

CHCH-TV Opens New 4K-Ready Studio in Hamilton

*Hamilton, Halton & Niagara's News Leader
Now Broadcasting Daily From New Home on Innovation Drive*



April 14, 2022 - HAMILTON - A new era began at CHCH TV this week, as the longest-running independent TV station in Canada has moved into its brand new, permanent home. After 67 years in downtown Hamilton, the news leader for Hamilton, Halton, Niagara and surrounding communities is now operating its broadcast and business operations in a rapidly growing suburban area of the city, fittingly from an address on Innovation Drive.

The station's inaugural broadcasts on Monday, April 11, 2022 gave CHCH viewers a look at the showcase element of the newly constructed facility: 7,000 sq. ft. of fully digital and 4k-ready broadcast space, which is the new home for flagship daily shows Morning Live and the CHCH Evening News at 6 & 11. The new state-of-the-art studios, combined with upgraded broadcast technology, an expanded newsroom, and dynamic spaces for employee, client and guest collaboration, will allow CHCH TV to expand its broadcast and digital coverage to bring local, provincial, and national audiences more news, information and entertainment than ever before.

"After nearly a decade of careful planning, we found ourselves with the unique chance to reinvent and reimagine what our future can look like from the ground up," said Chris Fuoco, VP of Sales & Marketing at Channel Zero. "The location we had for many years served us so well. But that building was built for one purpose, for traditional television. In today's day and age, we need adaptable spaces that allow us to hit the ground running

with emerging technology, like we are from day one in this new environment. I think of this building like a bridge or a transition to what the future of TV and media can become.”



A process years in the making, CHCH TV's fresh start began with pre-pandemic planning and design. The transition to Innovation Drive began in October 2018 when the property was first purchased by parent company Channel Zero. Planning soon commenced to renovate the existing 23,000 sq. ft. office building at 4 Innovation Drive, and simultaneously construct a 14,000 sq. ft., two-storey addition that would house two broadcast studios and spacious thoroughfares for employees and guests. These major arteries of foot traffic, an enclosed two-storey skylight-lit internal street and overhead walkway, are now affectionately referred to as Main Street and The Linc, as nods to the station's Hamilton roots.

As construction began, changing conditions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic gave senior management, construction managers, and design teams reason to accelerate plans for brand new, open-concept office configurations and the latest in remote video conferencing technology. Remodelled workstations, bookable hoteling spaces and meeting areas equipped with autonomous cameras, a green roof and charging stations for electric vehicles are features that speak to a new workplace culture valuing employee and guest safety, environmental responsibility, and team collaboration and connectivity intended to remain post-pandemic.

“In our previous office and especially during long stretches of the pandemic, everyone was separated, in ways we shouldn't be,” said Greg O'Brien, News Director at CHCH-TV. “We want to have open conversations, we want to talk about news, talk about content, and have fun. From day one at Innovation Drive, we've been able to do all that,

remain safe, and provide even better content to our viewers, broadcasting from the newest studio setup and newsroom environment in the country.”



During the final months of construction in 2021 and into 2022, CHCH took up a temporary residence at the Hamilton Technology Centre, conveniently located across the street from its eventual home. Partnered with HTC and Clearcable, CHCH continued to produce quality, reliable daily local news broadcasts three times daily from a retrofitted studio in a building known for fostering the development of local technology companies. Affectionately deemed “Summer Camp”, this temporary location ended up stretching into the winter months, providing what ended up being a truly essential safety net for an unpredictable timeline of supply chain issues and unforeseen challenges during the era of COVID-19. This allowed for the final move-in process in April 2022 to be done over one weekend without interrupting a single news broadcast.

“The support of the Hamilton Technology Centre was crucial for us to be able to complete this transition on our own schedule,” said Wayne Rabishaw, Director of Operations of CHCH-TV for 40 years. “There were those who thought we were nuts for moving a TV station not once, but twice - but it paid off. The incredible commitment shown by our team, to keep a positive outlook and operate our control room from a makeshift studio and trailer, provided the backbone of our operations and we couldn’t have done it without their buy-in. We’re extremely proud.”

The fully-constructed building that now stands at 4 Innovation Drive is a metaphor in itself for what CHCH-TV aims to achieve: a combination of merging old with new. The exterior brick walls of the previous building remain, just like the 67 years of broadcast history that will be unpacked and celebrated within the building interior in time for a public Grand Opening in Summer 2022.

As of April 2022, CHCH-TV's new home at 4 Innovation Drive is open and operating, populated by 65 full time and 23 part time staff, with more to follow suit in the coming months. The primary focus of move-in efforts to this point has been CHCH news & broadcast operations, as more than one million viewers watch CHCH local news programming weekly in the Golden Horseshoe region. The commitment made by Channel Zero to set permanent roots in Hamilton will allow the CHCH News brand to connect with the community it serves in new and exciting ways.

"The completion of this project is truly remarkable," said John McKenna, Executive Producer of CHCH News for 23 years. "Within the last 15 years, an astounding number of media outlets have closed or experienced unfortunate layoffs. Investing in this kind of newsroom in today's media environment shows a commitment by us to quality local journalism in Canada."



Feature elements of the state-of-the-art studios include:

- 7,000 total sq. ft. of multi-use studio space, from CHCH News to original productions
- A 360-degree anchor desk with fully adaptable lighting.
- A "Gate 11" sports desk, constructed in the style of Tim Hortons Field as a tribute to the stadium where the hometown Ticats and Forge FC play.

- A triple-monitor backdrop, featuring a stylized skyline stretching from Toronto's CN Tower, through Hamilton City Hall, to Niagara Falls' Skylon Tower, capturing CHCH-TV's diverse and expansive viewing area.
- A kitchen and bar set for local chefs and advertising partners to cook and conduct product demos for Morning Live interview segments and digital platforms.
- A portable control room to allow CHCH to take its show on the road, producing live on location for special opportunities like sporting events and concerts. Channel Zero's new production division, Channel Zero Studios, will also be in the mix, opening up opportunities in areas of scripted television and film.

Referring to the studio space, John McKenna said, "It's important to think of our set, as wonderful as it is, as a delivery vehicle. These upgrades help us get the news out better and faster, make our programming more interesting to watch, and helps us connect the content to the viewer in a way that we were limited in our previous environment."

"And we have to be everywhere," added Greg O'Brien. "We have to produce content for all audiences, in all formats, to live on all current and emerging platforms. The world is changing, and we've made the investment to change with it."

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About CHCH-TV:

CHCH-TV started broadcasting in 1954 and is proud to be the news leader for Hamilton and the surrounding Halton and Niagara regions. CHCH produces over 24 hours of original local news programming each week. With a primetime line-up anchored by movies, news magazine shows, and hit dramas, CHCH is available to over 92% of Ontario households and is viewed by millions nationally each week. CHCH News is produced daily out of its broadcast studio located in Hamilton, Ontario.

About Channel Zero:

Channel Zero is an independent Canadian media company that owns over-the-air channel CHCH-TV and specialty channels Rewind & Silver Screen Classics. Channel Zero's digital sales agency Junction Digital offers advertisers marketing solutions on our owned and operated websites and social media platforms and beyond via our trading desk. The film division of Channel Zero features Ouat Media, an Academy Award® winning film sales and distribution

company, and Channel Zero Studios, a creative production arm that brings scripted and unscripted projects to life with innovative partnerships. Channel Zero's head office is located in Toronto, Ontario. For more information, please visit chz.com.