

WCCO History

WCCO-TV began in 1935 as WRHM Radio and within a year became WTCN. In 1949 we received our first broadcast license for television and we went on the air with a staff of twenty-six. It was the second television station located in the Twin Cities. In 1952 Channel 4 became WCCO-TV. The call letters, WCCO, stand for Washburn Crosby Company, and represent the name of the old General Mills, who were the original owners of what is now WCCO-AM. When the television station opened the same call letters were adopted.

Originally located in Radio City Theater, we had one studio, three floor cameras, and one film camera. Today WCCO-TV has evolved to a station with a staff of about 200 people with 8 robotic cameras and two studios. During our first week of operation in 1952, we presented about 35 hours of programming. Today viewers enjoy more than 160 hours of programming a week.

WCCO moved into this building in September of 1983. As the first and only television station in downtown Minneapolis the move created quite a stir in the Twin Cities. WCCO-TV chose this site because it resembles the CBS studios in New York. The building was specifically designed with windows at eye-level for the public to be able to see our station. Today pedestrians on the Nicollet Mall can peak in, see our 4 Weather Center, our newsroom and watch us do what we do.

The architectural firm of Hardy, Holzman, Pfeiffer and Associates designed our building and Orchestra Hall. The original plans for the building resembled the across the street neighbor until the designers visited Vetter stone quarries in Mankato. When the architects found the red variegated sandstone that our building is made out of, the original plans were redesigned. The designers and owners ultimately modeled the outside of the building after a TV tower. The copper that outlines the chimneys, skylights, roof and walls of the production studio were also mined and crafted in Minnesota. The building has approximately 100,000 square feet in it.

Channel 4 is a CBS affiliate, but we are owned, operated and governed by CBS. This means that we agree to run 60-75% of the programming that CBS offers us. We also agree to run this programming in a quality technical manner and we will not air any programming offered by the other two competing networks. This is a mutually beneficial agreement. This is the 15th largest television market in the country. Another way we get programming is through syndication. These programs are independently produced and distributed. Dr. Phil, Oprah and Wheel of Fortune and Ellen are examples of syndicated programs. Syndicated programs are purchased through a bidding process. The station with the highest bid or best offer will win the rights to air that particular show in that market. No other station will be able to broadcast that particular syndicated version in the market. WCCO has sole ownership of Dr. Phil, Oprah, Wheel of Fortune and Ellen in this market. We have a contract for a certain number of episodes and after that number has been run then we must bid again for the rights to air that show.

WCCO 4's news department is considered a leader in the Twin Cities and national markets, producing award-winning documentaries, investigative reporting and in-depth features. We have the market's first investigative news team, the I-Team. WCCO-TV has won several prestigious news awards including the coveted du-Pont Columbia, Edward R. Murrow, National and Regional Emmy's and the George Foster Peabody award. Over the years, WCCO-

TV has been home to many of the region's best-loved and most respected TV news personalities, including Dave Moore. Moore joined WCCO-TV in 1950 and for twenty-eight years (1957-1985) he anchored the 10pm evening news and the number one ranked 6pm news from 1968-1991.

Don Shelby joined the WCCO 4 News Team in 1978 and as Moore's successor, currently co-anchors the 10pm newscast. Don has won all five of the nation's top journalism awards, including 3 national Emmys, the du-Pont Columbia Citation, the Scripps-Howard Award for Excellence, the George Foster Peabody Award and the Society of Professional Journalist Distinguished Service Award, where the two runners-up were Ted Koppel and Bill Moyer.

Amelia Santaniello joined our news team as a lead anchor in 1996. Frank Vascellaro joined WCCO in 2006. The team made their husband and wife on-air debut together in 2006.

WCCO-TV is preparing to advance into the next level of technology with "You Media", led by John Daenzer, Director of New Media. New Media will further WCCO's local and global media reach, embracing new technology and audiences and encompassing website products and unique content. The effort will include partnerships with CBS Outdoor, CBS Radio and CBS Digital Media Group.

WCCO.com has won numerous awards including an a regional Edward R. Murrow award for its journalistic efforts for large market television stations (2009), "Best Web Site" for large market Minnesota television stations from the National Press Club, "First Place Online Journalism" award in 1998, 1999 and 2001 and "Best Website" for Minnesota TV stations by the Associated Press. In addition to local news coverage, users can also find information about all of WCCO-TV's programming, on-air talent and special events.

In today's changing market WCCO 4 News continues its tradition of providing viewers with the most in-depth and accurate news coverage. In the coming months, we will supplement this high standard of journalistic coverage with high quality local programming.