



FCC WINS BIG IN FM AUCTION

By Tom Smith

On November 3rd, the FCC started a multi-round auction for 288 FM licenses. The auction went 62 rounds and ended on November 23rd when the final results were announced. The final amount bid was \$178,001,500 for a total of 258 licenses. After bidding credits were applied, the FCC netted \$147,445,075. First time applicants with no interest in any other broadcast property and certain small business were able to deduct 25 to 35 percent from the final total amount of their bid. The FCC retained 30 licenses due to lack of interest or lack of a qualified bidder.

The highest bids were for licenses in Mesquite, NV for \$7,131,000 by College Creek Broadcasting; and Overton, NV for \$6,412,000 by Kemp Communications. The minimum bid that the FCC required for these two licenses was \$713,000 for the Mesquite license and \$641,000 for the Overton license. Mesquite is about 70 miles north east of Las Vegas on the Colorado River and is a Class C. Overton is 45 miles northeast of Las Vegas on the upper end of Lake Mead and is a Class C1. Las Vegas would be on the fringe of both of the proposed stations coverage area. Other high bids were \$6,765,000 (\$4,497,250 with credits) from Biggleworth Broadcasting for a Class A in Pacific Junction, IA that is just outside of Omaha, NE. College Creek also bid \$4,392,000 for a Class C2 in Cheyenne, WY; and Culumus Licensing, Inc. bid \$3,578,000 for a Class A in Lanesboro, MN which is 30 miles southeast of Rochester and 35 miles southwest of La Crosse. The lowest bid was for a Class A FM in Kotzebue, Alaska. That bid was for \$5,500 with the final payment being \$4,125, when bidding credits were applied.

Many of the participants bid on a large number of licenses. The biggest winner was College Creek Broadcasting, who won 38 licenses, paying a total of \$35,556,000. They also had the largest number of high bids. The rest of

(continued on page 4)

Next Meeting:

**Thursday,
January 13, 2005**

**Belden Cable
and Networking
Presentation**

**Dutch Treat Dinner
at 5:30 PM
at Perkins
1410 Damon Road**

**Meeting and Program
at 7:00 PM**

**at Wisconsin Public
Broadcasting Center
3319 W. Beltline Hwy**

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Where Do You Need To Be?

By Steve Epstein, CPBE CBNT

In today's fast-paced, interconnected world, it is a relatively simple matter to see satellite pictures only a few minutes old, download files from halfway around the world and converse with friends instantly without a telephone. Despite these capabilities, do you still have to make a trip to the transmitter or a remote site to do anything other than maintenance? If so, why?

This point has been driven home lately as I oversee a facility with a studio and two remote transmitters at

separate locations. For a variety of reasons, the remote controls are useless. Yes, they provide the functions needed to comply with FCC regulations, but they do not allow sufficient flexibility to troubleshoot or repair remotely. One remote location is 40 minutes southwest of the studio, the other is 30 minutes southeast of the studio.

Even though the two transmitters are only about 25 miles apart, thanks to the Missouri river, there is no way to get directly from one to the other, making it a 70-minute trip. Needless to say, time spent (wasted) driving can be considerable, as is the cost off the off-

air time. Yes, remote control can be expensive, but so can off-air time.

Interfaces to meters, control points and warning circuits can all be found today from a variety of sources. Some can be home-brewed from relays and other components that may be left-over spares or found in decommissioned equipment. Telephone interfaces—especially modems—are common today. They are on nearly every PC—even the old ones that have been removed from service. These can be used for a variety of purposes, even if you are not skilled at writing software.

(continued on page 4)

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December Business Meeting Minutes

Chapter 24 of the Society of Broadcast Engineers met on Wednesday, December 15, 2004 at the Timber Lodge Steak House in Madison, Wisconsin for the chapter's Holiday party. There was no regular business meeting. There were 10 members in attendance, 8 of whom were certified and 3 guests.

Don Borchert had attended the SBE National Meeting in October where he was presented the SBE Educator of the Year Award. Don also accepted on behalf of the chapter awards for Best Chapter Newsletter (Class B) and Best Regional Convention or Conference.

Submitted by Jim Magee, Secretary

Helicopter Crashes After Striking TV Tower Guy Wire

On Dec. 1 an Army helicopter out of Fort Hood in Texas crashed near the broadcast tower for KXXV-TV, which is licensed to Waco, TX. Seven soldiers of the 4th Infantry Division, including a brigadier general, were aboard the Blackhawk helicopter.

Weather conditions were foggy that morning. According to a statement from KXXV, the lights on the station's tower were not working after severe weather from the previous week. The station had notified the FAA and a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) was issued.

The Black Hawk was en route from Fort Hood to the Red River Army Depot in Texarkana. The pilot had been given visual flight clearance, but moments before the crash he requested to change to instruments. The flight plan was supposed to steer the aircraft clear of the tower site. An investigation into the accident is underway.

(from SBE Chapter 59 newsletter)

Los Angeles Tower Felled by Plane Crash

The Associated Press reports that a private plane crashed into the tower of KFI-AM Los Angeles at 9:45 a.m. on Dec. 19. The single-engine Cessna 182 brought the 760' tower down. The two people on the plane were killed. Their identities were not immediately released. The plane was en route to Fullerton Airport from El Monte, both in California, when it crashed. Fullerton airport is about one mile from the tower site. The FAA reports that the pilot did not issue any distress reports.

KFI's tower has resisted earthquakes and a brush with a private plane once before. The tower survived the previous air incident. The tower's guy wires were replaced in March 2004 after 47 years of use. KFI reports that the station was off the air for about an hour before switching to an auxiliary tower at the same site at about 5kW. Within a day, the station was able to increase its power to about 25kW. The station is licensed for 50kW into the main antenna.

(from SBE Chapter 59 newsletter)

Canadian Satellite Radio

XM and Sirius satellite radio in Canada each plan to offer four channels of Canadian content split between English and French-language programming. Both services offer more than 100 channels overall.

According to the CBC, Joan Pennefather, a commissioner with the Canadian regulatory body, said four channels isn't enough. John Bitove, a Canadian partner of XM's, said technology is changing so quickly that some of the domestic content rules governing Canadian broadcasting may need to be revised, the CBC reports. (cbc.com)

(from Phoenix, AZ SBE Chapter 9 newsletter)

SBE CHAPTER OF THE AIR:

HamNet meets the second Sunday of each month at 0000 GMT on 14.205 MHz. Hal Hostetler WA7BGX is the Control Station.

EAS TEST SCHEDULE AVAILABLE

The schedule of Required Weekly Test (RWT) and Required Monthly Test (RMT) times to be sent on Wisconsin Public Radio is listed on the web. It can be found at www.wpr.org/eas.

All of the designated State Relay stations in Wisconsin are members of Wisconsin Public Radio.

Also listed on the web page are scheduled time for RMTs from NOAA Weather Radio stations.



AMATEUR RADIO NEWS

By Tom Weeden, WJ9H

- As governments and relief organizations attempt to gauge the scale of death and devastation from the December 26 South Asia earthquake and tsunami and to aid the victims, amateur radio operators throughout the stricken region are offering their services as emergency communicators. The death toll from the disaster now is being estimated at upward of 140,000. Thousand remain unaccounted for, millions have been left homeless and many are without food or water. Victor Goonetilleke, 4S7VK, president of the Radio Society of Sri Lanka (RSSL), reports that "uncomplicated short wave" radio saved lives.

"Ham radio played an important part and will continue to do so," he said in an e-mail message. Goonetilleke said that even Sri Lanka's prime minister had no contact with the outside world until amateur radio operators stepped in. "Our control center was inside the prime minister's official house in his operational room," he recounted. Goonetilleke reports that even satellite phones failed, and only the amateur radio HF link remained open. One problem: Batteries were running out, and there are no generators to recharge them.


- Charly Harpole, K4VUD/HS0ZCW, now in Bangkok, Thailand, reports he's been helping to handle emergency traffic to India on 20 meters. Harpole had been visiting the VU4RBI/VU4NRO DXpedition in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands when the earthquake and subsequent tsunami struck.

The DXpedition's sponsor, the National Institute of Amateur Radio (NIAR) in India, told ARRL that the DXpedition team is continuing its communication efforts at the government's request on behalf of rescue and relief operations in that region. "Ham radio is the main link from the people of Andaman Island to people all over," said S. Suri, VU2MY, the NIAR's chairman and director.

- Wyn Purwinto, AB2QV, reports that the government of Indonesia's Aceh province had banned amateur radio since the rebel uprising in that region, and he's asked the Aceh government to lift the ban so Indonesian amateurs can handle emergency traffic. Aceh was among the most severely affected regions in Indonesia.

Although the US does not have third-party traffic agreements with any of the countries affected by the disaster, international emergency and disaster relief communications are permitted unless otherwise provided. The international Radio Regulations as revised at World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 (WRC-03) provide that amateur stations may be used for transmitting international communications on behalf of third parties only in case of emergencies or disaster relief.

(Excerpts from the American Radio Relay League's arrl.org web site)



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FCC WINS BIG IN FM AUCTION (continued from page 1)

the top ten winners were as follows with number of licenses won and total amount of bids. Numbers in parentheses is amount paid after bidding credits.

Bigglesworth Broadcasting,	10 licenses for \$24,268,000 (\$15,774,200)
Kemp Communications, Inc.	2 licenses for \$9,703,000 (\$48,880,250)
Cumulus Licensing, LLC.	7 licenses for \$8,565,000
Radioactive, LLC	21 licenses for \$13,159,000 (\$8,553,350)
Citicasters Licenses, LP	2 licenses for \$4,391,000
GBH Telecommunications	1 license for \$3,266,000
White Park Broadcasting,	7 licenses for \$3,213,000
Coloma Broadcasting, LLC	2 licenses for \$4,266,000
Hispanic Broadcasting, Inc.	8 licenses for \$3,907,000

Radioactive had the second highest number of high bids and GBH Telecommunications is the owner of Boston Public stations, WGBH TV and Radio.

There were two licenses auctioned off in Wisconsin. A Class A went for \$967,000 (\$628,550 after credits) in Two Rivers to Radioactive, LLC and a Class A in Solders Grove went to Advance Acquisition, Inc. for \$231,000.

There were a large number of final bids in the one to three million dollar range, with most of the bids in the half a million dollar range with almost all of the licenses going for a number of times the amount of the minimum bid the FCC required. Few of the stations were in or near metropolitan areas or

even in medium sized cities. Most of the licenses were for locations west of the Mississippi in mainly rural areas, making many of the bids appear high compared to prices for stations in many similar sized cities and towns. These new stations will occur a lot of cost before they are on the air and for a period after. The amount of the bid must be paid to the FCC shortly after the auction ended. This means that the new licensee will have to pay interest on the money while the station is being built, as well as pay for the construction of the station and the start up costs.

As many of these stations will be joining existing stations in the marketplace, it may be a while until they start to make money and recoup their costs. With many of the new stations, the bid is already higher than the amount the station could be sold for as an operating and money making entity. On top of this, many of the owners are new to the business and in a number of cases are going to start a number of operations at the same time. Expect some of the license to be sold before getting on the air and a few of the "winners" to go bankrupt.

This auction ended a freeze on new FM stations that lasted since the late 1990's. The FCC had to deal with a number of issues concerning auctions, including how to deal with non-profit applicants who were exempt from auctions. There were also a number of applications that were in comparative hearings and it had to be determined if they could be auctioned. Many of those did go to auction.

From FCC Releases (www.fcc.gov)

Where Do You Need To Be? (continued from page 1)

I/O boards are available from numerous manufacturers that cost less than \$200. Most offer a Windows interface that is easy to set up and control over a dialup phone line or through the Internet. An added bonus may be the ability to send text messages, or offer voice capabilities, both of which make it easy to interface with just a cell phone, instead of requiring a computer.

Something else that is quite common today is an SMTP interface. This is essentially an e-mail client. Properly configured e-mails could easily

be sent directly to a database to provide a long-term record of meter readings and status at the remote site. Next time you "must" make a trip to the transmitter, see if you can implement some additional remote control that would allow you to at least diagnose the problem and, ideally, correct it remotely.

Regardless of what you use, make sure it offers some level of security through passwords. Any modem in an auto-answer mode is a target for hackers. The last thing you need is 12-year old script kiddie who has figured

out how to control your transmitter and is enjoying it. Along those lines, having caller ID and a log at the remote site might not be a bad idea if an intruder does find a way in.

Steve Epstein is the Chair of SBE Chapter 59, Kansas City. (<http://www.broadcast.net/~sbe59/>)

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From Fred's Travels...

By Fred Baumgartner

With this new gig, I get to occasionally visit an historical or interesting place in my travels. Usually looking for a rest room and some radio and TV history. In this case, West Branch, Iowa (on the *Eastern* side of the state... go figure) has the Herbert Hoover Library, and his final resting place.

You might recall that in the 1920's radio was an expensive novelty, and a few thousand hams (Herbert included) occupied the spectrum. By 1925, some 530 stations were on the air. In 1921, a year after women got the right to vote, Hoover was appointed Secretary of Commerce, and if you will recall your history, The Bureau of Navigation gave up it's roll in regulating radio in favor of the Department of Commerce.

Licenses were granted for 3-months at a time (This was when the "public interest, convenience and necessity" was the driving force) and there was a band plan.

My favorite story? A religious sect asked for permission to build a station to disseminate warnings of the world's imminent end. Herbert told them to spend their money for airtime on existing



Figure 1. An image of old-time radio at the Herbert Hoover Library in Iowa.

outlets; if the world was really going to end in a month, it would be a far wiser investment.

The Library also has a whole series of antique microphones that you have seen in the historical photos, as well as one of several (or so I've come to learn over the years) "first" TV transmission systems. This first was used to connect the Washington Post Office to

Baltimore, and used a Nipkov disk.

Funny where you find Broadcasting History. Bathrooms were nice, and there are few visitors. Worth the stop. Made a 17-meter contact from the parking lot, just to honor another radio guy.

(Fred Baumgartner is a systems engineer with Leitch and a member of SBE Chapter 48, Denver)

HAVE AN IDEA FOR A SBE PROGRAM?

Is there a topic you would like to see covered at one of our local Chapter 24 meetings? Is there a technology that you would like to learn more about?

Or, better yet, is there a topic that you are qualified to speak on at an upcoming meeting? Please let us know!

Please forward your ideas to one of the Program committee members.

SBE Certification Information Available

New certification information brochures and applications are available from Jim Hermanson, the Chapter 24 Certification Chair.

If you are considering taking an SBE certification exam, would like more information, or have questions about the process, you are encouraged to contact Jim.

He can be reached by sending an email message to jim@jimhermanson.com.


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QUALCOMM PROPOSES STREAMING VIDEO SYSTEM

By Tom Smith

Qualcomm has proposed a streaming multimedia system on the 700 MHz spectrum that it won in auction last year. Qualcomm won five of the six Economic Area Groups licenses on TV channel 55. These licenses cover the whole United States except for the Pacific Region (Hawaii and Guam).

The system Qualcomm is proposing would use high power transmitters on high towers to stream 50 to 100

channels of local and national content including 15 live streaming channels as well as video clips and audio.

The system would operate in conjunction with CDMA standard cell and PCS operators. The transmission system is a one way system called Forward link Only and information would be ordered through the subscribers wireless phone, which no doubt could be part of the media receiver unit. The video would be 320 X 240 QVGA with stereo audio. Content would come

from TV stations, the networks, cable and satellite providers and other content providers.

Qualcomm has created a new subsidiary called MediaFLO USA to manage the system. The investment in the new media delivery system is projected to be \$800 Million with Qualcomm paying the FCC \$38 million for the spectrum.

From Qualcomm Release (www.qualcomm.com)

FCC Fines Trucking Centers for Marketing Illegal "Amateur" Transceivers

The FCC has proposed fining Pilot Travel Centers LLC \$125,000 for allegedly marketing unauthorized RF devices—specifically, transceivers labeled as Amateur Radio Service (ARS) equipment but intended for use on both Citizens Band and amateur frequencies. CB transmitters must receive FCC certification—formally called "type acceptance." Amateur Radio equipment does not require FCC certification. The Notice of Apparent Liability (NAL) released November 22 asserts that Pilot continued to market CB transceivers labeled as amateur gear despite multiple citations and warnings.

"Commission field offices issued a total of nine citations to Pilot's corporate headquarters and its retail outlets warning Pilot that future violations would subject Pilot to penalties including civil monetary forfeitures," the NAL said. The Commission alleges that from October 2002 until last July, Pilot, in 47 separate instances, offered for sale various models of non-certificated Galaxy CB transceivers labeled as "amateur radios" that easily could be modified for CB operation. The FCC says in some instances, Pilot

employees referred to the units as "CBs."

The ARRL expressed its full support for the FCC's enforcement action against Pilot. "The marketing as 'Amateur Radio' equipment of transceivers that are intended for other uses causes widespread interference to licensed radio amateurs operating within their allocated frequency bands," ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ said on the League's behalf. "We hope that the Commission's long-awaited action will be followed by additional measures taken against marketers who persist in similar violations."

Responding to the citations, Pilot told the FCC that all of the radios in question were "marketed as amateur radios and, as sold, operate on the 10-meter amateur band." Pilot contended the units fell under Part 97 rules and didn't require FCC certification. In January 2002, the FCC Dallas Field Office advised Pilot that the devices referred to in the Citation had built-in design features to facilitate CB operation and that the FCC considered them CB transmitters that fall under


Part 95 rules. The NAL says the Dallas Field Office received no further response from Pilot.

In 1996, the FCC defined a CB transmitter as one that "operates or is intended to operate" at a Citizens Band station. The Commission subsequently clarified its rules to specify that transmitters intended for operation on non-amateur frequencies "must be approved prior to manufacture, importation or marketing." The clarification notice specifically included among devices requiring FCC certification all Amateur Radio Service transceivers designed to be easily user-modified to extend their operating frequency range into the Citizens Band and other non-amateur radio service frequencies.

(From the ARRL.org web site)



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Congress Passes Satellite Transmission Bill

Satellite companies will be able to retransmit broadcasters' television signals for another five years but would have to offer those signals on a single dish, under legislation approved by Congress. The bill represents a setback for satellite providers like Echostar Communications, who has argued that capacity constraints require it to split its signal onto two dishes, Reuters reported.

Broadcasters had complained that less-popular channels are commonly shunted onto the second dish, which some customers choose not to install. Echostar, the number two satellite provider under its Dish Network name, said any move to consolidate signals onto one dish would cost the company \$100 million, according to Legg Mason analysts.

Satellite providers will have 18 months to phase out the two-dish arrangement under the measure, which passed both the Senate and the House of Representatives as part of a \$388 billion year-end spending bill. The retransmission agreement allows satellite customers in remote areas not served by broadcast TV to view network shows. That provision was set to expire at the end of this year. A similar measure passed the House of Representatives in October.

Echostar said it was disappointed that it has only 18 months to eliminate its two-dish configuration. However, the company said it would work to meet

this tight deadline and to minimize the impact on consumers.

Echostar also suggested that the new law require terrestrial broadcasters, who have been slow to roll out full-power digital transmissions of their signals, to do some fast work as well. Over the next several years, it said, the bill will allow satellite TV carriers to begin offering distant high definition TV network channels to many consumers if the local broadcasters lapse on their promises to Congress to begin broadcasting full-power HDTV to their viewers.

The digital white area provision will motivate local broadcasters to build their towers and broadcast at full power in order to serve their communities, Echostar said. The changes will also help accelerate the digital transition and ensure the return of the 700MHz spectrum to the government.

The Digital Transition Coalition, a coalition of consumer groups, said the new legislation could provide relief to millions of television viewers, especially those in rural areas who cannot receive local network programming in digital.

(from SBE Chapter 59 newsletter)

SBE MEMBER RESUMEBANK

Want to get your resume out to employers? Participate in SBE's Resume Bank, available to SBE members only, free of charge.

Call the SBE National Office at (317) 846-9000 or e-mail Membership Services Director Angel Bates at abates@sbe.org for information on submitting or accessing resumes.

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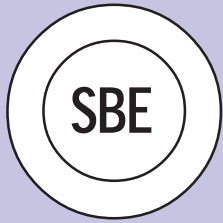


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Thanks to Leonard Charles for his work on the Chapter 24 WWW page.

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JANUARY MEETING and PROGRAM



Society of Broadcast Engineers CHAPTER 24 MADISON, WISCONSIN Thursday, January 13, 2005

Belden Cable and Networking Presentation

Join us this Thursday evening January 13th when Don Heinzen and Dave Geon of Belden CDT give us an update on their latest broadcast product offerings, as well as their new line of networking products with Belden's recent acquisition of CDT. We hope to see you there.

Dutch Treat Dinner
at 5:30 PM

at Perkins
1410 Damon Road
(on the Beltline frontage road
near Fish Hatchery Road)

Meeting and Program
at 7:00PM

at Wisconsin Public Broadcasting Center
3319 W. Beltline Highway

Visitors and guests are welcome at all of our SBE meetings!

2005 UPCOMING MEETING/PROGRAM DATES:

<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Program</u>
Tuesday	February 15, 2005	Electronic Theater Controls Tour
Wednesday	March 16, 2005	T.B.A./Nominations
Thursday	April 12, 2005	T.B.A./Elections

Program Committee:

Steve Paugh
277-5139

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