks like at the end of the day, it's still going to have to pass the test of engineering reality, and we'll have to see if consumers are ready to embrace a non-backwards compatible jump to the future."

Doback recognizes broadcasting's challenges, but is optimistic for its future.

"Unfortunately, broadcasting is just another example of politicizing governmental regulations, but there is a critical role it has to play," he says. "There is no system better that covers breaking news as effectively as today's broadcaster can and does on a daily basis. And I don't think there's a delivery platform that has the robust capability of over-the-air broadcast television."

Once retirement officially starts on July 1, Doback plans on sitting outside at the lake and watching the sun rise each morning. He says he has plenty of projects on his to-do list, but plans on just relaxing for a while before starting anything.

And of course, he'll continue to watch the local news.

"I worked through the change of black and white to color, then from film to video tape in the news area, and then from analog to digital, and then from linear tape to file-based news acquisition and editing systems," says Doback. "It has just been an amazing journey of 'who would have thought we'd be able to do all of that that.'"

This entry was posted in [Tech Exec Profile](#) and tagged [ABC](#), [Michael Doback](#), [Ray Thurber](#), [Scripps](#), [WXYZ](#) on [June 17, 2013](#) [<http://www.tvnewscheck.com/playout/2013/06/scripps-vp-engineering-mike-doback-to-retire/>] by [Andrew Dodson](#).

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