

## Vernonia Radio Station Looking for Funding

Vernonia now has a radio station, at least on paper.

Vernonia Public Broadcasting, 104.5 FM with a call sign of KVPB-LP, is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit public charity which has been granted a construction permit and radio license by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for a low power (LP) FM broadcast, 100 watt radio station to be located in Vernonia.

The project is the work of Reo Gargovich, the President of Vernonia Public Broadcasting. Gargovich has been pursuing the idea of a community radio station since 2009. He says he's been following a group, the Prometheus Project, which has been lobbying congress to require the FCC to provide more opportunities for a LP FM radio stations for use by local communities.

The FCC did open a window for new radio station licenses a few years

ago and Gargovich learned that any local radio station needs to be publicly managed by a nonprofit; no one is allowed to own it like a commercial radio station. Gargovich formed a nonprofit with a three member local Board of Directors and was granted the license.

"Theoretically Vernonia has KVPB, 104.5 FM ready to go as soon as we can put the hardware together and make it happen," says Gargovich.

Gargovich has said the station would be used to disseminate information during emergencies; the FCC requires the station be part of the national and state emergency alert system. Gargovich has spoken with the City of Vernonia about providing emergency services and also has an unofficial endorsement from the Vernonia Fire District. Gargovich would also like to provide programmable music and also envisions shows hosted by locals.

Gargovich has been involved in VERA, the group of local HAM radio operators, in the past and has assisted the community during past emergency situations.

He has also managed the regional Skywarn system for amateur radio in seven counties, connecting local radio operators to the National Weather Service. Data collected through this project allowed Vernonia to get online river gauges at the Green Bridge and on Rock Creek to better predict river and stream levels during high water events.

In addition, Gargovich was responsible, along with Dale Webb, for starting the "Vernonia Weather" page on Facebook, providing real time information and predictions during weather events. He also just started a "Vernonia Roads" page to provide updated road conditions. "This kind of activity is already my hobby," explains Gargovich.

The hardware and associated cost ranges from a full maximum package capable of everything Gargovich envisions for around \$20,000 to a more basic minimum set up for \$10,000. Gargovich says in his ideal package a good antennae would be placed on Cory Hill, which includes monthly costs for internet access, purchase a more elaborate and functional transmitter with testing equipment included, pay royalty fees associated with musical entertainment, and provide a generator and fuel to keep the station running during any extended power outages.

Gargovich has already begun placing donation jars around town to collect funds to buy the equipment needed, but needs to find some other funding sources in order to raise funds by February of 2017, the deadline imposed by the FCC to be up and running.

## New Drug and Alcohol Treatment Center to Open in St. Helens

A new drug and alcohol treatment and recovery facility is getting ready to open its doors in St. Helens.

Medicine Wheel Recovery Services (MWRS) is a newly formed nonprofit that will function as an outpatient clinic for adults, and their families, suffering from addictions and unaddressed mental health issues. The co-ed facility will provide individual and group therapy and counseling along with a variety of recovery skills training, including communication skills and parenting classes. The facility will also help clients navigate and access community resources and offer referrals to their community partners.

According to their web page, MWRS "promotes healing by addressing the delicate balance of physical health, mental and emotional health, social and cultural connection, community involvement, environmental responsibility, and spirituality," with a focus on cultural experiential opportunities, cultural ancestry, and personal traditions.

Jessica Ford, a volunteer doing community outreach for the program, says MWRS has not yet set a date to open their doors, but they will host a ribbon cutting ceremony on Saturday, March 12; doors open at 10:00 am, with the ceremony at 12:00 pm, and an open house until 4:00 pm.

MWRS is being run by co-ex-

ecutive directors Pam Daniels and Tana Howtopat. "They have a lot of experience working in this field and they're super excited to come into the community and offer their support," said Ford.

Ford says the facility will also offer gambling addiction services as well as DUI courses. According to their webpage, MWRS's ambitious five year plan includes the addition of a residential recovery program, educational opportunities for both adults and children, green and sustainability practices including an organic garden, and additional support services, including assistance with employment, housing, nutrition, education, personal finance, and health and fitness.

Ford says she hopes citizens from all over Columbia County will use their services. She said she is currently working on finding a van to use as a shuttle service to help clients access the facility. "It's hard sometimes for people to get the services that they need and we feel it's important that we try to provide a way to get here."

*Medicine Wheel Recovery Services is located at 58147 Columbia River Highway, Suite B in St. Helens. To learn more about Medicine Wheel Recovery Services go to [www.MedicineWheelRecoveryServices.org](http://www.MedicineWheelRecoveryServices.org).*

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