

Ratings 'war' goes on

Eugene awaits two 'new' FM stations

By KEVIN HARDEN
Of the Emerald

Listeners who turn their radio dials to two Eugene FM stations next year may be surprised by what they hear. Some may not notice the difference, but two

KZEL, which went on the air 16 years ago as KWFS-FM, was sold to California businessman Rob Skinner, who purchased KBDF earlier this year.

Skinner, a former radio announcer who bought both stations for Jayar Communications, Inc., is

hurt it, he says. With the help of KBDF and the corporation, KZEL listeners shouldn't notice a drastic change in musical format.

"The changes we should make are called natural evolution," Garrett says.

Competition within the FM radio

won't be caught in the competition squeeze.

"Just the opposite," he says. "We'll be in a much more stable position than we've ever been in. In fact, there will be a little bit of a cushion, so we can go for a specific type of audience. Before we were trying to be all things to all people."

But the competition for top ranking by Arbitron has been almost minimal in the FM market since radio station KSND, FM 93, began playing Top-40 songs on an FM musical format.

KSND, which is also owned by KASH-AM, has been the top-rated FM station in the Eugene area for the last rating period. And, according to Bill Dudley, a radio announcer and program director for KASH, that ranking will be hard to beat.

The advent of two "new" FM stations with more money to upgrade their formats won't hurt

KSND at all, Dudley predicts. KBDF, which was the top-ranked AM station last year, has slipped in the Arbitron ratings and will probably fall behind KASH on the AM side. KZEL will also be far behind KSND on the FM side, he says.

"All that is important is trends," Dudley explains. "And right now the trends for KASH and KSND are going way up while the trends for KBDF and KZEL are going way down."

Whatever happens, KASH and KSND will be ranked higher than KBDF and KZEL, even if the two merge, Dudley predicts. And, even with four communications companies vying for a top spot in the Eugene FM radio market, KSND might be the only station that won't have to change its format.

"Why should KSND change? It's doing what it does best without any competition right now."



Graphic by Janice Brown

"new" FM stations soon will be on the air.

Those stations, KZEL, a progressive-rock station at FM 96 and KFMV, a similar station at FM 98, are being taken over by two AM radio stations and officially will begin operating under new ownership sometime before the end of the year.

Although a final decision on the purchases has yet to be made by the Federal Communications Commission, KZEL and KFMV probably will change hands this month. The FCC decision is due by the end of August.

also doubling as general manager of KBDF.

After the FCC approves the sale of KZEL, it may keep the same format of music.

But there may be one slight change, says Stan Garrett, KZEL program director. The station, with the help of the Jayar Communications corporation, will be able to specialize its musical format instead of trying to please a large variety of people, Garrett says.

The financial stability available from a large corporation will improve the station's operation, not

market in the Eugene-Springfield area has increased dramatically over the past few years. Individual FM stations, trying to operate on small advertising budgets, usually went bankrupt. An AM-FM combination can reach a larger audience and bring in more advertising dollars, Garrett says.

"The (radio market) pie remains the same size, just the number of people going after it are decreased by two."

Although there is a fear that FM stations owned by AM stations will compromise their musical formats, Garrett thinks that KZEL

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