

New York's WNBC Partners With NYC-TV

In an unprecedented arrangement, WNBC-TV, NBC Universal's owned-and-operated New York flagship will air programming from the city's public TV station NYC-TV (WNYE-TV). The programming pact, announced Tuesday in a press conference hosted by Mayor Michael Bloomberg and WNBC, is the first of its kind between a commercial and non-commercial TV station.

Beginning Sept. 4 WNBC will broadcast five NYC TV series on its station and another two shows on WNBC 4.4, one of the station's two digital broadcast channels. The agreement runs through Dec. 1 for the programming on WNBC and for six months on WNBC 4.4.

In exchange for its programming, NYC will get broader distribution and four minutes of advertising inventory per day. "I think it's going to be a moneymaker," said Arick Wierson, general manager of NYC TV. In addition to selling through ads to its underwriting sponsors, the station will also use the inventory sell its own DVDs, promote its station and air city-related public service announcements.

For Frank Comerford, president and general manager of WNBC, who is looking to build up programming for the recently-launched hyper-local sidechannel, the deal was an easy one. "Both of our objectives are similar: to be local and reach the marketplace with local programming, news and information to the community," Comerford said. "We have an additional need with 4.4. We needed content and they needed distribution," he added.

The deal is also cost-effective for WNBC, which would have to invest in more syndication programming to fill the week day hour between 11 a.m. to noon, now devoted to "NYC TV on NBC." "The syndication model is changing," Comerford said. "The risk gets taken by stations. If it doesn't work, you're stuck. If it does, rates go up and then the show goes across the street."

In total, WNBC will air 113 episodes of five half-hour NYC TV shows: \$9.99, Blueprint NYC, Cool in Your Code, Eat Out NY, and New York 360. The programming replaces Martha, which moves to 10 a.m.

WNBC 4.4 will air 120 episodes of the same five series plus two other shows, Secrets of New York and the special Seven Secrets of Grand Central.