



Figure 2.62 Once a high-end digital production truck, now a home for feral cats — this truck rolled on its side.



Figure 2.63 Here NEP's Super Shooter II is towed into position by a bulldozer in the mid-1980s. (Source: Joseph S. Balkan — Hearst-Argyle Television)

Park and Power

You Have to Get There First

Setup for a remote can take months, as it does for the Olympics, or just a few hours, as is the case with many locally televised baseball and basketball games. With the Olympics, a substantial portion of the facility is actually installed in temporary or permanent structures for long periods of time. But in the vast majority of remote productions, the capability arrives on multiple wheels. Sometimes a substantial amount of effort is required just to get the vehicle(s) to the venue. As with all things on the road, accidents do happen. A 53-foot truck, one of the first digital television trucks, flipped a couple of years ago when its driver fell asleep at the wheel. ABC has one at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean — it was washed off a ship on its way to Hawaii in the 1970s.

Often when broadcasters get near the venue they find the last few hundred yards the toughest part of the trip. At Super Bowl XXXVI, space was so tight the multiple trailers involved had to be moved into position with tugs like the ones used to move airplanes. Many places, like the Meadowlands, have or have had ramps that start at too steep an incline. Even when the unit is in place it isn't always safe. Once in what was the Astrodome, baseball game coverage stopped when torrential rain overcame the truck bay drainage and the truck started filling up with water.

Power

Because current draw on each leg, or power cable, can be over 100A, the cables are thick, often two or three aught. As already mentioned, the connectors on these cables are the cam-lock type to ensure that the connection has very little resistance.

Opening up the Truck

Besides powering up the truck, the EIC and any assistants available must also provide access to the trailer and its equipment. If the truck has only an EIC and no other help, the stairs are not installed until other crew members arrive. The unit's truck driver will often help with stair

Parking



Figure 2.64 While smaller television production vehicles such as ENG and SNG trucks can have automatic leveling systems, there are no such systems for trailers that can weigh almost 80,000 lbs. Trailers are often carefully backed onto wood planks in an effort to level them. (Source: John Tomlinson — NEP)



Figure 2.65 Parked truck with its backup generators nearby. (Source: Tim Stoffel)

Figure 2.66 Production truck arrives for 2001 Winter Games (Source: Chad Wachs)





Figure 2.67 The main expansion module of a high-definition production trailer on display. The expansion sections of a truck can add about 50 percent more inside space in the case of a triple expando, over a straight trailer (one with no expandable sides). A triple expando has expansion modules as seen here and in Figure 10.10 and adds a third out the back of the trailer. The trick with expandos is to make sure everything is in its traveling position before closing the expansion modules back into the trailer. Often consoles, wall partitions, ceiling parts, even whole racks, must be stowed in a different position than they are when the trailer is in use. Otherwise, the expansion modules can become "trash compactors" as they are retracted back into the trailer.



Figure 2.68 Snow and ice make the task of parking much more difficult. There was an incident a few years ago where a 48-foot trailer left overnight at Rich Stadium in Buffalo, NY with wheels blocked and tractor brakes on, slid down a slight incline and into a gate because of ice. (Source: Jason Taubman)



Figure 2.69 Production trailer (right), graphics trailer (center) and utility trailer (behind) at 3Com park for a FOX NFL game. Many of the newer venues have television production parking inside, but many older ones like 3Com do not. A number of the older domes had outside parking, including Seattle's Kingdome, and the Pontiac Silverdome in Michigan. The fans inside may be relatively comfortable while the production facilities right outside are battling raging winds and low temperatures. Even summer can pose obstacles: Rain and lightning pose no threat indoors but produce much grief outside. There have been shows where all communications inside the truck essentially ceased as heavy rain pounded on the trailer's roof.

install if it is too much for a single person to handle. Since many trailers today have expandable sides or "expandos," the EIC will also bring the expandable sections out via a hand crank, or via motorized control in newer trucks.

Most large trucks today need some configuration when they arrive on site. In addition, many medium and large remotes have multiple trucks and other vehicles that must be maneuvered into compounds. Once this is done the rest of setup can commence. ■



Figure 2.70 Once the vehicles are parked and leveled, the next step is to supply power. With these large production vehicles, you don't simply run a power cord to the nearest Edison socket. Most require a lot of power. An NTSC or PAL analog-equipped 48- to 53-foot trailer usually requires at least 30kW. That's without air conditioning on. Environmental requirements usually kick that consumed power up past 50kW. The newer digitally equipped trucks can increase the needed power by 50 percent (70- to 80kW). The demands of high definition are even higher — over 100kW. Most trucks run on three-phase 208V service. Some are switchable between 220V single-phase or three-phase. Shown is the power panel for a three-phase truck. The forth power cable is for ground. Metering lets the engineer in charge of the truck ensure that voltages are correct before anything in the truck is powered up. Current draw can also be checked here.



Figure 2.71 Once the side has been expanded out, the right third of the monitor wall in this truck is swung into place and the necessary video feeds are connected.



Figure 2.73 The truck above, one of NMT's high-definition trucks, is a double expando. Besides an expansion area that expands out the other side, a smaller expando section on this side of the trailer slides out and holds the monitor wall in the production compartment in order to provide more working space. The bays below house equipment, cable, manuals and spare parts. (Source: Tim Stoffel)



Figure 2.72 The truck engineers then move the stowed part of the front production desk into place.



Figure 2.74 Inside parking for the trailers used at Super Bowl XXXVI at the Superdome in New Orleans. This multiple-week remote, without the threat of being rained upon, allowed the equipment crew to "spread out" a little. (Source: Martin Eibeck - NEP)