

Entering the 100% Digital Age

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SCG would like to wish you a wonderful Thanksgiving Holiday!

Are you ready for the digital television switch?

By now, you've probably seen the commercials indicating, "...television stations nationwide must stop transmitting analog television "over the air" signals and begin broadcasting fully in a digital format on February 17, 2009." Do you really know what that means and how it may affect you?

This is the deadline set forth by the FCC for "over the air" or off air broadcast stations to cease analog transmission. In other words, if you are of the 5% of the US population who still receive TV signals through an antenna, it means you will have to either buy a digital (ATSC) tuner for each analog TV in your house, replace every analog TV in your house with a TV containing an ATSC tuner, or switch to a cable television service or digital satellite service.

Remember, the February deadline is for off air signals, not cable services. It is at the service provider's discretion as to when they will cease analog signals; which could be as soon as next month or even 3 years from now. But eventually all cable companies will cease transmitting both analog and digital signals and will transition to 100% digital signals only. So what does this mean? Maybe nothing for a while, but once providers make the change, if you have an analog TV set connected directly to cable (without a digital converter box), you will not get a picture. The solution for our homes is to have the cable company install a digital converter box at each analog TV or replace each analog TV with a TV containing an ATSC (digital) tuner. For most of us, this should be a relatively easy fix.

The real impact is going to be felt by larger facilities with their own in-house cable television systems such as schools, universities, hospitals, hotels, prisons, etc. Many of these facilities have analog head end systems and distribute analog signals to their TVs. What will happen when the head-end cannot receive or distribute a signal? What will happen when you cannot purchase a replacement TV with an analog tuner? It's just a matter of time.

At Schmidt Consulting Group, we can provide site surveys of your existing cable distribution systems and provide design and recommendations for upgrading your TV head-ends and cabling plants. We are currently working closely with end users of school districts, universities, hospitals and at other facilities to ensure a smooth transition into the digital age.

Green Initiatives



Another LEED A.P. on staff: Brandy Baker, E.I. recently passed the LEED A.P. exam. Brandy's success is part of a company-wide initiative to have all SCG design professionals accredited by the United States Green Building Council.

Brandy joined our Daphne branch office in May of this year. Since then, she has provided Mechanical and Plumbing design services for a number of projects including the new Municipal Complex in Gulfport, MS, the new Hancock Bank (in both Pascagoula and Biloxi, MS), and the new Charles Walker Community Center in Gulfport, MS.

On her new accreditation, Brandy had this to say, "by studying and passing the LEED AP exam, I feel confident in my abilities to assist in future LEED projects."

A Certified Commissioning Agent on staff: Gene Schmidt, P.E., CxA, LEED AP passed the AABC Commissioning Group's (ACG) Certified Commissioning Authority (CxA) exam. ACG is a non-profit association of certified commissioning authorities, dedicated to the advancement of professional, independent commissioning services through education, training, and certification of qualified architects and engineers.

HVAC systems must be energy efficient, satisfy stringent indoor air quality and comfort expectations, and still be designed and constructed within a set budget. Commissioning is a systematic process that facilitates and ensures the required communication, coordination, testing, and verification, and results in the delivery of a building whose HVAC systems perform as intended.

The responsibility of a Commissioning Authority is to provide leadership in the planning, organization and facilitation of the completion of the commissioning process on behalf of the Owner. In addition to having good technical knowledge of the systems being commissioned, the CxA must also have a complete understanding of the commissioning process and possess the organizational, documentation, communications, and team-building skills that are necessary to lead and coordinate an effective commissioning team and to ensure that the intent of the building Owner is achieved.

Commissioning is also a vital part of the LEED Certification process. EA Prerequisite 1: Fundamental Commissioning of the Building Energy Systems of LEED for New Construction requires that a CxA lead, review and oversee the completion of the commissioning process; while EA Credit 3 of LEED for New Construction requires that a independent CxA to lead, review, and oversee the completion of all commissioning process activities.

Mr. Schmidt looks forward to providing commissioning services to our clients as a CxA. He draws upon his previous experience performing such services for a number of military support facility projects.

A new Structural E.I. on staff



Neil J. Bishop, E.I. has joined the Structural Design Team at our Pensacola office: Neil grew up in Massachusetts and decided to follow a family trend and pursue a degree in Civil Engineering. Neil graduated from the Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston, Massachusetts in 2000, making him a third generation Civil Engineer.

Neil began his career during college as an engineer's assistant for a company in Boston. There, he conducted site investigations and structural mapping and analysis for wireless communication infrastructure sites. After receiving his degree, Neil shifted his focus to industrial, commercial, and residential building design. After a long tenure of running his own company and a short stint for a giant corporation (Jacobs Engineering), he decided to move to Florida.

In 2007, Neil took a position with TKW Engineering Consultants in Fort Myers. There, he provided structural design services for such projects as the new Miami High School, a multi-functional facility which consisted of all exterior Tilt-Up Concrete panels. He was responsible for the coordination of all shop drawings and calculations for more than 5 million square feet of wall panels. Neil also had the privilege of assisting in a value engineering study of the Orlando Events Center, a new 20,000 seat bowl type, covered arena for the Orlando Magic that had gone drastically over budget.

SCG is excited to have Neil as part of our team. He brings with him vast experience with Tilt-up Concrete building construction, as well as with high wind load analysis and design of steel, concrete, timber and composite systems. Neil also has a great base knowledge in seismic retrofitting of existing structures having been responsible for several upgrades of older buildings (circa 1800) to bring them up to modern standards. Neil has experience with exceptionally large projects, having overseen construction of a distribution facility that was over 10 million square feet, but always maintains a focus on delivering quality service for even the smallest of buildings.

Photo of the Month



SCG enters the 4th Dimension:

Our Engineering Team has just wrapped up their first project utilizing Autodesk's Revit software. This software is part of the Building Information Modeling (BIM) trend that is revolutionizing the architectural/engineering industry.

Our Team has spent the last nine weeks mastering the program. This entailed a daily, one hour training session led by Justin Stegall, our Structural CAD Manager, which included all disciplines.

Their efforts have resulted in the creation of a more accurate set of bid documents. Through the use of this software, a 4th dimension is created; meaning that all components (steel, HVAC units, piping, tanks pumps, etc.) are actually inherent in the model. The addition of this dimension assists in the coordination of all trades during the design process and eliminates conflicts.

This model can develop a bill of materials for elements such as pumps, pipes lengths, and flange types to help the contractor make a more accurate bid, resulting in a better price for the owner. SCG understands the benefits of this software and is committed to parallel our efforts with those of our clients and the industry as a whole. Our CAD Managers will be attending a conference next month in Las Vegas, Nevada to fine-tune their knowledge of the software.

About Us: Schmidt Consulting Group, Inc. was established in 1987 to provide Mechanical, Plumbing, Electrical, Communications, and Structural design services to a very diverse client base.

Headquartered in Pensacola, Florida, SCG currently employs branch offices in St. Petersburg, Florida and Daphne, Alabama to serve our clients more effectively and efficiently.

Our range of consulting services includes planning, design, the production of construction documents, supervision of public bidding, contract administration, and supervision and inspection during construction.

Our reputation for quality, responsiveness, and timeliness has been demonstrated through successful projects for many private, federal, state, and local entities.

Schmidt Consulting Group, Inc. has provided specialized design solutions for a variety of facility types including: Airports, Auditoriums, Broadcast Studios, Churches, Colleges and Universities, Correctional Facilities, Data Centers, K-12 Schools, Hospitals and Healthcare Facilities, Industrial Complexes, Laboratories, Libraries, Military Facilities, Multi-Family Residential Units, Municipal Facilities, Museums and Performing Art Centers, Office Buildings, Recreational Facilities, Sport Complexes, and Wastewater Treatment Plants.



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