

## Ross Expands Headquarters And Extends Product Line

Canadian company to break ground next month

BY TOM BUTTS

IROQUOIS, ONTARIO—Ross Video's growing bottom line is forcing it to expand its headquarters here.

The manufacturer, which calls the small Ontario town of Iroquois its home, has grown significantly over the past several years and will consolidate several satellite spaces and more than double its main factory space from 20,000 to 54,000 square feet. "We expect to break ground sometime in May," said Jeff Moore, Ross Video executive vice president, sales & marketing, adding that total square footage when all is done will total 57.5K.

Iroquois is a community of 1,500 on the St. Lawrence River and an hour and a half south of Ottawa. John Ross, a former tech executive with Central Dynamics, established the company in Iroquois after launching Ross Video with the sale of his first switcher for \$3,500 in 1974.

Nearly four decades later, his son, David leads the company, which has seen a significant product expansion in recent years. Although it made its name selling broadcast production switchers, Ross Video has been quietly acquiring the technology to develop products throughout the broadcast production chain, from switching to storage, signal processing and graphics.

Making its home base in the Ottawa area is no accident. Frequently referred to as "Canada's Silicon Valley," the area is home to more than 3,000 hi tech companies, with an emphasis on telecommunications, (Nortel and JDS started there). Nearby educational institutions, such as Carleton

University and the University of Waterloo "have allowed us to tap into some very good skill sets," said Moore.

According to David Ross, the privately owned company has grown an average of 15-20 percent annually over the past two decades and by the end of 2011, expects to boast more than 350 employees worldwide.

tomation (OverDrive), storage (SoftMetal), graphics (XPression), signal processing (openGear) and this year, routers.

The expanded product line "gives us more opportunity to talk to customers," Ross said. "Our salespeople now have a reason to call on a regular basis because our customers always need something that we sell. And having that critical



Ross Video is introducing its new Carbonite Switcher at NAB.

Ross attributes a large part of the company's growth to word of mouth as well as brand awareness. In the early years, "we were viewed as very cost effective but probably not as good as the brand names that were out there," he said. "It's just within the past few years that we've been able to break through. People are recognizing Ross as being a premium brand."

Within the past decade, the company has added the essential elements that surround the switcher production environment, including au-

mass of product is partly what is causing this [current] growth spurt."

That growth spurt can also be partly attributed to the acquisitions the company has made over the past several years. In 2010, it acquired Norpak, which manufactures Nielsen encoders and Closed Captioning Inserters as well as VBI, VANC and transport stream data insertion products. Ottawa-based Norpak has been an openGear partner for the past four years and offers a range of openGear-compliant data in-

