



New net is set – en Español

V-me bows with PBS as partner

By RICHARD HUFF
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A new Spanish-language TV network goes live this afternoon, promising to offer a different kind of programming for Latino viewers.

Executives will flip the switch on the new network V-me at 1:15 p.m., making it available to digital cable subscribers in major markets around the country.

"This has been three years in the making," said Carmen DiRienzo, president of V-me. "It's gone through multiple iterations and there's an intense sense on our part that this programming doesn't exist anywhere else and is really in demand."

The network is a partnership with 18 PBS stations — including WNET/Ch. 13 here.

Content for the network will run the gamut from an early morning yoga show, six-hours of childrens fare, an interview show and a nightly Latin movie.

"The Latino population is di-

verse, intellectually curious and intersted in a broad array of programs, just like the general market is," DiRienzo said.

She said discussions with potential viewers repeatedly turned up the same points — that Latino viewers wanted respect, respect in the way they're portrayed and respect in the sense of intelligent programming.

"We look at it as a window out and a mirror in," DiRienzo said. "A lot of our programming falls in line with that concept."

The network's day is broken into different blocks. Mornings start at 7 a.m. with a yoga show. Six hours of kids programs follow. Daytime hours will focus on entertainment and lifestyle, ranging from cooking to health, and a docu-reality show. Evenings will include current affairs and nonfiction programs. And the day ends with a Latin film.

"Latin films are kind of a reflection of the various Latin cultures," DiRienzo said.

The network's signature show, she said, is "Viva Voz," which is a nightly hourlong interview show. Guests come from the fields of entertainment, sports, business and politics. There will be a rotating roster of

hosts.

"It speaks immediately to that point of respect by its very existence," DiRienzo said. "It's intelligent talk for intellectually curious people who would like to enjoy those conversations in Spanish."

Some of the shows will be tied with current PBS offerings such as the "NewsHour" and "Religion & Ethics." For instance, the folks at "NewsHour" will supply science-related segments that may or may not have aired on the show, which will then be repackaged in Spanish.

Locally, the network will air on Time Warner Cable's Ch. 812, Comcast's 242 and Cablevision's 199.

This is not simply a version of PBS in Spanish, she said.

"We're decidedly not high-brow," DiRienzo said. "We're going to be intelligent, engaging; we hope to be empowering, and we hope to be entertaining."

'The Latino population is diverse, intellectually curious and interested in a broad array of programs.'



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V-me



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