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## Marla Drutz

By Kevin Elliott  
News staff

write the author

09/03/2013 - While major metropolitan newspapers are struggling to maintain operations across the nation, local television stations in Detroit are moving into the future with enthusiasm. At least, that's the view taken by Marla Drutz, vice president and general manager of WDIV-TV, on the outlook of the Detroit television market.



Photo: Esme McClear  
(click for larger version)

"Right now is a great time to be in local television," Drutz said, a Bloomfield Hills resident who moved to the metro Detroit-area nearly three decades ago from Ohio. "For a long time, it felt like it wasn't advancing."

Drutz, who joined the station in 2008, has a vantage point that includes the area's top Nielsen ratings for its 4 p.m., 5 p.m., 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. newscasts, as well as a website – [www.clickondetroit.com](http://www.clickondetroit.com) – with the highest comScore of any local news outlet in the Detroit marketplace. Her optimism seems to stem more from growing opportunities than from current ratings holdings alone. Beyond providing online and mobile news consumption through the station's website and apps, Drutz said WDIV is returning, at least in part, to locally-produced shows that provide context and discussion to events.

"When I first came to Detroit, there was a lot of locally produced programming by all of the stations," Drutz said. "What I've seen, not just in Detroit but it mirrors a nationwide pattern as well, and that's the reduction of locally produced talk shows, but an increase of locally produced news."

Drutz said two reasons for the reduction of locally produced shows, such as "Kelly and Company" or "Sonya," with Dr. Sonya Friedman, are the high cost of production and today's viewers demand for immediacy. Nationally syndicated talk shows, she said, became available to local stations and filled in the gap, allowing for focus to shift to local news. Now, she said, there is a return to locally produced shows.

"For them to be successful, you have to have a studio audience, you have to coordinate guests and do more," she said of past studio talk shows. "The model is more difficult."

"Live in the D," which debuted at 11 a.m., Aug. 12, is WDIV-TV's latest effort to provide a platform for local conversation about happenings in both metro Detroit and beyond. The show, which is co-hosted by Local 4 News anchors Guy Gordon and Karen Drew, has elements of a daytime newscast with guest-driven conversations.

"Hopefully, our viewers would describe it as timely and relevant with today's news with a lot of conversation of what is happening in our community and an effort to showcase a lot of positive things happening in our community," Drutz said. "People want more than just the chaos reports of what's gone wrong. I think this show will afford us the opportunity to provide that..."

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In terms of her own future, Drutz said she feels fortunate to be in her position with WDIV-TV, which she accepted in July 2008, having previously spent 19 years with WXYZ-TV. The station change, she said, was like having a baseball coach visit the pitching mound in the sixth inning.

"The coach usually asks them if they have anything left," she said. "I got a chance to have someone come out to ask me if I have what is needed and necessary. Without hesitation, I grabbed the ball."

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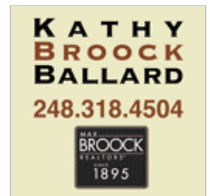
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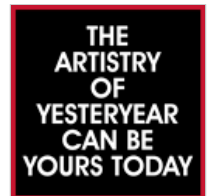
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