

Chapter 38 of the Society of Broadcast Engineers

SBE

EL PASO - LAS CRUCES - JUÁREZ

FEBRUARY
2017

PO Box 3561 El Paso, TX 79923-3561 www.kint98.com

NEWS

Is It Time to Bring Back the TV Antenna?

Jan 30, 2017 by Lou Frenzel in [Communiqué](#)

Over 80% of us subscribe to some form of pay TV service, whether cable- or-satellite based. We get hundreds of channels, most of which we do not watch. And while the service is generally good, the monthly cost continues to go up. According to research firm [Parks Associates](#), the average U.S. monthly pay TV bill is \$84, but many pay more. With premium channels and high-speed internet service bundled in, monthly bills are often ballooning to over \$200 per month (too much even for the generally affluent).

On top of that, Parks Associates says that about 63% of consumers also subscribe to one or more of the over the top (OTT) streaming services like Netflix or Hulu. 31% have multiple OTT subscriptions. This leads me to wonder our video viewing habit is growing out of control. Most people today sit in front of a screen all day, be it a computer, smartphone, tablet, or TV set. Is that a good thing?

The increasing cost is causing sub-

scribers to downgrade their service to save money. Some consumers have “cut the cord” completely in favor of an internet service subscription only plus some OTT for movies and TV series. The outcome of these trends has essentially stopped the growth of pay TV services. The appeal of OTT is that you can watch it on your smartphone, tablet, or oversized 4K TV thanks to Wi-Fi.

Perhaps the most interesting revelation by Parks Associates research is that many consumers have dropped pay TV completely and opted for over the air (OTA) TV. The percentage of U.S. households that use antenna-only TV has grown from about 9% in 2013 to 15% today, and that number continues to grow. Even the Consumer Technology Association (CTA) has reported an uptick in TV antenna only households. With TV stations broadcasting full HD digital television (DTV), picture quality is excellent when you get enough signal. That means you must have a good TV antenna just as you do in any wireless application.

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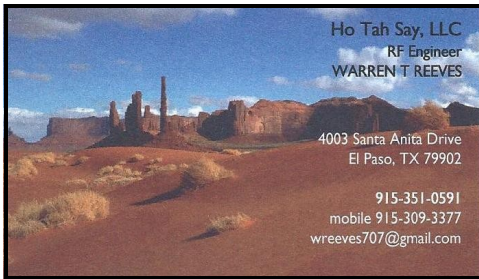
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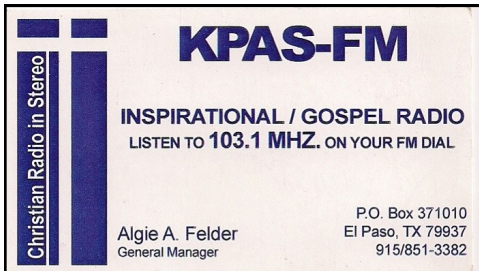
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Ho Tah Say, LLC
RF Engineer
WARREN T REEVES

4003 Santa Anita Drive
El Paso, TX 79902

915-351-0591
mobile 915-309-3377
wreeves707@gmail.com



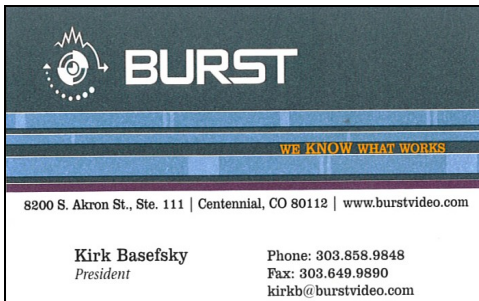
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NewsChannel 9

801 North Oregon
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915 532-6793 Fax

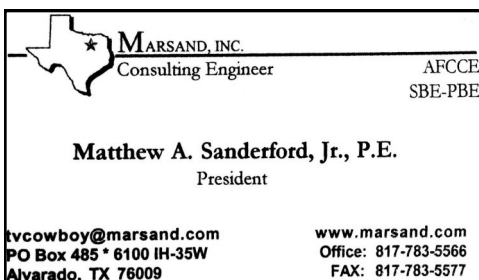
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KEVIN LOVELL
General Manager

KVIA-TV 7
4140 Rio Bravo
El Paso, Texas 79902
Tel. (915) 496-7777
Fax. (915) 532-0070

Website
kvia.com
e-mail
kvia@kvia.com



MARSAND, INC.
Consulting Engineer

AFCCCE
SBE-PBE

Matthew A. Sanderford, Jr., P.E.
President

tvcowboy@marsand.com
PO Box 485 • 8100 IH-35W
Alvarado, TX 76009

www.marsand.com
Office: 817-783-5566
FAX: 817-783-5577

My daughter and son-in-law recently cut the TV cord in favor of OTA TV. They kept the high-speed DSL line. After analyzing their TV consumption they concluded they could get all the news, sports, and entertainment they wanted from local TV channels. My two grand-kids mostly watch movies on their smartphones or tablets, so they did retain their modestly priced Netflix subscription. The outcome is a radically lower TV bill.

As for antennas, they tried several indoor types on their two sets, with mixed results. My son-in-law eventually put up a small outdoor antenna that gets the channels for ABC, CBS, CW, Fox, ION, NBC, PBS, TBN, Telemundo, Univision and a few other independents. He used a splitter and the house cable wiring to distribute the signal. Picture quality is excellent.

A few years ago, I cut costs by dropping our second cable box in the guest bedroom, hoping for a good OTA experience. I tried two indoor antennas, with pitiful results—I got only one channel when many are available. As it turns out, I am basically too far out in the suburbs to get good reception. An outdoor antenna is only the way to go. I did not have the physical arrangement to do that, and I never got around

SBE CHAPTER 38 OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN

Antonio Castro
SBE member # 11456.
KFOX/COX retired Chief Eng.
800 Arredondo dr.
El Paso. TX 79912
915-584-1220 home
915-525-8507 cell
farahjac@sbcglobal.net

VICE CHAIRMAN

Carlos Sosa
SBE member # 26533
801 N Oregon St.
El Paso, TX 79902
915-496-4444 Office
csosa@ktsm.com

TREASURER

Walter Hanthorn
SBE member # 18307
KSCE TV
4461 Gen. Maloney
El Paso, TX. 79924
915-269-7583 home
915-532-8588 office

CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE:

David Halperin.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE:

Antonio Castro
Warren Reeves

FREQUENCY COORDINATION COMMITTEE:

Warren Reeves
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EL PASO, TX SBE CHAPTER 38 MEETING MINUTE

DATE 01/10/2017 LOCATION: TAJIN ENCHILADA HOUSE

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 12:07 PM, BY ANTONIO CASTRO.
THERE WERE 8 ATTENDANTS.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY: MINUTES IN THE DECEMBER NEWS-
LETTER ACCEPTED BY MARIO JIMENEZ, SECONDED BY NORBERT
MILES.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER: \$ 3,904.13 IN THE BANK. ACCEPTED
BY CARLOS SOSA, SECONDED BY ELI GARCIA.

REPORT OF THE CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE: NO REPORT.

REPORT OF THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE: PROPOSED AN IN-
CREASE FEE IN THE LOCAL MEMBERSHIP. DID NOT PASS.

REPORT OF THE FREQUENCY COORDINATOR COMMITTEE: NO RE-
PORT. COORDINATOR IS OUT OF TOWN.

REPORT OF THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE: IF THERE ARE
ENOUGH FUNDS, WILL SCHEDULE IN THE SECOND HALF 2017.

REPORT OF THE WEBSITE COMMITTEE: 2108 HITS LAST TIME, NOW
2123. (15).

REPORT OF THE EAS CHAIRMAN: TEXAS AND NEW MEXICO
MONTHLY TEST WERE RECEIVED AND RE-BROADCASTED. NA-
TIONAL TEST RECEIVED .

REPORT OF THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE: WILL VISIT THE LIST ON
SBE NATIONAL FOR POSSIBLE PRESENTERS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: ANNOUNCED THE ENNES WORKSHOP
FOR 2017 AS WELL AS THE CHAPTER ENGINEER OF THE YEAR. WILL
UPDATE THE LIST OF E-MAILS AND PHONE NUMBERS OF THE CHAP-
TER MEMBERS.

NEW BUSINESS OR ANY ITEMS FOR THE CHAPTER INTERES:
TO UPDATE THE FACEBOOK PAGE..

NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION: FEBRUARY 14, 2017, PARK-
ING LOT AT COMANCHE PEAK 11:30 AM FOR A VISIT TO THE
TRANSMITTER SITE OF KDBC.

**INVOICES FOR THIS YEAR
MEMBERSHIPS WERE SENT
AND DELIVERED. I YOU HAVE
NOT PAID, BRING \$\$ TO THE
NEXT MEETING. THANK YOU!**

FEBRUARY PROGRAM

The month of January, we had our first chapter meeting of 2017.

We discuss several issues for the year despite of the low attendance.

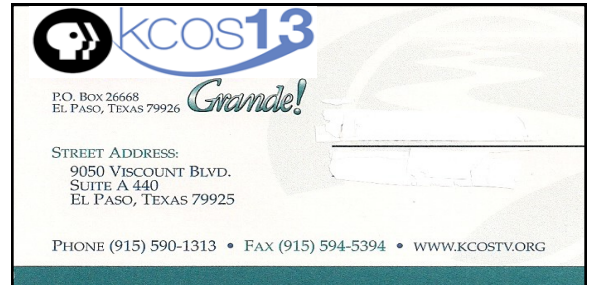
For this month of February, we don't have a presentation, but will have a very interesting meeting that will take place at the upper Comanche peak, KDBCTV building. Bruno Cruz, KFOXTV/KDBCTV, will host the meeting.

Because of the limited parking space up in the site, we will meet at the parking next to the gate at 11:30 AM on the valentine's day, February 14, 2017 and the ride is going to be in 4X4 vehicles.

LET'S HAVE LUNCH UP IN THE COMANCHE PEAK.

DIRECTIONS WILL BE POSTED NEXT WEEK.

PLEASE ATTEND !!!!



to trying the attic. Part of the problem is that my homeowner's association covenants forbid outdoor antennas. However, Dish and DirecTV dishes are allowed. I assume a modest outdoor OTA antenna would also be permitted. No Yagi on a 50-ft. crank up tower.

The OTA TV option is a good one. It is free except for the antenna expense. Just be sure you are in a location where the signal strength is sufficient. The FCC has some great information at the website indicated below. It includes their DTV Reception Maps Tool. You plug in your zip code and it gives you a list of the TV stations available to you with a signal strength estimate. You can also access their [guide on TV antennas](#)—a great resource.

Another resource is [Antennas Direct](#) with their Transmitter Locator tool that also gives you a map of the TV stations nearby and an estimate of potential reception.

One more good source of info is [Antenna Web](#). It provides station data, and you can choose and buy an antenna online.

Also try the [NoCable](#) site.

There are many other such resources and TV antennas are still available at places like Best Buy, Walmart, Radio Shack, Fry's, and others. If you are looking for a way to save a few bucks this year, give this a try. I think you will be surprised at what you find.

But that's not all. That trend could continue once OTA 4k TV is available. The Advanced Television Systems Committee (ATSC) is working on a new U.S. standard to cover 4k, including high dynamic range (HDR) and other advanced features. ATSC 3.0 standard, as it is called, will use OFDM and LDPC error correction to make this happen. That is not compatible with the existing ATSC 8VSB standard now in use, so during any transition, TV sets will need to cover the current and 3.0 standards.

No availability date has been given for 3.0, but this is surely in our future thanks to support from the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB). It's just one more reason to consider cutting the cord and getting an antenna.