February 2019 Meeting Summary:

From L-R:
Jason Knapp-WBNS TV Engineering, Terry Douds-Ohio University/WOUB-TV, Gene Batey-SBE Chapter 52-Program Coordinator

The February 21st, 2019 SBE Chapter 52 meeting was combined with the SMPTE Ohio Section, and held at the WBNS Digital Television plant, in Columbus. 40 members/guests were in attendance to hear guest speaker, Terry Douds, Engineering Operations Supervisor for the Public Broadcasting TV station in Athens, Ohio, WOUB-TV, and who also teaches classes in Audio production at the Ohio University. Terry represents PBS on the S34-2, audio subcommittee for the ATSC 3.0 next generation broadcasting television standard, which considered and finally selected two immersive audio broadcasting standards from the various candidate standards submitted from firms around the world. Terry's began his presentation by defining the term "immersive audio" and going over the many "audio object" isolation enhancements made possible with several new technologies such as, Dolby ATMOS and MPEH-H. This includes a ceiling surround speakers type layout called 7.1 plus 4" and results in a unique "sound

objects" isolation environment for the audio observer, as never before! He mentioned that past legacy audio broadcasting systems essentially just distributed general "audio channels" with limited sound fields of perception for the listener. For future legacy TV set viewers/listeners receiving the new immersive audio broadcasts with just a reduced number of speakers, etc, they too can experience a great benefit due to the backward compatible features of Dolby ATMOS and MPEG-H technologies. He went on to outline some of the various activities involved in the committee's audio standards work which lead to the final selections from both the USA, and around the world. For the USA, the final selection eventually went to Dolby ATMOS, and for the remainder of the world, it went to MPEG-H. He emphasized how these audio sub-committee selections went forward only after very careful and detailed considerations were made involving (in some instances) very intense, discussions between all of the interested parties!

He also pointed out how the corresponding next generation ATSC 3.0 Television receiving sets' tuners will actually be able to pass through both types of immersive audio standards signals, Dolby ATMOS and MPGEG-H, depending upon which country or market locality the receiving TV set viewer/listener happens to be located in.

A lively Q & A session followed Terry's very interesting, and well received presentation!

Gene Batey,
SBE Chapter 52,
Program Coordinator