

XIT Communications/Hereford Cablevision Closing OFFICIAL November 1st

A fixture in Hereford broadcasting changed hands this morning when Clint Formby announced the sale of Hereford Cablevision to XIT Communications of Dalhart.

Formby, managing partner and president of Hereford Cablevision, and XIT officials completed the agreement at the cable company office, 119 E. Fourth.



In a press release from XIT Communications, the company stated it has assumed operations of the local system and will offer the same cable and Internet services.

Also, Lloyd Ames will continue to serve as general manager of the cable system. Cablevision employees Tony Martinez, Randie Villarreal, Janie Jimenez, Andrew Tijerina and Julie Green will also continue employment with XIT Communications, while Formby has agreed to serve XIT in an advisor/consultant position during the transition period.

"XIT Communications, through its partnership, XIT Wireless, has been providing wireless service to the Hereford area for fifteen years," XIT general manager Darrell Dennis said in a press release. "XIT is very excited that Hereford

Cablevision provides us the opportunity to expand our multi-service offerings by deploying both wired and wireless services."

He noted that XIT Communications has been able to offer advanced video and communication services to some of its communities since 1997.

In April, the company purchased Vega Cablevision from the Riley Family of Gruver. XIT crews are laying connecting fiber from Hereford to Vega and Vega will operate as a satellite from the Hereford system and benefit from the new services as they are rolled out to our Hereford customers.

"XIT is ready to take the next step, which is adding digital to the Cablevision network. Hereford Cablevision's upgrade has paved the way for what XIT is about to do," Dennis stated. "They have laid the foundation. We are here to finish what Hereford Cablevision started."

Formby and Ames both said recently the sale took longer than anticipated because the deal involved numerous contracts broadcast and cable networks that had to be transferred individually from Hereford Cablevision to XIT.

One major element of the sale was cleared in September when the City of Hereford exercised its right of first refusal on the purchase of Hereford Cablevision.

Under the terms of the franchise agreement, the city had the right to take over the cable system should the franchise be sold. City Manager Rick Hanna said the city does not want to go into the cable television business.

Hereford Cablevision was granted its franchise in 1971 and went on the air in June 1972 with seven channels.

"We had the three Amarillo stations and three Dallas stations — KPGP, which was independent; PBS and CBN (Christian Broadcasting Network) — and a weather channel," said Cablevision president Clint Formby, who also is the primary stockholder in the company.

The signal from Dallas was transmitted via microwave from Dallas to Big Spring and then to Hereford.

"If there was a thunderstorm near Big Spring, we knew it because we'd go off the air," Formby said.

In 1978, the cable system switched to satellite, which Formby said "allowed us to go to the bird and get a good signal without static and improve reception."

Since its inception, Hereford Cablevision has had three general managers: Roger

Hale, Danny Adams and Lloyd Ames. Ames had held the position since February 1978.

Hereford Cablevision had two other locations before establishing its offices at 119 E. Fourth.

Four years ago, the cable company spent about \$1 million on a system-wide upgrade. Another \$700,000 was spent two years ago to convert to fiber optics.

"Using existing aerial lines, we lashed up 13 miles of fiber optic cable," Ames said. "Then, with the new extension of fiber to the Sandalwood Street Addition, a distance of one mile, a total of 14 miles of fiber cable was installed. We also added several miles of fiber optic cable to interconnect all Hereford ISD campuses."

By using the fiber optic cable with Cablevision's existing coaxial cable, a state-of-the-art hybrid fiber coaxial system was created.

By putting in fiber optics, Cablevision was able to increase system performance and capacity.

Fiber optic amplifiers, which convert the signal from light to normal cable frequencies were installed. The system bandwidth was increased from 400 MHz to 550 MHz, which enabled the channel capacity to grow from 50 to 78 channels.

Taps at the poles and pedestals were changed out to increase channel capacity and dependability. Amplifiers were installed to increase the channel capacity. Forty battery-assisted standby power supplies were installed to keep the amplifiers running should the electricity go out.

Return amplifiers were installed to create a two-way system.

"By doing this, we were able to add Internet service in 2004, and in the future, we will be able to add digital cable channels, digital phone service and High Definition TV," Ames said.