

Covering the suburbs

Tube journalists gear up

By SANDRA ARMERUSTER

Remember when you used to go to your local shopping mall to buy clothing or appliances? It wasn't long before area banks, grocery chains and the U.S. Post Office caught on and joined the action.

Well, going to your local shopping mall may take on a new dimension this week as WWJ-TV Channel 4 opens four suburban news bureaus at Westland, Northland, Eastland and Eastland malls.

Operating each bureau will be a reporter-anchorman and a camera and sound crew, which will transmit stories via a leased telephone line to the station's main bureau in Detroit. The reports will then be carried live on the 5:30-6:30 p.m. newscasts.

While telecasts will be made from the mini-studios with the use of portable, mini-cams (cameras), at least one bureau chief says the operation will include live telecasts with shoppers in the mall.

Anchoring the Westland bureau will be Doug Bruckner, 34, a five-year veteran of television news reporting with Channel 4.

Bruckner said fixed mini-studios, shopper interviews and the continued use of three trucks equipped with mini-cams will widen Channel 4's geographic area of coverage and increase the flexibility of news reporting.

"We used to go to some things and report back with a live, mini-cam report just like all the stations have been doing," said Bruckner. "But things don't always happen at 6 p.m. So, we'd have contrived reports."

It wasn't until the last 1 1/2 years, however, that television equipment became refined enough to create mini-studios, according to Bruckner.

Now WWJ has planned, in the near future, an interview with an auto company board chairman president in its main, downtown studio. Bruckner said each bureau then will go out into the malls and allow shoppers to sound off or ask questions live.

"The area is so decentralized now. People live and work in a number of places, but before Detroit was the focus (for home and work)," said Bruckner, who was raised in California and now lives in Troy.

"Simply because of logistics, it's been more difficult to cover the metropolitan area... TV reacts. We're a prisoner of things and we often follow the newspaper for stories because we can't afford the (reporting) staff that a newspaper can. Our budget is taken up in technical equipment and people to operate it," he explained.

Now Channel 4 hopes its four bureaus will be able to establish an identity in the area they cover. For Bruckner, the western territory is from the City of Detroit limits west to

Plymouth and Ann Arbor, and extends from Romulus north to Eight Mile.

The north bureau, based at Northland Shopping Center, includes most of Oakland County. Heading that bureau is John Butte, Bureau chief for Southland is Dwayne X. Riley and for Eastland is Bob Vito.

Bruckner said the station is spending "hundreds of thousands of dollars" to set up the bureau system. While the station probably expects to improve its ratings, Bruckner said he doesn't know "what they're expecting in the ratings return immediately."

Channel 4 ranks first at 5:30 ("We're ahead of Channel 7 two to one," said Bruckner), last at 11 p.m. and in a "dead heat" race at 6 p.m. "There's only a one to three-point spread between the three stations at 6," said Bruckner.

"News is important to the station's image. Some stations now, I understand, are making a profit at it (news casts). But if a station is number one in its ratings, that prestige carries over to other areas."

Bruckner began his reporting career working for the Nevada State Journal after attending the University of Nevada. He then took a pay cut to go into television work.

That began in Reno where he did everything from anchoring the 11 p.m. news to locking up the gate at night. Bruckner said he liked the work but not the pay.

On a vacation in Honolulu, he landed a job as a TV news reporter and weekend anchorman for 4 1/2 years.

Coming to Detroit in 1973 to work for Channel 4 was a little bit like coming home. Although he was raised in California, his father originally was from

Milan and his mother from Vpsilanti.

Now he seems happy to be here.

"I like the people mostly... Basically it's a blue collar town. People are down to earth. Even those with bucks don't put on airs. We're treated in a friendly way on just about every story we do."

"I like the area because I like the water and northern Michigan," continued Bruckner. "As an urban person who is single, I find Detroit has just about as much as any other city but New York. It gets sold short. I like the entertainment, the shops and Canada."

"And every major city has crime." When he isn't working, Bruckner said he enjoys swimming, biking, tennis, golfing and traveling—"everything in warm weather," he said, laughing. He has traveled to Russia and Brazil and is planning a trip to Egypt in May.

Asked what direction he would like to see TV news improve, Bruckner said, "Too much television is dictated by requiring a certain number of stories that are a minute and a half in length. That results in surface coverage that sometimes people don't understand."

"We have some departure with mini-documentaries that last for three to four minutes. We need to be able to go longer," said Bruckner, who will continue to do his produce report feature on Wednesdays.

Both TV and newspapers sometimes "overstep their bounds on propriety," he continued. "But when you have a group of media people, competition enters in. If the competition does it, you have to do it. You have to be aggressive, but there are some grounds for propriety."



A mini-version of the downtown Detroit Channel 4 television studio is being replicated in four suburban locations as WWJ changes its format for news telecasts. Doug Bruckner, a five-year veteran with WWJ,

prepares his spot as chief of the news bureau at Westland Shopping Center. Other bureaus will be located at Northland, Eastland and Southland malls. (Staff photo by Art Emanuel)

HAGGERTY LUMBER & SUPPLY CO.
FOR ALL YOUR BUILDING NEEDS
2055 HAGGERTY, WALLED LAKE
624-4551 or 356-6166

Rite CARPET
Featuring America's finest Carpet Mills. Largest Selection in the Area. Choose from Lees, Wunda, Vene, Bigelow or Cablin Crafts.
7 Mile at Middlebelt across from Livonia Mall
8497 W. Grand River
Outside Brighton Mall
1-227-1314
678-8360

PERFECT.
When you let Averill prepare your 1977 income tax returns. Last year we prepared over 2,000 returns at an average cost of only \$25.00 (tax deductible). In our private offices, your return will be handled by a professional tax accountant in a personal, confidential and consistent manner. Averill is a full time, year around, professional tax service now in its 28th year.
For your appointment call 533-0121
Mon.-Thurs. 9 am-6 pm Fri.-Sat. 9 am-5 pm
AVERILL TAX SERVICE
26201 Grand River (near Beech Daily) (313) 533-0121

Averill Tax Service

Start the New Year with a New Account at a New Bank Where there are New Friends waiting to meet you.

Top Row: Nick Romano, President; John Pechtil, Commercial Loan Mgr.
Second Row: Margaret Jennings, Assistant Vice President and Manager; Nancy J. Romska, Assistant Manager
Third Row: Diane Stolliker, Teller; Debbie Hoffman, Teller; Karen Clemens, Secretary; Agnes Walker, Meldman, Customer Service Representative

Five Dollar Certificate
Certificate for \$5.00 Deposit
When Opening a New Savings Account
Michigan National Bank-Farmington
Redeemable at 24240 Orchard Lake Rd. in Walled Lake
Offer Expires February 15, 1978

Please enter my name in your Grand Opening Drawing:
NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____
PHONE _____
Grand Opening Drawing to be held February 15, 1978

Stop in, open an account, and enter the drawing for these great prizes
(no account necessary to enter drawing)

Just cut out the certificates and bring them to the Michigan National Bank - Farmington, 24240 Orchard Lake near 10 Mile and we will deposit \$5.00 cash to start your 5% savings account. Fill in the second certificate for your chance to win one of the great prizes pictured here.

- 1-Farberware Food Processor
- 1-15" Panasonic Color TV
- 1-15" Panasonic Toaster Oven
- 1-Farberware Open Hearth
- 1-Farberware Clock Radio
- 1-Honda EX-4 Instant Camera

Michigan National Bank Farmington
24240 Orchard Lake Road Member FDIC 477-3330