



eScapes Network, LLC

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Very few television programs ever achieve such a milestone. The classic TV series *Bonanza* ran from 1959 to 1973 and didn't do it. *M.A.S.H.* ran for eleven years on network television and didn't even come close to it. In fact, it took *The Simpsons* 25 years to accomplish what the eScapes Network has done in a little less than six months.

And what is "it"? The 500th produced episode.

Last week, with little fanfare, the fledgling network from Monroe, Michigan concluded editing an episode of the Seattle waterfront and sent it to quality control for approval. When the episode was approved, it was noted that eScapes had just reached its 500th unique segment.

Granted, the eScapes Network does not have the logistical burdens of scripted programming-- actors, sets, script revisions, and the like-- but just as its network cousins, eScapes is highly dependent on locations.

In fact, that's what the eScapes Network is all about ... locations.

The network produces 15-minute HD episodes featuring exotic and visually stunning destinations from around the world accompanied by a relaxing adult contemporary soundtrack. The patent-pending concept is called "Hybrid Radio/Television."

From the comfort of their living rooms, viewers can explore and discover a wide range of the earth's greatest locations, from bustling cityscapes to beautiful serene lakes, mountains and natural wonders.

"We've got content," says Jon Oswald, General Manager of eScapes. "In an ever expanding video world where content is king, our network is the prince in waiting. We've put together a really dedicated team of producers and editors who have worked incredibly hard and what we've accomplished to date is a significant milestone for this company."

And it's not going unnoticed. The network, broadcasting via satellite to all of North America and parts of South America, is being well received by cable and television operators.

"The eScapes Network could just as easily have been named The Relaxation Network," said Mr. Oswald from his office in downtown Monroe. "With a 24-hour news cycle that ratchets people up emotionally, along with scripted programming that continues to push the boundaries of taste to shock and draw attention, we have created a calming psychological space where viewers can tune in to watch anything from ships at sea to tropical beaches. No car chases, no politics, no angry talking heads, no pushing the envelope on taste; I think people need and want what we're putting on the air."

He seems to be right. Since launching on Buckeye Cable in Northwest Ohio on May 16, the network has been in constant negotiations with television and cable operators who are anxious to add eScapes to their program line-ups.

"It's really been amazing, the reaction that we're getting from programmers and advertisers," said Jim Balistreri, eScapes' Director of Sales and Marketing. "At first, the concept seems so simple that people mistakenly equate it to the Yule Log that stations have run on Christmas for years. But after having eScapes play during a meeting, within ten minutes people are saying how comforting and addictive our network truly is."

"I have it on all the time," said Tracy Wilson, Station Manager at KCTU in Wichita, Kansas. "Even before they officially launched, I was watching the satellite feed and contacted them because I had never seen anything so compelling and relaxing. We now air eScapes on our digital subchannel and use it on our primary station as well. The viewer reaction is extremely positive and the number of different episodes is staggering."

And if Jon Oswald is right, viewers will have a lot more to watch in the future. "By the end of this year, we'll have at least doubled the number episodes we air, but the world is so big, there's so much to see and discover. Our video artists are in the field right now capturing amazing scenery. We're not slowing down our pace one iota."

So with 500 episodes "in the can" in less than six months, an ever-growing footprint of national distribution, and the prospect of even more virtual-vacation destinations coming to a screen near you, it looks like the eScapes Network is going to be setting records for the most episodes ever produced by a television network.

As C. Montgomery Burns, the owner of the Springfield Nuclear Plant on *The Simpsons* would say, the future of the eScapes Network is ... "excellent."