



The

Broadcasters' Desktop Resource

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... edited by Barry Mishkind – the Eclectic Engineer

Checking it Out The GatesAir Flexiva FAX20

[August 2014] As the Harris Broadcast transmitter division morphs into GatesAir, many are watching to see how the company's products will perform and be received. Mike Everhart recently installed a GatesAir Flexiva FAX20.

You might say it was a good experience: "One of the smoothest installations I've ever had. Almost anti-climactic."

Those are the words of Mike Everhart, Director of Engineering for Alpha Media and its KUPL-FM in Portland OR, where recently they took delivery on a GatesAir FAX20, the 20 kW member of the Flexiva family of high efficiency FM transmitters.



According to Everhart, "We were interested to see how a 20 kilowatt TPO transmitter could fit into a one-rack-wide space, as we have some space challenges at a few of our sites that could be solved by a rig that narrow."

CHOSING THE FAX

Alpha Media selected the Flexiva FAX20 transmitter following an evaluation period that included several competitive transmitters.

Everhart and Alpha turned to GatesAir and found what they thought would meet their criteria, the FAX20K.

Everhart said, "Our decision to purchase the GatesAir FAX20 was based on several factors, including some innovative technology:

- A small footprint,
- The use of the latest HV MOSFETS and parallel power supplies,
- Good AC to RF efficiency; 6% better than the Z-20,
- An aggressive price point,
- And positive reports from other engineers who had installed models from this line."

"Perhaps the biggest factor was our sales representative, Garrett Wood. He was very responsive to all our questions and worked hard for our business."

AN EASY INSTALL

Everhart was pleased with the new FAX20. "The installation was very straight-forward."

The transmitter and integrated exciter went together easily. Continuing with the Everhart's comments: "Our Portland Engineers, Thor Waage and Mike Alston, were able to move it into position and install the amplifier modules and power supplies in just a few hours. Once our contractors had the RF, grounding, and AC supply attached, we followed the initial turn-on instructions, and had 20 kW running into the dummy load in no time.

"A few more hours to configure the interlocks and remote control, and we were done and on the air. The transmitter has performed flawlessly since."

Convinced GatesAir will be around to provide any needed parts or technical support, Everhart plans to "keep this one for the long term."



The KUPL staff found the difference in size between the Z-20 and the Flexiva “amazing”

WATCHING IT WORK

The Flexiva FAX20’s physical layout differs from some other current transmitters in that it does not sport a large GUI on the front panel.



The Flexiva FAX20 is narrower than a rack

That did not cause any problems with the install, as the crew found the display more than suffi-

cient for setting up the transmitter. More detailed data and displays are available on an updated, more intuitive GUI that is connected via IP, whether on site or at distant locations.

IN FOR THE LONG HAUL

Everhart acknowledges the attentive customer service from GatesAir throughout the process, from pre-sales to post-installation support that enabled a smooth transition.

“As with any new product, sometimes the documentation is a bit slow to keep up with the improvements and upgrades,” says Everhart.

Summing up, he said, “We see the maintenance aspect as the biggest benefit for us in terms of operating costs. It’s a lightweight transmitter, and it was very simple to install the power supplies and amplifier modules. That makes for a sensible design that is easy to navigate and maintain over the long run.”

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