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NYC shows hit big time in Ch. 4 deal

By Richard Huff
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Say so long to "Starting Over" on WNBC/Ch. 4 and hello to some shows you might have seen elsewhere.

Beginning Sept. 4, Ch. 4 will replace that sappy reality program - which had already been canceled - with episodes of a variety of shows that have aired on New York City-owned channel WNYC-TV.

The WNYC shows, which can be seen on Ch. 25, will run weekdays at 11 a.m. on Ch. 4.

The unusual deal gives Ch. 4 inexpensive programming to fill a hole in its daytime schedule while giving WNYC wider distribution.

"These shows are good shows," said Ch. 4 general manager Frank Comerford. "More important, it's the content. ... I was really impacted by the content. It's about New York City, it's about our marketplaces, it's important to the people living around New York."

WNYC's shows will air on Ch. 4 until Dec. 1, when they will be replaced by a new series called "iVillage Live," a program produced by the staff at the Web site iVillage. That show will be produced at NBC's Universal Studios in Orlando.

The programs covered under WNBC's deal with WNYC include:

"\$9.99," which offers tips on inexpensive activities in the city.

"Blueprint/NYC," a show that takes viewers to some of the iconic locations in the area.

"Cool in Your Code," a series that spotlights things that are cool and undiscovered.

"Eat Out/NY," a restaurant show.

"New York 360," a behind-the-scenes look at the local entertainment world.

"Secrets of New York," which focuses on mysteries of the city.

The WNYC programs also will be shown on WNBC's digital channel 4.4, which is on Time Warner's Ch. 732 and Comcast's Ch. 110.

The goal for the digital channel is to make it a viable alternative to Ch. 4, Comerford said. Plans are in the works to relaunch it in September, using the WNYC programming.

Under the terms of the deal, Ch. 4 and WNYC will split advertising time on the shows. Ch. 4 will sell its portion to advertisers, as it does with its other programs. WNYC will use its time to promote its own shows and the city, according to Comerford.

"This agreement with WNBC, which will give us an even greater opportunity to promote the city and its attractions, is just the latest in a long line of accomplishments for the station offering 'Everything New York,'" Mayor Bloomberg said in a statement.

The WNYC shows will remain on Ch. 4's digital channel for six months, Comerford said.