

TV Station Takes Aim at Vacationers

By Aurrice Duke

WVH-TV, seen on Cablevision Channel 78 and UHF Channel 50 in East Hampton, has become an affiliate of RSN, a network that provides sports and outdoor lifestyle programming to 102 resort communities nationwide.



On June 27, WVH, which calls itself Hamptons Television and claims to reach 600,000 viewers on the East End, began broadcasting four hours of RSN shows daily. The lineup includes a morning show, "RSN Outdoors," which Hamptons TV plans to "localize" by inserting local live segments as well as weather and events information.

Afternoon and evening programming will include "Reel Thrills," said to capture "the coolest, most interesting outdoor events," a show about golf called "The Clubhouse," and an "extreme sports" program. Late at night, RSN will show films meant "to appeal to movie buffs."

"The benefit of partnering with RSN is that the new content will appeal to an active and upscale audience, which is set on enjoying life. It's also a segment of the population advertisers are interested in reaching," said Ernie Schimizzi, president of WVH, who has run the station with his brother Greg Schimizzi since 1994.

The partnership is expected to boost advertising revenue for Hamptons TV. Viewers can expect to see a range of advertisements from luxury car manufacturers such as BMW, wine and spirits purveyors, and credit card companies - all of which already advertise on RSN.

RSN will be given the opportunity to expand its reach into a market whose largest industry is tourism, and will gain access to programs Hamptons TV already provides, such as coverage of the Hampton Classic Horse Show.

"The Hamptons is a very good destination for us," said Richard Bilodeau, RSN's vice president of marketing. The company has affiliates in resort and ski communities across the country, including in Lake Placid, N.Y. "We've been increasing our reach in upscale beach and golf communities by diversifying our content."

Hamptons TV competes with Plum TV in Wainscott for viewers and local advertising dollars. The stations, Mr. Schimizzi said, are quite different.

"Plum TV is leased access, which means they pay along the same lines as an infomercial would, and are not subject to the same F.C.C. media doctrine." As the East End's only

Federal Communications Commission-licensed broadcaster, WVVH is the official station for emergency government broadcasts, and must meet F.C.C. rules concerning, for example, political programming and the number of children's programs it shows.

"Plum TV has said in print they want to appeal to individuals making \$500,000 or more," Mr. Schimizzi said. "You don't have to make half a million a year to watch and enjoy WVVH-TV. Our focus is to appeal to the broad, local community regardless of economic status."

According to Mr. Bilodeau, "RSN's programming is geared for the outdoor enthusiast and from what I've seen of Plum TV, it appears to be a local version of the Fine Living Network. The two stations appeal to two different kinds of people."

Plum TV did not return calls for comment.

RSN, known then as the Resort Sports Network, pioneered the concept of "vacation television" 20 years ago. According to Nielsen Media Research, it is the top-rated television station in the markets it serves, beating the networks and other cable stations.

The company provides programs that "people like to watch when they're on vacation," said Mr. Schimizzi, who said that adding such programs "will further establish us as the channel to watch for vital information."