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Strange bedfellows propose a big LPFM/translator policy change. Prometheus Radio Project and EMF Broadcasting usually don't see eye to eye on many issues. Prometheus is a big supporter of local low-power FM, while EMF's business plan involves nationwide distribution of its California-based "K-Love" and "Air 1" networks over an ever-growing collection of full-power FM licenses. But the two parties came together last week to file a Memorandum of Agreement that has the potential to breathe new life into the FCC's long-stalled review of thousands of applications for FM translators that have been sitting without Commission action since the last window back in 2003.

+ **The Prometheus/EMF plan — give LPFM first shot at those frequencies.** EMF was one of the biggest filers during the 2003 window, and it was among the groups with the most to lose when the FCC decided, four years after the fact, to limit the window to 10 applications per party. The new proposal would lift that 10-to-a-party rule, end the long freeze on those 2003 applications, and even open the frequencies just below the FM dial at 87.5, 87.7 and 87.9 to translators and LPFMs — but with a big condition: none of the applications from the 2003 window would be processed until LPFM applicants first get a window to file their own applications, which would get priority over translators. That's no big sacrifice for EMF, which has shifted its own growth strategy from translators to the purchase of existing (and often big-signalled) full-power FM signals as station values have slumped. And it's a big win for Prometheus and other LPFM advocates, who have argued (with considerable Commission support in recent years) that their service is a better fit for the FCC's "localism" initiative than translators would be. To bolster their argument, EMF and Prometheus even submitted a "Memorandum of Law" outlining the legal argument the Commission could use to implement their plan without the delay a lengthy new rulemaking proceeding would impose.

+ **Plenty of pushback in the offing.** While LPFM advocates would stand to benefit from the FCC's adoption of the Prometheus/EMF proposal, there's another sizable new community with its own translator agenda that would be significantly disrupted if the new plan passes. Those, of course, are the commercial broadcasters — especially in small towns - who pushed hard to get the FCC to allow them to relay their AM stations on FM translators. That move has been a big boon for many struggling AM signals, not to mention a source of healthy profits for translator applicants who saw the value of their new licenses soar once they could be sold to AM stations, in some cases for six-figure sums. While the recent AM-on-FM translator ruling prevents newly-granted translators from being used for that purpose, the FCC acknowledged that that was only a temporary restriction likely to be lifted at some point. Those translator applicants don't want to see all those frozen applications trumped by new LPFMs on the same channels - and they'll have the weight of lots of small-town AM operators on their side if they go to bat against the Prometheus/EMF plan.

FCC's controversial Form 323 is due, for real this time. The process of gathering information about the ownership of commercial radio stations has been a challenging one for the Commission. Last year, the FCC suspended filing requirements for the form while it addressed a slew of challenges from broadcasters upset about the need to enter reams of information manually — and about the potential privacy issues of a requirement that anyone holding 5% or more of a station's ownership obtain an FCC Registration Number (FCC). After crafting a revised form, the FCC abruptly set a new July 8 deadline for all commercial stations to file the new Form 323, complete with an odd regulatory

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twist: the data being reported on the form must be current as of November 1, 2009, not as of July 2010. For stations that have been sold since 2009, it's the old owner, not the new buyer, who's responsible for filing the form.

+No Form 323 waiver for Chicago's WFMT. While it's a commercially-licensed station, WFMT (98.7) is owned by Window to the World Communications, the nonprofit operator of Chicago PBS outlet WTTW (Channel 11). Window asked the FCC to allow WFMT to file Form 323-E, the ownership form for noncommercial stations, arguing that it deserves the exemption "because it is a non-profit, non-stock entity that is managed by a self-perpetuating governing board comprised of officers and trustees" who shouldn't be required to give out their social security numbers in order to obtain FRNs. The FCC rejected the waiver request, noting that it now has a procedure in place to issue "special use" FRNs without requiring a social security number - and that other commercial stations owned by nonprofit entities file Form 323 without complaint.

Signals in the news (I): As classical fans mourn, "Joy FM" gets a full St. Louis signal. The sale of KFUE-FM, Clayton, MO (99.1) was a contentious one indeed: faced with the prospect of losing the market's only classical station, listeners went to court to argue that the station's longtime owner, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, had put together a shady and financially unstable deal to sell the 100-kw/1027' C0 signal to Gateway Creative Broadcasting. But they weren't able to persuade the FCC to put a halt to the sale, and on the night of July 7, as listeners staged a candlelight vigil outside KFUE's suburban studios, KFUE-FM ended 62 years of classical music with Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and then signed off. It returned the next morning as KLJY, "Joy 99," picking up the contemporary Christian format from Gateway's two deep-rimshot signals, KHZR, Potosi, MO (97.7C2) and KPVR, Bowling Green, MO (94.1C3).

+KFUE: The aftermath. To help pay for the \$26 million sale of KFUE-FM (\$18 million down and another \$8 million over ten years), Gateway is now trying to sell its other two FMs, which continue to simulcast the new "Joy 99" for now. 97.7 serves an area south of St. Louis, while 94.1 reaches an area northwest of the city. And the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reports there are still some lingering controversies over the end of KFUE: a quarter-million dollar payment to the LCMS trustee who both arranged the sale and voted to approve it, and a questionable severance deal for KFUE-FM's employees that would prevent them from working anywhere for six months, though it may not hold up in court. Meanwhile, LCMS remains in the radio business through its original station, religious daytimer KFUE, Clayton, MO (850), which has been under the same ownership since its 1924 debut.

Signals in the news (II): Format/frequency shuffle in northern Arizona. Grenax Broadcasting is rearranging its station lineup in the scenic mountainous terrain north of Phoenix. Its flagship format, hot AC KFLX "The Canyon," moved down the dial earlier this month, trading its Kachina Village-licensed 5-kw/1457' C2 signal on 105.1 for a new signal on 92.5 licensed to Chino Valley. That 1.5-kw/571' class A signal is less potent than 105.1, but it's better-centered over the Prescott/Verde Valley area where much of the market's growth is located. The 105.1 signal, which comes from Mormon Mountain, primarily serves the more established Flagstaff area to the northeast — and it's relaunching with talk under new calls KBTK. Both signals have translator reinforcements: "92.5 the Canyon" is also on 104.1 in Flagstaff, while 105.1 has a translator on 97.1 serving Prescott and vicinity.

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Dallas' KVTT moves from FM to AM to silence. It was not quite a year ago when one of the fixtures of the religious radio dial in the Dallas-Fort Worth market left the FM dial. KVTT, Dallas (91.7), deeply in debt after more than 30 years on the air, sold its class C FM license to public broadcaster KERA, which relaunched 91.7 as KKXT, playing AAA music. KVTT owner Covenant Educational Media took some of the \$18 million proceeds from the FM sale and began leasing time on the former KJSA, Mineral Wells, TX (1110). But that 20,000-watt daytimer (which soon changed calls to KVTT) lacked the full-time visibility of KVTT's old dial position, and last week Covenant announced that it couldn't afford to keep KVTT going as an AM station, either. The station signed off Monday, and owner M&M Broadcasters is now seeking a new leased-time tenant for 1110.

A North Texas FCC decision ends an LMA and pending sale. In an unusual June ruling, the FCC said that Liberman Broadcasting had waited long enough to upgrade its Dallas rimshot KNOR, Krum, TX (93.7). That upgrade (from C1 to C0) was being held up by an unconsummated move of KIKT (93.5) from Greenville to Cooper, Texas, and the FCC ruled that until it moved, KIKT would have to accept whatever interference it received from KNOR's upgraded operation. The ruling was apparently the last straw for Mike Horne, who'd been in the process of buying KIKT and sister station KGVV, Greenville (1400) from Cumulus. Cumulus has asked the FCC for permission to take KIKT and KGVV dark for now, with future plans for the stations unclear.

Summer weather disrupts local FM reception from coast to coast. It's a common problem this time of year for FM broadcasters – the calls and e-mails start coming in from listeners who suddenly can't hear their signals. At Washington's WTOP (103.5), PD Jim Farley says his newsroom has taken several calls complaining of "popping, fuzzy-sounding audio and interference from other stations." The good news? There's an easy explanation. The bad news? There's nothing stations can do to fix it. Here's what's happening: the hot, steamy weather in many parts of the country is the perfect recipe for tropospheric ducting, which creates atmospheric inversion layers that bring distant signals in, sometimes so well that they overwhelm local stations on the same channel. ("Trop" can also wreak havoc with 950 MHz studio-transmitter links.)

+So what about those Texas-to-Massachusetts FM signal reports? To make matters even more confusing, there's another mode of "DX" signal reception that's also very much in season. E-skip takes place at a higher level of the atmosphere, creating a "mirror" hundreds of miles in the air that can suddenly bring in FM and TV signals from 500 to 1500 miles away for periods that can last from seconds to hours at a time. Unlike trop, E-skip is less dependent on local weather conditions — but it does come and go seasonally. It's usually most common in May and June (when it was especially strong this year), but it usually begins to fade out in early July. That's bad news for DXers, but good news for local broadcasters trying to get a clean signal to their markets.

Correction: That's Sioux City, Iowa. *RJ* reader and Iowa native Brian Davis caught the gaffe in last week's issue that moved Sioux City across the Missouri River from Iowa to Nebraska. (The item concerned Wayne Radio Works' move of KCTY 104.9 from Wayne, NE to Hubbard, NE.) While Sioux City itself is in western Iowa, the Sioux City radio market covers parts of three states, including South Sioux City in Nebraska and North Sioux City in South Dakota.



The banner is a horizontal strip with a vibrant, retro aesthetic. On the left, a blue vintage car is shown from a front-three-quarter view, with a large circular graphic overlaid on the windshield that says "SUMMER OF LOVE" in stylized, colorful letters. The car has "LOVE" written on its front. The background is a soft-focus landscape. In the center, the text "Summer of LOVE for Radio" is prominently displayed in a mix of bold, black, and colorful fonts. Below this, it says "We Love You, Radio!" in red, followed by "So... If you are not a current subscriber, sign-up on the website to get Inside Radio FREE via email all summer long..." in black. At the bottom center, in smaller text, it says "(Offer Valid June 21, 2010 thru Sept 3, 2010)". On the right side, there's a circular graphic with "SUMMER OF LOVE" and a peace symbol, and below it, the text "Sponsored by timeless cool" is written in a blue, stylized font. The overall color palette is dominated by warm tones like orange, red, and yellow, with accents of blue and green.