

**News from:** Farris Marketing and WFMJ-TV

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## **Farris Marketing Designs Unique News Set for #1 Local News**

*WFMJ-TV newscasters will soon be broadcasting  
from a new and unique news set*

BOARDMAN — Farris Marketing has designed a lot of unusual, extensive and expensive tradeshow displays, including 2,000-sq.-ft set-ups used in Las Vegas. So when the company had the chance to take shot a designing the news set for the WFMJ-TV, it welcomed the challenge.

Though not as big as some trade show displays he has designed, the news set for 21 had some “unique challenges,” said John Farris, Vice President and Creative Director of Farris Marketing.

First of all, it had to be different. “Most news sets in markets this size look alike. They have room for a logo, a desk and a screen for showing video clips and graphics,” says Farris. “The folks at WFMJ — especially News Director Mona Alexander and General Manager John Grdic — wanted something different..”

Grdic and Alexander, who piloted the local station to the top of the local news ratings, wanted something fresh, with texture and architectural touches. “We wanted warmth; modern, state-of-the-art, but also a hint of home and traditional home visuals.” says Alexander.

Farris Marketing designed a 46 x 25-foot set that combines woods, plasters and other materials you see in your home — but went high-tech with color-changing graphics in the background. Traditional furniture is mixed with custom-made pieces and some back lighting that will keep viewers watching while not distracting them.

One unique touch is a spiral staircase on the main news set. But the greatest challenge of all may be building the set and getting it installed in the news studio of WFMJ without missing a newscast. Local craftsman Al Frano was given that task. With Farris and WFMJ reviewing sections as they are completed, Frano is constructing the set in a warehouse in Canfield. When he is done (possibly next week), lighting and other tests will be performed.

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When everyone is satisfied, Frano will take the set apart again and rebuild it at the station's studios. It was the only way to do it without interrupting newscasts, according to Farris. "They may have to use just the Weather Wall" one morning, but that's about it.

Farris designed the main news set and a "soft set" where casual interviews are conducted. A sports desk set and two additional venues — areas where breaking news or special stories can be delivered by reporters — are also a part of the design.

Why is WFMJ going through a change when they're number one in the ratings? "Our viewers deserve it," says John Grdic. "We needed more areas of our studio set changed to allow us to do different types of interviews. It's the same reason that NBC's *Today Show* is changing its morning news set."

"I believe our viewers will like the new look," says Grdic. "One reason we're successful in the ratings is because we give viewers what they want to see. After several years of looking at the same set, we know they would like to see something fresh."

According to Grdic, the new set will be introduced by the first week of September if all goes according to plan. "It better, or Farris Marketing will hear about it," he joked — adding that he has used Farris in the past for a number of projects. Grdic believes in using locally owned companies like Farris as much as possible. "Research, promotions...they do it all."

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