

Telesat puts television on the road

Television coverage of special events could be faster, cheaper and more efficient with a new commercial service being introduced by Telesat Canada.

The Canadian satellite operator has applied to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) for regulatory approval of a new transportable earth station service called ANIKAST 1400.

Once approved, the service is to start July 1 for Telesat customers, which include the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Canadian pay-television operators and Telecom Canada, a consortium of Canadian telephone companies.



The van-mounted transmitting service can put a broadcast crew on the air within 20 minutes.

The van-mounted transmitting service can put a remote broadcast crew on the air within 20 minutes of arrival at the site of special events such as important international visits, visits, political conventions and election campaigns and sports events.

"The broadcaster's ability to cover such major stories has often been severely restrained by the costs and technical complications involved in getting pictures and sound produced at an event site on the air," said Telesat president Eldon Thompson at an Ottawa news conference that was simultaneously broadcast to a group of Toronto reporters using the ANIKAST 1400 system.

"Telesat believes it has come up with a solution that will solve most of these problems for the TV broadcaster, at a cost most would have thought impossible just two

years ago."

Telesat has been using the service on a trial basis for more than a year, and it was used for 36 special events in 1983.

The ANIKAST 1400 service consists of a 2.2-metre satellite transmitting dish mounted on the back of a van.

The antenna is fed broadcast signals from special events that are difficult to serve with normal broadcast links and transmits them via the *Anik C* satellite back to broadcasters' studios.

Henry McGee, supervisor of market planning for Telesat, said the logistics of setting up remote and special events coverage without a transportable satellite system can

take up to six weeks, because the broadcaster must arrange for a temporary satellite connection, the rental of a transmitter and the hiring of a technical crew for the transmission.

With the ANIKAST 1400 service, Telesat customers who reserve the service one week in advance can rent the transportable earth station and a one- or two-man crew for \$1 550 for eight hours, which includes one hour of television transmission time.

He said that is about half the cost of the makeshift broadcasting services used before the self-contained, transportable transmitter was perfected.

Telesat is to put one terminal in operation in central Canada and another in western Canada on July 1, and plans to add a third "freelance" terminal for use in the Eastern and Atlantic regions by 1985.

Volcanic vents found in Canadian waters

Undersea volcanic vents, where heat and minerals well up from inside the earth's crust, have been discovered in Canadian waters.

The hot vents, beneath 1 700 metres of water, are the first ever discovered entirely in Canadian waters. The vent zone, called the Southern Explorer Ridge, is about 150 kilometres west of Nootka, about two-thirds of the way up Vancouver Island.

"We were very lucky to find it," said Stephen Scott, a University of Toronto professor of geology who was one of 12 scientists on a cruise of the *CSS Parizeau*, a Department of Fisheries and Oceans research ship.

Dangling a sensitive heat gauge and a camera at the end of 1 700 metres of cable, "was like fishing with a lure and trying to avoid snagging the bottom," Mr. Scott said in a phone interview from the *Parizeau's* base at Sydney, B.C.

The equipment was encased in a steel cage that slammed into features along a trough in the ocean floor where two plates of the earth's crust are moving away from each other. But the equipment identified several places where heat and sulphur-rich minerals are moving through weak spots in the ocean floor.

Biologists and geologists are preparing to return to the area later this month and plan to use a two-man deep ocean submarine called *Pisces* to look at the vents. Worms that live on a diet of sulphur, as well as clams and crabs are generally found living in total darkness around such deep-ocean vents.

Ottawa firm supplies computer institute

Digital Equipment of Canada Ltd., based in Kanata, Ontario, has signed a four-year, \$65-million research agreement with the University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, and the university's Institute for Computer Research. The agreement calls for Digital to supply more than \$25-million worth of computer equipment to the institute over the next four years, including 15 large-scale VAX computer systems and about 2 000 personal computers and workstations.

The university and the institute are to be responsible for the research and development program and provide research staff, equipment maintenance and space for the project. Their participation is expected to be worth about \$40 million over the next four years.