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Radio Business Report
Voice of the Radio Broadcasting Industry

Radio News

$15.4 Billion: 1998 is a record revenue year for radio
1998 radio revenues were 12% ahead of the previous record sales year—set way back in 1997. The 1998 record is not expected to have a long lifespan either.

Radio mourns Tom Milewski
Spot pacing almost mirroring 1998
No easy way out of EAS patent controversy
CD Radio’s tricky chip shot slows down rocket shot
RAB confab turns into McLaughlin group?
Marcus says ownership diversity is a capital formation idea
CRG buy is a promotion for Chancellor
Smyth takes the helm at Greater Media
Pedlow becomes king BE; Shimmel shimmies to Simmons

Television Business Report

Spot pacing almost mirroring 1998
No easy way out of EAS patent controversy

Diller deal weds CATV services to the Internet
Antennas, anyone? Universal UHF hits the market

IIBOC issues roundtable
Orban finds a DAD; Blaupunkt decorated by CEMA

Brill enjoys 37% revenue gain
For ABRY, the hills are alive with the sound of Muzak

Spin cycle: Clear Channel-Jacor names buyers
Cox, CBS and ABC were able to pick up sticks at Lowry Mays’ big sale, as well as minority-owned Radio One, Blue Chip and Mega Media. CCC will add Syracuse.

Chancellor looks for a deal while stock slips
Z-Spanish expands in Dallas with FM move-in
Alonso’s Atlantic City dice roll makes him the Egg Harbor man

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Radio enjoys record earnings from $ea to $hining $ea

1998 radio revenues soared above the high-flying results of 1997, breaking well over the $15B mark ($15.411B, to be exact). A 12% gain in local business to $11.923B, coupled with a 15% surge which took national up to $2.768B accounted for the increase. The gains were uniform throughout the country—none of the five regions were more than +/-2% in the all-important local category, and all were within the same +/-2% for national business with the exception of the West, which beat the national total by 3%.

Revenues in the month of December were only 1% below the total for the year at 11% to the good. This was the result of a 10% gain in local business over December 1997, which was bolstered by a 14% gain in national business. The West was the big winner locally, enjoying a 14% gain. The fruit of the big rep firms in the Big Apple seemed to fall near the tree this time around for national, as the East picked up a whopping 30% gain. For the most part, revenue gains were fairly evenly distributed with the exception this time of the Midwest, which had modest gains of 7% in local and 2% in national.

RAB president Gary Fries sees more of the same for this year, saying, “as impressive as 1998 was for radio, we are expecting even more in 1999.”—DS

Milewski dead at 49

Tom Milewski, Executive VP/COO of Greater Media Inc. and President of its radio group, succumbed to lung cancer on Feb. 8 at The Medical Center at Princeton in New Jersey. The 49-year-old broadcaster is survived by his wife, Kathleen Carroll, and two children.

“We benefitted from his energy,” said Frank Kabela, President, Greater Media, which owns radio, newspaper and cable TV properties. Although Milewski had been a vocal opponent of ownership deregulation, Kabela noted that once the 1996 Telcom Act passed, Milewski moved aggressively to reposition the company’s radio group to own superduopolies in Boston, Philadelphia and Detroit.

Milewski rose through the ranks at Greater Media, joining the company in 1973 when it acquired WCSS-FM Detroit, where he was PD and morning personality. After earning a law degree in 1976, Milewski moved to company headquarters in East Brunswick, NJ and subsequently became VP/General Counsel. He was named Executive VP in 1991 and radio group President in 1997.

Memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society, 3076 Princeton Pike, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648, or to the oncology department of The Medical Center at Princeton, 253 Witherspoon St., Princeton, NJ 08540.—JM

Pacing on track

Forward pacing is running only slightly behind last year’s rapid pace in the latest RBR/Miller Kaplan Market Sell-Out percentage report. “I don’t believe that this is any indication of a slowdown,” said Miller, Kaplan’s George Nadel Rivin, who noted that actual results from January appear to be strong.

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2/15/99 RBR
EAS patent controversy erupts

A battle may be brewing. The NAB and National Weather Service (NWS) are saying the government needs to get involved in a recent patent fiasco over EAS technology. The NAB and involved in a recent patent fiasco over EAS technology. Over the last few weeks, broadcasters have been receiving letters from Quad Dimension Inc., claiming it holds a process patent (No. 5,121,430) on the new EAS technology. They are told to pay $240 for 1999 and $180 for each year afterwards to use the EAS system in a license agreement.

"Broadcasters are innocently caught between two conflicting federal pressures—compliance with the patent laws and adherence to FCC [EAS] regulations," said NAB's Eddie Fritts in a letter to Bill Kennard, cc'd to the Commissioners and Dept. of Commerce.

RBR sources who wished not to be identified say there was an earlier 1992 Quad patent, a different technology that the FCC did not adopt. "A couple of years after the FCC adopted its EAS rules, QDI got its patent expanded [amended] after the fact to include what is involved in those rules. The expansion is from using the vertical interval in TV stations [for transmission] to any broadcast medium, and from using zip codes to specify geography to any code that specifies geography. NOAA filed a reexamination of the patent back in September and the patent office stood behind it."

Quad CFO Al Eckilson only agreed with the details of the expansion. His side of the story: "As a group, we conceived, designed and tested the system totally on our own. We did our pre-research with regards to existing patents/prior art, there was none. We proceeded and received a patent. When the system was developed, a year or so later, the FCC created a new standard for an early warning system. They were fully made aware of our system—we sent them the information, even a demo disk on how it works. And basically, they adopted it."

The NWS wants this resolved as soon as possible and is pushing for a second reexamination. "The National Weather Service is extremely concerned that the patent reexamination take place at the earliest possible time, because of the possible negative impact on the EAS system and our mission of saving lives and protecting property. It's clearly something that [broadcasters] did not expect was part of the package," said Allan Eustis, Chief, Industrial Meteorology, National Weather Service. "We were unaware of their patent or their claim to a patent until people started sending us these letters."

Why aren't the manufacturers the ones charged? "We have a patent on the entire system. The manufacturers deal with only the encoding part of their machine," said Eckilson, who added the whole chronological history of this process patent is on their web page, www.quaddimension.com.

And the solution? "There's various things being talked about with the FCC and Dept. of Commerce. This is something the government should purchase or subsidize. We look at them as the ones who more or less created this problem. Otherwise, we're asking for $15/month for the use of the system we designed. I think that's very fair and reasonable," said Eckilson.—CM

Setbacks for CD Radio

CD Radio (O:CDRD) disclosed in an SEC filing (2/4) that problems with two contractors would delay the commercial operation of its satellite DARS system until at least Q4 2000 and increase costs by $175M. News of the filing spread quickly, and sent the company's stock price plunging.

CD Radio said the design and development of chip sets by Lucent (N:LU) required more engineering resources than originally expected and will cost $27M, rather than $9M.

Additionally, Space Systems/Loral (N:LOR) has had to delay launches for all three of CD Radio's satellites, due to a backlog in delivery of Proton rockets. Rather than beginning launches this November, the first satellite is now set to go up in January 2000, #2 in March and #3 in May, with checkout completed by June 2000—three months later than originally projected. A CD Radio spokesperson said the previous dates had been "soft" launch dates and that the company had only recently gotten the new, "firm" dates.—JM

Party time at RAB '99

RAB '99 scored a record attendance of 2,353 in Atlanta, beating the previous year by 30 people. "The Internet will be part of Radio's future," observed RAB CEO Gary Fries, as this year's conference featured several Web-oriented sessions.

During the Atlanta confab, Fries presented the Kevin B. Sweeney Award for Excellence in Radio (named for RAB's first president) to Ed McLaughlin. "Ed has always been a visionary," noted Fries.

Celebrating afterward were (l-r) Herb McCord, CEO, Granum Communications, Dick Chapin, President, Chapin Enterprises, McLaughlin and Norm Feuer, COO, Triathlon Broadcasting (O:TBCOA).

RBR observation: Fries' praise of McLaughlin may be an understatement! Rising to the rank of President of ABC Radio Networks would be enough of a career for most people—and while there McLaughlin shook up the industry by implementing multiple networks, now a mainstay. Ed's greatest fame though, came after he left ABC, founded his own syndication company and discovered an unknown Talk host named Rush Limbaugh. The rest is history.—JM

2/15/99 RBR
Marcus has a plan

Preparing to address FCC Chairman Bill Kenard's (D) en banc hearing on broadcast ownership rules and share the stage with entertainer and L.A. broadcaster Stevie Wonder, Chancellor CEO Jeff Marcus has a plan to create more opportunities in the industry.

"My feeling is the FCC will conclude their objective is not going to be met by eliminating one-to-one waivers and by eliminating [TV] LMAs. If that were to occur, the unintended consequence would be new entrants would not have access. Media properties would simply be swapped between existing owners and there would not be any opening of the markets to new entrants," said Marcus in a Chancellor conference call just prior to RBR's press deadline.

"The real issue is capital formation meeting with opportunity and Chancellor would be delighted to be part of an initiative, with other companies I have spoken to...to create a funding source for new entrants into the media business. I think that will be much more compelling...to the Commission than to try and do this with a regulatory fix," Marcus added.

He also said Rep. Cliff Stearns (R-FL) who sits on the Commerce Committee will soon introduce a bill in the House "that will once and for all codify the ability to add duopolies...and it will also codify the one-to-one market waivers...so this question will have a legislative fix."

"There is a bill in the works," said Stearns' press spokesperson Paul Flusche to RBR.—JA

Chancellor acquires Creative Resources Group

Creative Resources Group, a promotions consulting firm headed by Gerry Tabio, was acquired Monday by Chancellor after five months of consulting for the group in Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, Chicago and New York. Creative Resources will teach and consult Chancellor sales and marketing staffs in developing new promotions and marketing concepts for clients. Tabio becomes an SVP and remains president of the new-division.

"We're dealing with different people at a whole different level. There is such a tremendous amount of hidden potential in radio—if you are competing for a share of a buy that has already been planned, you can't really experience that potential," said Tabio. "You need to get in there earlier and come up with a better idea, create things that have never existed before, and create revenue that wasn't there in the first place."

Albeit somewhat duplicative, this seems to round out Chancellor's group promotional strategy well—another company, Global Sales Development (RBR 1/4, p. 4), headed by Alison Glander, was acquired last May and dubbed "Skip" Schmidt. It helps design and execute promotions ideas locally—working on behalf of Fortune 1000 advertisers.—CM

Filling the executive suite

• Former Infinity (N:INF) sales exec. Sam Benrubii is heading back to Infinity as VP/Sales for the entire radio group. Benrubii had most recently been head of sales for Westwood One (N:WON), which is partly owned by Infinity.
• Root Communications Group has named Daniel Savadove CEO. He had been VP/GM of chancellor's WIOQ-FM Philadelphia. Acting Root CEO Thomas DiBacco is returning to Styles Broadcasting as co-CEO with his wife, Kim Styles.
• CEO-designate Barry Baker is leaving Sinclair Broadcast Group (O:SBGI) after three years to start an as-yet-undisclosed venture. Baker never shed his bizarre "designate" title at Sinclair because the FCC has yet to approve the license transfer of one of his former River City TV stations.

For the record

In the 1/25 issue of RBR, p. 10, the head of Clear Channel's Tampa operation was incorrectly identified as David Manning. In fact, the VP/Market Manager is R.W. "Skip" Schmidt. Manning now heads Clear Channel's Tallahassee stations.

Smyth heading Greater Media radio

Peter Smyth has been named Group VP for Greater Media's 14-station radio group. Smyth, who heads the company's five-station superduopoly in Boston, joined Greater Media in 1983 as GM of WMEX-AM & WMJX-FM Boston.

Smyth's promotion had been intended to begin a transition in which he would assume the duties of the ailing Tom Milewski, President of the radio group. Tragically, Milewski died only four days after Smyth's elevation (see page 3).

For now, Smyth will continue as Regional GM for the Boston stations as he also runs the entire group and acquaints himself with operations at company headquarters in New Jersey. He'll report to Frank Kabela, President, Greater Media.

Pedlow new BE CEO

John Pedlow has been named President/CEO of Broadcast Electronics Inc., succeeding interim President Doug Davis (RBR 1/18, p. 14).

Pedlow had been VP/GM of US operations for Alpha Technologies, a manufacturer of equipment for cable TV and telecommunications. In a somewhat different vein, he directed race operations for the 1995 America's Cup event in San Diego.

RBR observation: Despite its location on the Mississippi River, we don't think yacht racing is a major pasttime for folks in BE's headquarters town, Quincy, IL.

Shimmel heading Simmons

Veteran broadcast researcher Howard Shimmel has been named Exec. VP, Marketing Research Services, for Symmetrical Resources. As such, he'll also assume the role of acting President of Simmons Market Research Bureau, succeeding Josh Chasin, who recently resigned. Symmetrical is the parent company of Simmons, which specializes in consumer marketing and media information.
Diller merging TV and Internet

The convergence of “new” and “old” media is accelerating. Barry Diller announced a deal last week (2/9) which will merge three enterprises from Diller’s USA Networks (O:USAI)—Home Shopping Network, Ticketmaster and Internet Shopping Network/First Auction—with Lycos Inc. (O:LCOS), the #2 Internet portal (behind Yahoo!). The merger deal doesn't include USA Networks’ entertainment cable channels (USA, Sci-Fi and Studios USA) or local TV stations, but all will be used for cross-promotion.

The merged company, to be called USA/Lycos Interactive Networks, will be owned 61.5% by USA Networks, 30% by current Lycos shareholders and 8.5% by minority shareholders in Ticketmaster Online-Citysearch (O:TMCS).

“There is no excuse now for us not to be a dominant player as the world continues its transition toward interactive systems,” said Diller. He's billing the combined venture as “the only global Internet portal with local content, auctions and a direct commerce business.”

From the get go, USA/Lycos will have revenues of more than $1.5B, operating cash flow and a profit before goodwill amortization.—JM

Paxson sells cable stake

Paxson Communications (A:PAX) sold its minority interest in the Travel Channel cable network to Discovery Communications for $55M. Discovery had purchased its existing stake in the Travel Channel from Paxson for $20M in November 1997.

“The pending sale of our interest in the Travel Channel is consistent with our stated strategy refocusing the company’s resources and efforts on operations that only support our PAX TV Network programming, sales and promotional activities,” said Jeff Sagansky, CEO, Paxson. Sagansky also noted that Paxson will be receiving $21M for its previously announced sale of a Connecticut TV station which duplicated coverage for the PAX TV Network.—JM

Company develops universal UHF antenna

Antenna Concepts of Diamond Springs, CA has developed a UHF broadcast antenna, “The Ultra Blaster,” that can be used for any UHF channel. It is offered in NTSC, DTV or dual mode versions.

“The Ultra Blaster is the only end fire helix CP [circularly polarized] antenna to offer the full UHF band, channels 14-59 [60-69 will be removed after DTV transition], allowing broadcasters facing channel changes to use a single antenna and also save weight and wind load,” said Jeryl Schooler, COO, who added the antenna offers up to 50% savings in wind exposure compared to panel antennas. The company began offering the antenna 2/1.—CM

Tribune expands TV listings

Tribune Co.’s (N:TRB) Tribune Media Services has expanded its TV listings business by acquiring JDTV Inc., a Milwaukee-based company that distributes TV listings information to the cable and satellite TV industries. JDTV also operates the www.UltimateTV.com Internet site.

Tribune Media Services already distributes customized TV and movie listings to a number of the nation’s largest daily newspapers, including The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, USA Today and Tribune Co.’s own flagship, the Chicago Tribune.—JM

LIN cash flow up 23%

LIN Television reported that its pro forma cash flow for 1998 rose 23.2% to $103.1M as net revenues gained 11.3% to $219.7M. The cash flow margin for LIN, which owns eight stations and LMAs four others, improved five points to 47%.

Already controlled by Hicks, Muse, Tate & Furst, LIN has a deal pending to merge with Chancellor Media (O:AMFM). That is supposed to close this quarter, but Hicks, Muse’s current effort to sell Chancellor (RBR 1/25, p. 3 & 12) has caused many observers to speculate that LIN is a likely spin-off in any merger or sale of Chancellor.—JM
USADR's petition: Handicapping the digital derby or getting IBOC moving?

Now that the dust is settling from USADR's recent top ten group investment backing (RBR 1/11, p. 2-3), we take a deeper look into its 400-page Petition for Rulemaking (RM 9395) and resulting comments from competitors Digital Radio Express (DRE) and Lucent Digital Radio (LDR), broadcasters and other concerned parties.

The petition asks that specific deadlines be established for evaluative and performance criteria (7/1/99) and that all system submissions be in by 12/15/99. "What we're trying to do is push the ball forward. Satellite DARS isn't waiting for us, Eureka is up and running, they're not waiting. Our view is the technology is ready, it's in the best interest of all parties to get it out there for folks to take advantage of," said Bob Struble, President, USADR.

USADR also asks the Commission to establish broadcaster deadlines, similar to HDTV. "Upon the effective date of the Commission's adoption of DAB rules and designation of a DAB standard, all broadcasters will be authorized to immediately begin simultaneously broadcasting analog and digital radio signals...." 2. "On the 12th anniversary of the effective date of the new DAB rules, broadcasters will be allowed to increase the power and bandwidth of the digital carriers (no longer protecting analog signals from digital interference).

While the criteria suggested for an IBOC system is also basic to the Lucent and DRE systems, USADR did not request that its specific, patented blend-to-analog backup be one of them. Said Struble: "Our view is if you want things like fast tuning, gradual (not immediate digital signal drop-off to silence) degradation, you cannot do that without a time diversity blend. However, we don't actually say to the Commission, 'hey, systems have to have blend'."

In Appendix A, USADR lists two proposed amendments to Part 73 of the Commission's rules regarding DAB—73.130 (for AM) and 73.325 (for FM)—before and after full transition to digital. 73.170 provides suggested analog and DAB bandwidths with AM analog signal attenuations to make room for the DAB signals. 73.325 basically sets the stage for IBOC, defining the mask and designating bandwidth for the analog and DAB signals from center channel. DRE and Lucent's designs would require the same basic FM amendments to Part 73, however, DRE claims its AM will

Most support the petition
Most broadcasters agreed with USADR's proposed timetables and the following points of its petition: IBOC will improve AM and FM audio quality and signal robustness for listeners; IBOC allows broadcasters to keep up with other digital programming while adding new datacasting services; The Commission should choose a standard; IBOC needs to be compatible with the current AM and FM analog signals; The Commission should establish interference protection criteria to ensure compatibility and it should hold off on any plans for Low Power FM.

Among the comments RBR reviewed (some are USADR investors)—Heftel (O:HBCCA), Bonneville, Gannett (N:GCI), Susquehanna, CBS Corp. (N:CBS), Cumulus (O:CMLS), Radio One, ABC/Disney (N:DIS) and Clear Channel (N:CCU)—all came out well in favor of the USADR petition, virtually point by point. Because Chancellor (O:AMFM), Citadel (O:CITC), Cox (N:CMX), Emmis (O:EMMS), Entercom (N:ETM), Sinclair (O:SBGI) and Jacor (O:JCOR) also invested in USADR, it is likely they offered similar responses. Below, some that disagreed.

2/15/99 RBR
Differing opinions

National Public Radio

NPR was among the most skeptical: "NPR can only support a rulemaking proceeding to further the development of an effective DAB transmission standard...NPR does not support a number of the specific elements of the USADR petition that address matters not ripe for consideration or that could foreclose due consideration of alternative approaches to DAB if IBOC proves unfeasible or so burdened with compromises that the benefits of a digital transition are fundamentally undermined."

In support of the above statement, five points were emphasized: 1) IBOC may not be the best means for implementing digital radio considering bandwidth limitations and dial crowding. 2) It is premature to establish implementing rules in advance of a technical standard and IBOC will likely require greater interference protection than the current rules. 3) The Commission should refrain from adopting evaluative criteria that favors a particular transmission standard. It cites USADR's proposal that each DAB system must have both AM and FM to be considered. 4) It is premature to adopt the USADR system as the definitive legal standard until real world testing of all existing IBOC systems is completed. 5) The USADR petition proposes a system of IBOC system evaluation that relies on notice and comment rulemaking to determine the best standard. The Commission's resources can be more effectively utilized within the DAB subcommittee of the NRSC."

Lucent Digital Radio (LDR)

Lucent (N:LU) underscored the need, and provided numerous examples, for field testing before any rule changes can be requested. It also said interference problems must be resolved through technology, not rules changes. "Field testing is necessary because simulations do not capture real radio propagation characteristics or real terrain effects...Lucent is confident that its system will prove technically superior in a number of ways meaningful to the Commission, to broadcasters and to the public. However, Lucent equally is concerned that a premature introduction of IBOC DAB could threaten existing broadcast services and dampen the prospects for a successful transition."

Instead of rulemaking, LDR suggested the process rely for now, on an existing Notice of Inquiry (NOI), citing GEN Docket No. 90-357. "All that is required is issuance of a Public Notice announcing that relevant information on IBOC DAB will be filed in GEN Docket No. 90-357...This would allow the Commission and the interested public to follow the development of IBOC DAB through the field trials and update the record in this open proceeding without further delay." LDR cites that 90-357 addressed both terrestrial and satellite DARS, and consequently, the Commission issued an NOI in response to two petitions for DARS rulemaking. "As the record developed, and when it became apparent that Satellite DARS was technically feasible, and terrestrial DARS was not, the Commission issued a joint NRPM."

Digital Radio Express (DRE)

DRE's comments, filed by VP Engineering Derek Kumar, address five items from the petition individually. 1) "With regard to the request by USADR that the Commission make a finding that IBOC is the most appropriate means to implement DAB, DRE suggests that the Commission has already explicitly or implicitly authorized the delivery of digital radio signals by alternative methods, so that any such finding cannot be exclusive." He cites satellite DARS as one example. Kumar does agree, though, that the FCC's authorization of IBOC is necessary to permit existing broadcasters to remain competitive.

2) Kumar agrees that the Commission should establish IBOC interference protection criteria, but disagrees with USADR's specific amendments to Part 73 of the rules that include restricting analog bandwidth to less than 5.5 kHz, because it would degrade the analog signal and increase the disparity of analog AM and FM sound quality. He indicates DRE's AM system would not require a restriction of the current analog signal.

3) DRE agrees with USADR's request that the Commission find a
single IBOC DAB standard to promote rapid acceptance, based on the findings of the NRSC's DAB subcommittee.

4) DRE agrees with USADR’s request that the Commission establish a timetable for IBOC system evaluation, within 1999.

5) DRE opposes USADR’s designation that its system as the DAB standard would serve the public interest. Kumar says the petition doesn’t demonstrate technical and economic viability because the claims “are supported through limited computer simulations and notably without field trials or laboratory evaluation of actual hardware systems.”

Prometheus Radio Project
The Prometheus Radio Project, headed by Pete triDish, supports the low power FM (LPFM) initiative and has commented on low power petitions 9242 and 9208. A couple of points made in Prometheus’ comments: “Thousands of individuals have risked severe fines and prison in order to diversify the options that are available on the radio dial. It is at least worth asking whether a plan that maintains the interests of the current players in the marketplace is truly serving the public’s needs...USADR has recommended that the implementation of low power FM be delayed until IBOC has already been established, so that interference tests can be made. If that’s how they think, then we could always suggest the opposite—that digital radio’s implementation be delayed until its interference with an established low power FM service can be measured...USADR cannot have it both ways—assuring us that it is technically compatible with today’s broadcast system...and expressing concern about LPFM with vague, indeterminate worries about ‘future spectral integrity’.”

Big City Radio
Al Kirschner’s filing was similar to Greater Media’s, and agreed with Lucent that an NOI was the way to go. Said Kirschner: “The initial comments we filed basically said hey, ‘this is a little premature, guys.’ That’s the basis of our filing—that you’ve got USADR, which all of a sudden wants an NRPM to pick their system. We don’t think it’s been fully tested in the field—we know it hasn’t—they’re not even going into the field until maybe April of this year. So far, it’s only been computer simulated. Our whole objection at this time is that it’s cutting out other technologies. It would be more, I believe, in the interest of everybody, including the Commission, to issue an NOI at this time.”

Lucent also thought an NOI was the way to go, but in Kirschner’s reply comments (to the initial round of comments on RM-9395), “Lucent wanted to use the old NOI, and I don’t believe that’s applicable because that dealt more with HDTV. Let’s issue a new one, focusing on radio, requesting everybody that has an interest in IBOC to present systems, to present data, to present comments—and let’s get it really rolling. This is going to put everybody on notice, saying ‘OK, guys, you have until say October of next year to provide the Commission with
AirTime closes shop; merges into DADpro32

Orban’s AirTime and Enco Systems’ DADpro32 audio delivery systems have been merged into one reverse-compatible product, using the best features from each. DADpro32 keeps the name for both. The new DADpro interfaces with Orban’s sound cube and Audicy production system.

Harris assumes exclusive worldwide distribution and system engineering (with Enco) for the combined system upgrade. “Enco, Orban and Harris are working on an upgrade path. We’re in the process right now of contacting all AirTime users, letting them know what’s going on,” said Scott Beeler, Director, North American Sales, Harris.

One competitor questioned if AirTime’s demise was because the product couldn’t overcome glitches within the QNX operating system (OS), and because Microsoft’s (another OS Orban was going to try) Windows NT50 was never completed. “You can’t fault Orban because, really, when the OS isn’t there, the product is harder to develop. Basically, they had a product that didn’t do everything they said it was going to do. The previous rumors were that the software was in worse shape when they took it over from Radio Systems than they thought, and were at the point where they had to decide—after a year and a half of limited success patching, fixing and tweaking—what to do,” said Dave Scott, president, Scott Systems.

Clearly, Harris needed to do something if it was repping a product it couldn’t sell. The merging maintains support for any systems already out there and provides a more competitive product overall. Said Beeler, “We were fighting an uphill battle, if you will, with AirTime. The product was delayed in getting out, so we didn’t have the customer base—the hundreds and hundreds of users that Enco had.”

Blaupunkt earns CES “Best of Show”

Blaupunkt won “Best of Show” in the Innovations ‘99 Mobile Electronics category at CEMA’s recent Vegas Consumer Electronics Show (CES) with its “Alaska” CD car stereo. The Alaska incorporates the Motorola “DigiCeiver” chip set—the first consumer radio circuit to digitize AM and FM signals so they can be fully manipulated by DSP (digital signal processing).

Perhaps the most impressive feature (other than RDS, 25 different user-controlled DSP adjustments and 16 EQ adjustments) resides in the Alaska’s “SHARXTM” digital IF filter that adapts (you’ll notice it “fine-tuning” for 1-2 seconds) bandwidth to receive weak stations crowded by their neighbors on the dial. RBR tested the receiver in the crowded Washington D.C. radio market, 8-14 miles from the FM tower sites. With the SHARX function turned on, the tuner was virtually impervious to first-adjacent channel interference, allowing multiple stations from Richmond, Norfolk, York, Lancaster and Philadelphia to be heard.—CM
Alan Brill's Brill Media (public bonds) reported that revenues rose 37% to $10.8M for its fiscal Q3, which ended 11/30/98. Radio revenues were $4.1M and newspaper $6.7M. Excluding stations which are being sold, radio revenues gained 14% from a year earlier.

For the first three quarters of its fiscal year, Brill Media said it had media cash flow of $10.8M, compared to $8.5M for the same period of 1997.

Franchisee buys Muzak

Audio Communications, the largest US franchisee of Muzak, is buying Muzak LP for $250M in cash and debt assumption. Once the deal closes, which is expected next month, Audio Communications will change its name to Muzak LLC.

Audio Communications is owned by ABRY Broadcast Partners III LP, an investment fund managed by ABRY Partners. Muzak LP is currently owned by affiliates of Centre Partners Management LLC.

February 10—RBR Stock Index 1999

Brill revenues rise

The undersigned acted as exclusive broker in this transaction and assisted in the negotiations.
Clear Channel-Jacor spinoffs
total $340M

The spin-offs from the $4.4B merger
(RBR 10/12/98, p. 2) of Jacor Communications (O:JCOR) into Clear
Channel Communications (N:CCU) didn’t dribble in—they were an-
nounced in a single package (2/11) as RBR was going to press. Indi-
vidual prices haven’t yet been an-
nounced, but Clear Channel is going
to get $285M total in cash. An addi-
tional $55M in value will come from
a swap for Cox Radio’s (N:CXR) five
Syracuse stations.

Finally, two stations in Jackson-
ville, FL, WZNZ-AM & WBGB-FM,
will be put into an FCC Trust, pend-
ing later divestiture.

Here’s how it will all shake out:

#22, Tampa-St. Pete: WHPT-FM & WFJO-FM (formerly WILV) from Clear Channel and WDUV-
FM (105.5 mHz, after a frequency swap with WTBT-FM) from Jacor to Cox Radio, headed by Bob
Neil, creating a seven-station superduopoly.

WRBQ-FM & WSJT-FM from Clear Channel to Mel Karmazin’s Infinity (N:INF), creating a six-
station superduopoly.

WRBQ-AM from Clear Channel to Disney’s (N:DIS) ABC Radio, headed by Bob Callahan, a
new market entrant which is likely to make it a Radio Disney station.

#24, Cleveland: WERE-AM & WENZ-FM from Clear Channel to Cathy Hughes’ and Al
Liggins’ Radio One, a new market entrant.

WNCX-FM from Clear Channel to Infinity, a new market entrant.

#53, Louisville: WFLA-AM, WDJX-FM & WLRS-FM from Jacor to Ross Love’s Blue Chip
Broadcasting, creating a five-station superduopoly.

WSFR-FM & WVEZ-FM, plus an option to buy WWHX-FM, from Jacor to Cox Radio. However, Cox plans to divest WRVI-FM & WLJY-FM, leaving it with a four-station superduopoly.

#55, Dayton: WING-AM & FM & WGTZ-FM from Clear Channel to Blue Chip, a new entrant
based in the adjacent Cincinnati market.

#73, Syracuse: WSYR-AM, WHEN-AM, WYYY-FM, WWHT-FM & WBBS-FM from Cox Radio to
Clear Channel, a new market entrant.

Broker: At Media Venture Partners, Charles Giddens represented Cox and Radio One.

Chancellor continues hunt for buyer

Chancellor Media (O:AMFM) CEO Jeff
Marcus gave no hint of how near a sale
of the company may be (RBR 1/25, p. 3) in last week’s quarterly conference
call with analysts and reporters (2/
11), but did note that interest has been
so high that the company has added
four more investment banking firms—
Morgan Stanley, Goldman Sachs,
Chase and Greenhill—to help BT Alex.
Brown and Hicks, Muse shop the multi-
media company.

Marcus repeated his often-heard com-
plaint that Chancellor is undervalued by
Wall Street, when compared to its peers.
That was just a day after Chancellor’s
stock price fell $4.375 to $49.375 as one
analyst cut his financial projections.
Marcus said the company was sticking
with its past guidance to analysts, but
did suggest that they recheck their num-
bers for capital expenditures and fully
diluted shares. In an interview with Dow
Jones Newswire, Marcus said pro forma
1999 revenues should be around $2.7B,
with cash flow of $1.27B.

For 1998, Chancellor reported
record net revenues of $1.27B, a gain
of 118.8%, and cash flow of $591.8M,
up 122.6%. Radio revenues, pro forma,
rose 17.8% to $1.13B and cash flow
gained 25.1% to $546.3M.
Z snares new Dallas FM

The latest move to the Dallas-Ft. Worth market is going to Amador Bustos' Z-Spanish Media for $26.5M. The 100kw signal on 101.7 mHz. KIKM-FM (formerly KDVE Denison, TX) is being flipped by Ronald Unkefer's First Broadcasting, which is exercising an option to buy the station from Janice Hunt for $15M (RBR 2/8, p. 8). It'll be Z's third FM and fifth station in the sprawling Big-D metroplex.

Mega-bucks for Jersey FM

In its biggest acquisition yet, Alfredo Alonso's Mega Communications is paying $15.5M for New Jersey Broadcasters' WRDR-FM Egg Harbor, NJ—an Atlantic City market station which also covers part of the Philadelphia market. Mega already owns two AMs in Philly. Mega is also buying a third AM in the Boston market. It's paying $936,000 for WLHH-AM Lowell, MA, currently owned by Wireless Talking Machine Co.

Radio One adds Richmond

Moving down I-95 with its string of markets. Philadelphia-Baltimore-Washington, DC, Radio One is now adding Richmond with a $4.6M buy of Hoffman Communications' WDYL-FM. The company also announced investments in USA Digital Radio and PNE Media LLC, an outdoor advertising company.

Radio One, which is expected to file soon for an IPO, reported a 42.3% rise in net revenues for 1998 to $46.1M. Broadcast cash flow gained 60% to $21.6M and after-tax cash flow shot up 248.3% to $7.7M. Radio One is the largest African-American owned radio group in the US. Broker: Charles Giddens, MVP

ABC on acquisition trail

Chalk up two more O&Os for Radio Disney. Disney’s (N:DIS) ABC is paying $6M for Faith Broadcasting’s KYOK-AM Houston and, as already disclosed (RBR 2/1, p. 15) $8M for Jacor's (O:JCOR) WEAE-AM (known for most of its existence as WTAE) Pittsburgh. Broker: Elliot Evers & Charles Giddens, Media Venture Partners

RBR observation: Philadelphia, Detroit and RBR's home base, Washington, DC, are now the only top-10 markets without a Radio Disney station. We're beginning to feel neglected.

Cumulus into Pensacola


Cox creates Tulsa six-pack

Cox Radio (N:CXR) is paying $3.5M to take its Tulsa superduopoly to six stations. KTFX-FM, which holds a CP to upgrade to 50kw on 102.3 mHz, is being sold by William H. Payne. The station is licensed to Sand Springs, OK. Cox will begin an LMA as soon as the power increase takes place.

TV owners claim WKOX

Richard Fairbanks' Fairbanks Broadcasting is completing its station sell-off with a $14.5M deal to sell WKOX-AM Boston to a holding company owned by George Vandeman and Edward and Judith Karlik. They currently own TV stations in New Bedford, MA, Burlington, VT and Ft. Pierce, FL.

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The deals listed below were taken from recent FCC filings. RBR's Transaction Digest reports on all deals that involve assignment of a station license (FCC Form 314) and substantial transfers of control of a licensee via a stock sale (FCC Form 315), but not internal corporate restructurings (FCC Form 316). All deals are listed in descending order of sales price.

$12,700,000—* WJON-AM, WWJO-FM & KMXK-FM St. Cloud (St. Cloud Cold Spring MN) from WJON Broadcasting Co. (Andrew Hilger) to Regent Licensee of St. Cloud Inc. (Terry Jacobs, William Stakelin), a subsidiary of Regent Communications (ORCIP). $500K letter of credit as escrow, $12.7M in cash at closing. Existing duopoly. Note: Hilger will retain KKJM-FM. Broker: Media Venture Partners

$4,500,000—* KCTY-AM, KRAY-FM & KLXM-FM Salinas CA from Radio Suprema Inc. (Robert L. Williams) to KCTY License Co. LLC, KRAY License Co. LLC & KLXM License Co. LLC, subsidiaries of Z Spanish Media Corp. (Amador S. Bustos, TSG Associates II Inc.). $450K escrow, balance in cash at closing. Superduopoly with KTGE-AM & KZSL-FM. LMA since 12/98. Broker: Media Venture Partners

$3,000,000—* KMGR-FM Salt Lake City (Tooele UT) from KMGR Inc. II, a subsidiary of Simmons Media Group Inc. (G. Craig Hanson, VP), to Deer Valley Broadcasting LLC (Bruce Buzil, Aaron F. Shainis, Andrew Barrett, The Judson Revocable Trust). $300K escrow, balance in cash at closing.

$950,000—KBOP-AM Pleasanton TX from Reding Enterprises Ltd. (L.W. Reding) to Freedom Network of Pleasanton Licensee LLC, a subsidiary of The Freedom Network LLC (George L. Lindemann Sr., Adam Lindemann, Otto Miller). $75K escrow, balance in cash at closing. Broker: Doyle Hadden, Hadden & Assoc.

$875,000—* WYYX-FM Panama City (Bonifay FL) from Mark A. Pirtle to Empire Broadcasting System LLP (Steven M. Kushner, Donald A. Cavaleri, Burt Baungartner, Jerry Cagle, Samuel C. Milkman). $140K in cash at closing, $735K note. However, the buyer may choose instead to pay $850K all cash. Duopoly with WILN-FM.


$375,000—* KLOR-FM Ponca City OK from Pioneer Communications Inc. (Mary Jane Kelly) to Team Radio LLC (Keith R. Greenwood, William L. Coleman, Patrick G. Walters). $10K escrow, $100K less escrow in cash at closing, $100K under non-compete, $175K note. Duopoly with KOKB-AM & KPNC-FM. Blackwell-Ponca City OK.

$300,000—* WVFM-FM Campton NH from White Mountain Radio (Daphne A. Corcoran) to Devon Broadcasting Company Inc., a subsidiary of Northeast Broadcasting Co. Inc. (Steven A. Silverberg, Jane N. Cole). $10K downpayment, additional $140K in cash at closing, $150K note.
Entercom cash flow soars 48%

In its first report since its 1/29 IPO, Entercom (N:ETM) said that broadcast cash flow shot up 82% to $17.4M for the company's fiscal Q1, which ended 12/31/98. That, of course, included some major acquisitions, but on a same station basis, Entercom reported a 48% gain in broadcast cash flow. Net revenues rose 66.8% to $47.4M.

Jacor sets record

In what should be its final full year report before merging with Clear Channel (N:CCU), Jacor Communications (O:JCOR) reported net revenues up 42% to $754.5M and cash flow up 48% to $256.6M—both records. On a same station basis, revenues grew 14% and cash flow 25%.

Radio brightest spot for Sinclair

1998 revenues were up 42.7% to $736.8M and broadcast cash flow 43.8% to $350.1M at Sinclair Broadcast Group (O:SBGI), but most of those gains were the result of acquisitions. For Q4, pro forma revenues were up only 0.3% and cash flow 0.7%.

Radio, however, was a different story. Revenues rose 11%, beating their 10 markets, which COO/Radio Barry Drake said were up 9%. Radio cash flow grew 25%.

Westwood posts Q4 records

Westwood One (N:WON) saw net revenues gain 7.69% in 1998 to $259.3M, while cash flow gained 6.9% to $52.3M. Net income, however, fell 48.83% to $13M.

Q4 results were stronger than the full year, with net revenues up 9% and cash flow up 20%. CEO Joel Hollander said WW1's Q4 revenues and cash flow were the highest for any single quarter in the company's history.

DG cash flow turns positive

DG Systems (O:DGIT) reported that Q4 revenues rose 18% to $12.3M. Cash flow (EBITDA) was a positive $749K, compared to negative $193K for the same period a year ago. Before special items, the company's negative cash flow decreased to $204K in 1998 from $3.6M in 1997.

Curtis expands in Raleigh

Don Curtis' Curtis Media Group, which owns 13 stations in the Carolinas, is buying WRDT-AM & WCLY-AM Raleigh from Jack Mortenson's Mortenson Broadcasting for $1M. That will create an AM superduopoly with WPTF-AM. Broker: John Pierce, Force Communications

More Keys for Mays

Clear Channel (N:CCU) doesn't own many stations outside the Arbitron-rated markets, although it'll soon pick up several from Jacor (O:JCOR), but Lowry and Mark Mays have apparently found the radio business to be good in the Florida Keys. In the latest addition, Clear Channel is paying $850,000 for WIFL-FM Tavernier, FL, a CP owned by Linda Kulisky. It'll be the seventh FM in Clear Channel's string of superduopolies covering the Keys.

Offerings priced

• American Tower (N:AMT) sold 27M shares of common stock at $25 each, including 1.3M sold by early investors. The company will receive net proceeds of $619.3M to finance expansion. Lead underwriter: CS First Boston

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• Emmis Communications (O:EMMS) sold $300M in senior subordinated notes, due 3/15/2009, at a yield of 8.125%. The issue was increased from the original $200M (RBR 2/8, p. 5).
Increase profits by running your station more efficiently. Outside the highest billing hours, it doesn’t make sense to pay announcers to sit around waiting to talk. A Scott uncompressed music on hard drive System can put all the songs, spots and prerecorded Voice Trax together smoothly with nobody in the air studio!

For years, Scott Studios’ client stations have been successfully pre-recording great 4-hour shows in 15-20 minutes.

Now, thanks to Scott Studios’ new free Voice Trax Via Internet (VTVI) software, free-lance announcers can record timely localized shows from anywhere. All they need is a good microphone, an Internet connection, any Windows computer, and Scott Studios’ free VTVI software!

After the station’s music has been scheduled, one touch of a button automatically e-mails the entire show to the distant announcer. Scott’s VTVI works seamlessly with all music schedulers and traffic/billing programs.

Scott’s Voice Trax Via Internet software is very easy for your announcers to use. Scheduled live tags, trivia and copy display automatically on the right side of the screen. There’s no fumbling with a copy book or even a mouse. When you’re recording a song or spot, simply press the space bar on the VTVI keyboard to start the next song or spot. Release the space bar after you stop talking. VTVI then moves the entire show to the distant announcer.

All Voice Trax are recorded with the computer’s ordinary sound card with impressive digital fidelity. Depending on your format, a microphone processor may be helpful to punch up the announcer’s voice, but no console is needed.

If all the station’s spots have been produced when the log is sent, Scott’s Voice Trax software automatically computes and displays accurate time checks the announcer can include if desired in any Voice Trax.

After recording any or all of the show can be reviewed and changed. Scott’s VTVI Segue Editor even lets your jock fine-tune timing without any need to re-record anything.

When done, a click on the VTVI Auto-Send button dials the Internet and moves the entire show to the distant Scott digital audio system automatically. Transfer speeds vary based on your Internet Service Provider, but with a dial-up phone line a shift can upload to the Internet in 40-50 minutes. With ISDN, transfer time can be 20-25 minutes.

Your announcer can be answering e-mail, writing copy, editing promos or doing a number of other things on the VTVI computer while your show is being transferred.

Scott Studios VTVI also includes our exclusive Voice/Music Synchronizer. When any Voice Trax mentions song titles or artists, your jock turns on the link so the Trax plays only with the correct song. No operator attention is needed at the station for Voice Trax to play seamlessly. If the announcer forgets to record something, or songs or spots get changed at the last minute, the Scott Voice/Music Synchronizer automatically substitutes generic Voice Trax for each day and hour for each announcer.

Nothing could be easier or less expensive, yet still sound so good as good talent with Scott’s VTVI! Of course, the free Voice Trax Via Internet does require Internet connections on both ends, a $29 per month FTP transfer site, and the Scott NT System plus a $2,500 Scott Remote Recording Router back at the station.

We also offer a $500 VTVI Deluxe that lets the announcer download telescoped song intros and endings from the Internet, then fine-tune timing of talk-ups and backsells in the context of the music and spots with little or no need for re-recording. With the VTVI Deluxe, a telescoped aircheck can be previewed with the beginnings and ends of the songs and spots.

Or, the $1,000 Super Deluxe VTVI lets your distant announcers record while listening to song and spot intros and endings in context!

It’s a fact: More U.S. stations use Scott Studios than any other major digital audio system. 1,950 radio stations have 4,300 Scott digital work-stations, including major groups like CBS, Chancellor, Disney/ABC, Clear Channel, Emmis, Citadel and many more. In the US’ top 10 markets, 45 stations and 5 networks use 155 of our digital workstations.

Call Scott Studios to see how the Voice Trax Via Internet digital system can greatly improve your bottom line.