



Union students air daily news program in high definition

Camera one has the anchor two-shot. The microphone checks are good. “30 seconds!”

The show open is ready to roll. Scripts in hand, the anchors look confident and ready. The studio crew relays director cues from the control room with precision and authority. “Open is up. Stand by.”

Such a scene unfolds in hundreds of commercial television stations every day. But this is also happening on the campus of Union University.

Jackson 24/7 is on the air. Although Union students produce the program, it is not limited to campus news. In fact, the intent is to produce a credible, professional news broadcast that covers the entire Jackson community.

The 30-minute news program airs at noon each weekday during the academic year on EPlusTV 6 in Jackson. The channel is available not only to Jackson Energy Authority cable subscribers, but anyone with an Internet connection watching the streaming broadcasts at www.eplustv6.com

“This is as close to the real world of broadcast news as they’re going to get at a school our size,” says Union broadcasting professor Steve Beverly. “Not too many schools our size are doing something five days a week.”

The program includes a summary of local news and weather, plus live interviews that focus on issues and events. Some interviews are in studio, while others are over the phone. After the program airs live at noon, it runs again on tape at 10 p.m. and again the following morning at 7:30.

Juliana Robbins and Matthew Kuchem anchored the first Jackson 24/7 broadcast in late October. President David S. Dockery was the first guest interviewed on the new set. Prior to launching the program, students rehearsed their rolls as anchors, studio crew and control room leaders.

“This is something a lot of college students don’t get to experience,” said Robbins, a sophomore from Lawrenceburg, Tenn. “To have this experience now is going to help me a lot in the future.”

“It’s not everyday broadcasting students

can sit down behind a news desk and actually produce a live TV show that will mean something to the community,” adds co-anchor Kuchem, a junior from Fort Worth, Texas.

The accomplishment is all the more important in light of what happened to the Union broadcast facility during the Feb. 5 tornado. Roof damage to Jennings Hall led to water damage that destroyed most of the existing equipment.

Given the industry’s move to digital, high-definition television, it was prudent to replace the damaged analog, standard-definition cameras and equipment with the latest technology. The move is thought to make Union University the only fully high-definition collegiate broadcast facility in Tennessee, and one of only a few in the Southeast.

“The (current freshmen) will be graduating four years from now,” says Chris Blair, chairman of Union’s communication arts department. “There’s going to be a rash of change (in the industry) in the next four years. If we wanted to prepare students for their future, we needed to do this.”