

KWSI FM debuts after numerous delays

With the promise of a "happy day, all day long," 100,000-watt KWSI FM hit the airwaves January 17 following months of delays and technical difficulties. The station's debut was long in coming and the anticipation was similar to that of a first-born child—when's it going to get here and what will it be?

KWSI is one of two central Oregon radio stations offering an "adult contemporary" format, which is the second most popular format, next to country and western, in central Oregon. Listeners are offered current top 40 hits, hits from the mid-70s to 1984 and occasional "oldies," such as Elvis, Peter, Paul and Mary and the Beatles. The station plays no hard rock.

To date, there are seven announcers on the air. Greg Partin, Ron Michaels, Sue Matters and Ron Smith work weekdays while Phillip David, Ken Miller and Delson Suppah all share weekend air time. Each has a definite air personality and sound. While KWSI is off the air Sundays from midnight to 6 a.m. on Monday, Smith and engineer Jim Malloy maintain equipment, either at the tower or at the studio. Once the engineering duties slow down, Malloy will have an airshift. David, Miller and Suppah will move over to the educational station KWSO when it goes on the air in April.

Cody White and Steve Walker present AP, CNN and local news and sports throughout the day. Every half hour for three-and-one-half-hours beginning at 5:30 a.m., White presents a concise look at the news. At 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. Walker gives timely and exclusive sports updates. "News Beat" spots are given on the hour beginning at 9 a.m. until 9 p.m. Cable News Network News (CNN) headlines and sports will be presented on weekends when the satellite is put into place.

Because announcers mention Kah-Nee-Ta several times in an hour, it is anticipated that the listeners will be drawn to the resort, thus increasing business at Kah-Nee-Ta. Station manager Nat Shaw stated that KWSI will "add to community pride, eventually pay for KWSO and is already offering new careers never before

available to tribal members." It is also, said Shaw, "another news source for tribal members."

Of course, a commercial station wouldn't be a station without commercials and KWSI is no different. The sales team, numbering three, plus manager John Partin, has set up shop in downtown Redmond from which they are working. Tribal member Billie Jo McConville, David Newton and Steve Moan have each been scurrying to gain advertisers. It is of the utmost importance that the station be considered a "profit-making commercial entity" as soon as possible, says Partin.

McConville's sales territory includes the "north country" including Madras, Warm Springs, Prineville, Pine Grove and Maupin while Newton and Moan cover Bend, Redmond and areas south. McConville was the first sales representative to bring in an advertising contract. McConville is fairly new to sales, but has gone through an intensive training program including a two-day session held at Kah-Nee-Ta with Darrell Soleberg from South Dakota.

McConville has at her disposal over 360 potential advertisers. Because the station was delayed, advertising sales were hampered, but the overall response has "been really good." Charter advertisers are currently being offered a special incentive program which is a package of advertising at reduced rates.

Due to the nature of FM radio waves, some areas of central Oregon don't receive KWSI as well as others. To remedy that, Shaw is proposing that two translators be installed to boost the frequency into low-lying areas. However, it has been reported that KWSI is reaching Goldendale, Washington, Sandy, Salem and Sunriver.

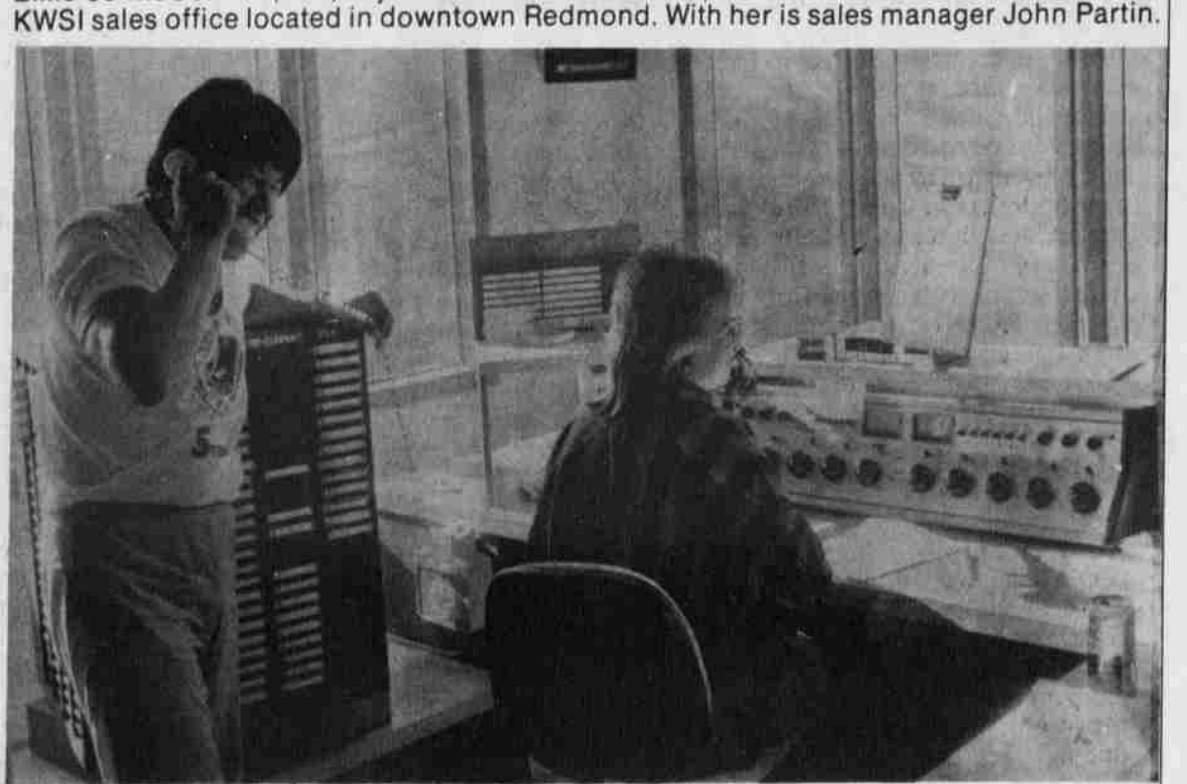
Radio listeners near and far alike now have a new and very promising FM station to which to listen. Not only will this, the Tribe's newest enterprise, aid in presenting a clear and positive voice for Warm Springs, it will also, within five years, be totally self-supporting. What began in 1981 as an idea is now a reality. And that reality is sounding better and better with each new day.



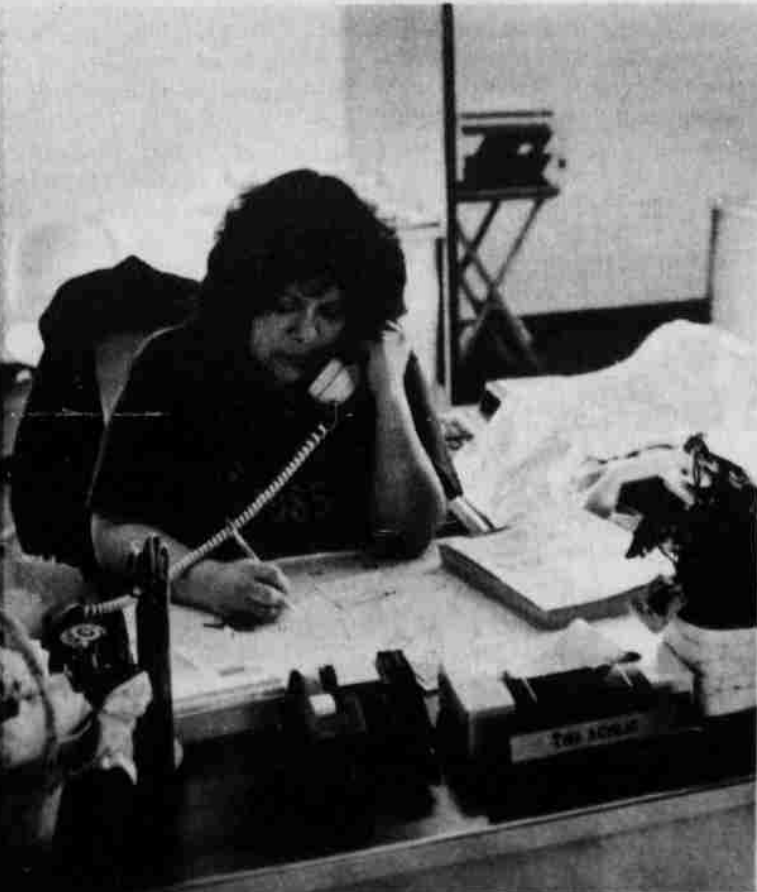
Billie Jo McConville, left, is just one of three sales representatives who works out of the KWSI sales office located in downtown Redmond. With her is sales manager John Partin.



Ron Smith not only announces but spends time working on promos in the production room located at the studios.



Announcer Delson Suppah usually works the midnight to 6 shift but recently visited the studio while Sue Matters was on the air.



Tina Aguilar, receptionist, coordinates efforts between the sales staff and station personnel.



Ken-Man Miller has developed a cool and laid-back style unique among KWSI announcers.



Steve Walker checks the AP wire for the latest news.

Text and Photos by Donna Behrend