



WITH NEW STUDIOS,
Great American Country
LOOKS AND SOUNDS GOOD

BY MICHAEL GROTTICELLI

Scripps Networks' Great American Country (GAC) is one of the top-rated country music channels, and its new file-based, HD-compatible facility is receiving quite a few raves. The country music network started in the 1980s, with most of its programs taped in Colorado and elsewhere across the country, and has grown considerably ever since.

After years of taping its programs in a variety of studios and production companies, the GAC network is now settled into a new two-story production studio in downtown Nashville. The 8000sq-ft facility was completed earlier this year, under the guidance of system integrator Broadcast Integration Group of Atlanta. It used a design developed internally by a Scripps Networks and GAC project team led by Kevin Kritch, the network's vice president of production operations.

The sleek new studios were built inside an existing recording studio and administrative office. The plant is completely designed and engineered for HD production, but currently distributes its programs in 4:3 SD only. The plan is to move to full HD sometime in 2009 when many of the other Scripps shows will convert to HD as well.

The 2000sq-ft main production studio "A" features four Thomson Grass Valley LDK 4000 HD 1080i cameras and three custom sets. The sets are fixed to the building's main walls, yet they can be adjusted, and parts of the walls and panels can be moved or replaced to accommodate different scenic designs and art direction for other shows and live music performances. Philadelphia broadcast scenic veterans Artists at Work designed and constructed the colorful and flexible sets.