

DELIVERING DSO

In 2007, Babcock won a prestigious contract with Arqiva to install low power Digital Terrestrial TV (DTTV) transmitter cabins at television relay sites in 15 regions throughout the UK, as part of the Digital Switchover (DSO) programme to be completed by the end of 2012. Babcock was selected by Arqiva, which is rolling out DTTV to 98.5% of the UK population, to support critical engineering, infrastructure and project management capabilities. Babcock Project Manager **Simon Adams** reports on what is involved

The initial contract was awarded in November 2007 for 470 sites. A further contract was awarded in March 2009, following Arqiva's acquisition of the former National Grid Wireless, to extend the number of sites to just over 1,000, significantly increasing the programme for both Arqiva and Babcock.

Babcock's work allows the delivery of DSO to mainly rural areas, complementing the coverage from the UK's main TV transmitting stations, making Babcock a critical part of the overall programme. For example, in the area of Selkirk, within the Border region, over 50% of terrestrial television viewers live in rural areas and rely on the relay stations for digital coverage.

CHALLENGING SITES

The installation of the first Borders site at Bonchester Bridge was a tense experience, with the site needing to be back on air in time for the six o'clock news, ten hours after the work started. Installations continued through the summer of 2008, with each site providing its own unique challenge – from extensive tree cutting to fitting temporary mains supplies.

Bryan Coombes, Communications Director at Babcock, said: "Babcock goes beyond the delivery of traditional

“**Viewers in rural areas rely on relay stations for digital coverage**”



broadcast services. From the design, build and systems integration of bespoke projects like this, to working in partnership with customers to plan for the future, we are not limited by the boundaries of existing processes, technologies or knowledge.”

1,000 MILESTONE

In November 2009, Babcock completed its 500th installation at Portishead, Somerset in the HTV West Region. And two years later that total reached the 1,000 site milestone through the completion of the installation at Portslade near Brighton.

In early October 2011, the project's last rack manufacture and testing was completed at Babcock's Engineering, Manufacturing and Testing facility located in Ashchurch. Production was ramped up achieving an output of eighty sites a month in 2009. Manufacture has included liaison with the supply chain, including those in Europe to co-ordinate deliveries, identify issues and expedite their speedy resolution.

CRITICAL TASKS

Installations bring together a number of skills and require careful planning to bring the disciplines together at the same time. Replacement cabin sites often require extensive civil engineering works in advance of the installation to extend concrete bases and install feeder ducts as well as installation of new RF feeders. On installation day, several critical tasks must be completed for a successful installation. These key tasks include: offloading a new cabin by lorry mounted cranes or other specialist vehicle; testing and connection of electrical supplies;

refection of gantry and installation of feeders; and the installation of a broadcast rack and equipment and commissioning of the complete system.

With its broad expertise in wireless infrastructure, engineering and programme management, Babcock is delivering all aspects of the low power requirement - logistics, low power transmitter cabins and associated system integration, and asset decommissioning. Babcock and Arqiva have developed a partnering programme to ensure successful delivery of this project, on time and within budget.

TEAMWORK

From my perspective, this has been a very challenging and busy project. I think success has been achieved through good teamwork, partnering with Arqiva, and a lot of hard graft. And a good manufacturing team at Ashchurch and a hard-working project management team have kept the installers really well supported. Installation teams have travelled the length and breadth of the country carrying out work in all weathers with locations ranging from windswept hills and wet islands to rooftops and even a cathedral. All in all, it is a great achievement that everyone should feel proud of. ■



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