Jumping from one station to another station to the top job at another station across town doesn’t happen very often in the TV business.

“It’s relatively rare,” said Marla Drutz, who did just that in July when she took over as general manager and vice president of Detroit’s NBC affiliate, WDIV-Channel 4.

The longtime programming director at ABC affiliate WXYZ-Channel 7, Drutz replaced Steve Wasserman, who left WDIV Jan. 18 after 11 years. Drutz, 52, was at the ABC station for 20 years, and was programming director for the past 15 years. “Because I’ve lived in Detroit more than 20 years, it’s an easy transition for me. I know how to say ‘Gratzi,’ ” she said. “I understand and love this market.”

All eyes will be on her as WDIV continues its local ratings battle with her old station. Her objective is to maintain and grow Post-Newsweek Stations Inc.-owned WDIV, a tall order in a highly competitive market and in an age of media budget cutbacks.

“We’ve got a tremendous television market,” she said, citing its professionalism compared to other, larger cities.

“Larger markets are not nearly as professional in their product and presentation,” she said. Detroit is the nation’s 11th-largest television market.

“This feels like a marvelous fit to me,” she said.

If you could take a class in anything it would be: “Psychology course to better understand people’s motivations and help me be a more effective leader.”

Biggest lesson learned in the past year: “New challenges can energize you more than you ever imagine.”

— Bill Shea

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Marsha Ennis
Aerotropolis project director
Wayne County

Of all the high-profile projects under way in the myriad efforts to revitalize one of the most heralded is the plan to grow an “aerotropolis” of new industrial, commercial, retail development on the land between Detroit Metropolitan Airport and Livonia.

“Rope or put up a ladder,” she said. “My job is easy; I just have to see the wall coming to know whom to ask for the help and then find the right person to ask.”

The aerotropolis is a key element in the “Road to Renaissance” initiative, the economic revitalization contribution by the nonprofit CEO council Detroit Renaissance Inc. to the wider “One D” economic plan. The project is also a collaborative effort between the airport’s

Sheila Ronis, PhD, is working on the Project on National Security Reform. She’s also a Crain’s “Woman to Watch” and director of our MBA and Master of Science in Strategic Leadership programs.

For Your Own Security, Congratulate This Woman.