

SBE Chapter 52 - July 2021 - Meeting Report



Our July 27th evening meeting was combined with the SMPTE Ohio Section, and took place at the new Sinclair Broadcast Television transmitter plant in Columbus. Included within that plant are both ATSC 1.0 and ATSC 3.0 “Lighthouse” TV transmitters as well as Radio transmission operations. The ATSC 3.0 TV broadcast transmitter is radically different in that it uses the OFDM (Orthogonal Frequency Division Multiplexing) signal standard rather than the 1.0 Zenith 8 VSB type. On the air since January 7th, 2021, their new TV transmitter can accommodate/pass through up to five complete ATSC 3.0 stations’ signals including those from other TV stations within the Columbus market, part of a temporary channel sharing arrangement scenario. The sole purpose of this “Lighthouse” TV station is to broadcast all of the Columbus area TV stations’ ATSC 3.0 signals for up to five years after first launching their 3.0 broadcasts. After that initial five-year period, each station will then continue their ATSC 3.0 Broadcast services from their own individual towers/antennas, etc. after shutting down their legacy ATSC 1.0 broadcast signal operations.

Ron Taylor and Mark Seekins of the local Sinclair Broadcast TV Engineering departments, went over the progress some of the area Columbus stations have made so far in preparing and implementing ATSC 3.0 broadcasts, as well as future plans for adding additional features within this new “wider pipeline” capability such as, network affiliate pass through and local origination of 4K video, Dolby Vision HDR, Dolby ATMOS immersive audio, higher frame rates, TV receiver internet interactions, to name a few. After their discussions, both Taylor and Seekins then conducted a comprehensive tour of the various transmitters and associated components within this truly futuristic, state of the art, “Lighthouse” TV transmission plant, one of few in the USA at this time! After a lively Q&A session, the meeting adjourned.

