

A HISTORY OF IDAHO AM RADIO

BY
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An incomplete history of Idaho AM radio would be a more appropriate title for this article as there is some station information missing. In compiling such a report we run into four main problems:

1. Since it has been almost 70 years since the first licensed stations came on the air most of the people who were involved with them are now gone.
2. The FCC was not formed until the mid 1920s (then as the Federal Radio Commission) & there are incomplete or missing records on many of the pioneer broadcasters. A few years back the FCC office in Portland OR sent me a list of stations supposedly on the air in the early 1920s. As far as I could tell only a couple of those stations survived so I suspect there could be many pioneer broadcasters long forgotten. The list was from the memory of one of the Portland FCC officials and may not be complete or accurate. Unfortunately the list is currently packed away (I am planning a move in the near future) & was not

available for this article but once it is located I hope to review it for further research.

3. In the early 1920s several Federal agencies issued broadcast licenses and those records are also few and far between. In fact many of the original stations evolved from amateur stations so their actual broadcast histories may go farther back than their listed sign on dates.

4. Most of the pioneer broadcasters have been sold a multitude of times since their first sign on & they no longer have complete or accurate information available on their own station history.

This list was prepared from information I first collected in the early 1970s when I researched the history of Idaho TV broadcasting & from information I collected directly from the stations for the IDAHO BROADCASTING GUIDE. The stations are listed in rough order of sign on date & also includes dates (when know) of call letter changes. A few stations, noted by a '*' preceding the call letters, have additional information following the list.

A major component missing are the numerous frequency changes of the earlier stations. I know from reviewing older copies of the IDAHO STATESMAN both KFXD & KIDO changed frequencies several times over the past 60 years. Forming a complete history of these changes would be an interesting project I may work on at a later date.

Specific dates for some changes in both call letters and frequencies are also missing from the mid 1970s to early 1980s as I did not start keeping complete records until I published the first IDAHO BROADCASTING GUIDE in 1984.

I would appreciate hearing from members who have additional information to add to this list. I can be reached at: 5147 Morris Hill Apt. 133, Boise ID 83706.

STATIONS ON THE AIR

- *KIDO 630, Boise, May 1922 KFAU, Nov. 9, 1928 KIDO
- *KFXD 580, Nampa, 1925
- KSEI 930, Pocatello, Sept. 23, 1926
- KIFI 1270, Twin Falls, Oct. 1928 KTFI, July 1, 1977 KTLC, June 1, 1984
- KIFI
- *KID 590, Idaho Falls, Dec. 1928 KGIO, Feb. 16, 1929 KID
- KRLC 1350, Lewiston, March 1935
- KWAL 620, Wallace, May 1938
- KGEM 1140, Boise, May 1, 1946
- KBAR 1230, Burley, Aug. 31, 1946
- KWIK 1240, Pocatello, Sept. 1946
- KEZJ 1450, Twin Falls, 1946 KUMV, KEEP, Aug. 27, 1987 KEZJ
- KLIX 1310, Twin Falls, Dec. 12, 1946
- *KUNI 1080, Coeur d'Alene, Nov. 11, 1946
- *KBDI 670, Boise, May 1, 1947 KDSH, 1955 KBDI
- KCID 1490, Caldwell, 1947
- KRPL 1400, Moscow, April 23, 1947
- KWEI 1260, Weiser, Dec. 1947
- *KACH 1340, Preston, Sept. 4, 1948 KPST, KACH
- *KSPT 1400, Sandpoint, March 23, 1949
- KBLI 690, Blackfoot, Nov. 1951
- KORT 1230, Grangeville, Oct. 8, 1954
- KUPI 980, Idaho Falls (Ammon), 1954
- *KRXX 1230, Rexburg, 1954
- *KIZN 730, Boise, Dec. 4, 1955 KYME, KTOX, Sept. 22, 1986 KIZN
- *KOZE 950, Lewiston, Oct. 6, 1955
- KBBK 970, Rupert, Oct. 21, 1955 KAYI, Jan. 1985 KBBK
- KZBQ 1290, Pocatello, 1956 KYIE, 1962 KSNM, 1978 KZBQ
- KARI 1400, Jerome, Aug. 1956
- *KBRV 790, Soda Springs, 1957
- *KLER 1300, Orofino, Sept. 1958
- KSRA 960, Salmon, March 1, 1959
- *KSPD 790, Boise, April 29, 1959 KEST, Sept. 1970 KSPD
- KTEE 1260, Idaho Falls, Sept. 10, 1960
- *KBGN 1060, Caldwell, Oct. 5, 1960
- *KKIC 950, Boise, April 8, 1961 KATN, KBRJ, KJHY, 1988 KKIC
- KJCY 1240, Mountain Home, March 20, 1962 KFLI, 1983 KJCY
- KVSI 1450, Montpelier, July 20, 1965
- KSXI 1340, Halley, Feb. 10, 1966, 1986 KNRC, 1987 KSKI
- KIGO 1400, St. Anthony, July 10, 1966
- KOFE 1490, St. Maries, March 1, 1970
- KBFI 1450, Bonners Ferry, Oct. 1, 1977
- KRCD 1490, Pocatello (Chubbock), Dec. 1980 KKL8, 1987 KRCD
- KSGR 1340, Nampa, Dec. 15, 1986
- KMJY 700, Old Town, Oct. 25, 1986

STATIONS OFF THE AIR

KRXX 1480, Gooding, 1985 KIDI, 1986 KRXX, off the air 1988
*KZID 1240, McCall, Oct. 15, 1965, 1987 KZID, off air 1988
KNPA 1340, Nampa, Nov. 1, 1962 KAIN, KXIC, 1984 KNPA, off the air May 11, 1986
*KACY 1450, Payette, Dec. 20, 1957 KYEI, 1985 KACY, off the air 1986

STATIONS NOT YET ON THE AIR

???? 870, Eagle
KIDH 1000, Eagle
KZUN 1600, Elk City
*KLIT 1210, Meridian
*KORI 1450, Payette

KIDO-First on the air as KFAU in May 1922, owned by Boise High School. Was sold to the Davidson family (who moved from Eugene OR) in 1928. They owned the station until 1959 when they decided to make KIDO-TV their primary business. KIDO-TV then became KTUB. It has been told in early accounts of KFAU, the reason for the station being sold was the school district could no longer afford to keep replacing the final tubes that were always burning out. KFAU may have been one of the first educational broadcasters in the country.

KFXD-put on the air by Frank Hurt in Logan UT in 1922 (BROADCASTING YEARBOOK says May 20, 1920 but former KFXD management said 1922). He moved the station to Jerome ID in 1925 and later to Nampa in 1927. I have found some listings to show the Nampa move occurred in 1930 but I now believe 1927 is the correct year.

KID-former frequencies were 1320 & 1350

KVNI-was on 1240 with 1kw until the mid 1970s when it moved to 1080 with 10kw day, 1kw night.

KBOI-was first on 950, moved to 670 on May 9, 1968 with 50kw day and 25kw night. Went to 50kw night Feb. 16, 1981. KDSH became KBOI in 1955 when the owners transferred the city of license of KBOI-TV from Meridian to Boise. KBOI-TV became KBCI in 1975 when both stations were sold to separate owners.

KACH-changed calls to KACH from KPST sometime in the late 1970s.

KSPI-my original listing for first sign on date was 1944 but BROADCASTING YEARBOOK shows 1949.

KRXX-station told me their first sign on was in 1954 but BROADCASTING YEARBOOK lists Jan. 1951.

KIZN-was originally on 740, moved to 730 in Dec. 1984

KOZE and KLER (both owned by 4-K Radio) swapped frequencies in the late 1970s.

KBRV-went off the air with sister FM KFIS 100.1 in the summer of 1986. In 1988 both stations were sold and KFIS came back on the air. The new owners said they planned to have KBRV on the air later in the year. At this writing there has been no indication the station has returned.

KSPD-was off the air from 1972 to 1978. It could be argued the 1978 to present broadcast operations are actually a different station from those of 1959-1972. BROADCASTING YEARBOOK lists the first sign on date for KEST as 1959 but the original owners said the station came on the air in April of 1961. I do seem to remember the station being on the air before 1961.

KBGN-was originally on 910, changed to 1060 in the late 1970s.

KKIC-as KAIN moved to 950 from 1010 in 1968 when KBOI moved to 670. In the early 1980s it was sold to the owners of KKIC FM, 101.7. KKIC was off the air from 1984 to May 1987. The station was also licensed to Meridian from the early 1980s until 1988 when relicensed to Boise.

KZID-station may be coming back on the air under new management. It has been reported prospective owners have been looking the station over.

KLIT-owner, Mary Lake Communications (FM KIYS 92.3) may have dropped plans for the station.

KACY/KORI-station (with sister FM, KQPD 100.1, also off the air in 1986) was sold in either 1986 or 1987 to Qwyhee Broadcasters Inc. The original offices and studios no longer exist. The call letters KORI were approved for both stations in 1987. As of this date no progress has made on getting KORI (AM or FM) on the air. I checked with the Payette Chamber of Commerce in 1988 and they said there had been no sign of Qwyhee Broadcasters Inc. in the area.