

Boom in Mobile/OB Refitting to HD

By Douglas I. Sheer

Throughout the industry, mobile and outside broadcast (OB) vehicles are being rapidly refitted or built to suit to accommodate the move to HDTV, at an unprecedented pace. First, it should be said that counting true OB vehicles is a challenging occupation. Every TV station has mobile crews in vans or small trucks. Then, in the movie industry, there are thousands of grip or gaffer vehicles, camera trucks or 'honey' wagons. Then, TV has hundreds of SNG vehicles that mainly patch feeds to the satellite networks. If all such vehicles were counted, globally, the numbers would get pretty staggering, certainly into the tens of thousands of trucks in all. But, these are not true OB vehicles capable of originating 'live' programming or capturing multi-camera events such as music concerts, plays or sporting events. That chore falls to larger, purpose built vehicles, often (but not always) of the tractor-trailer, cab and body design. That sort of vehicle is a rare breed indeed. Most counts place them, globally, in the hundreds, not thousands.

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