

**KNND** from A1

ator in 2018, though it would be years before real progress was made.

“This ended up actually being a much more long and arduous process than we ever thought,” said Reiten.

While KNND’s partnership with South Lane TV, whose tower is used for KNND’s transmitter, had forged a clear shot to start the project, the station was about to be uprooted.

KNND’s lease of its space with the Odd Fellows was up and the fraternity opted to do some work on the building. After conferring with their counterparts in the Metro area, it was suggested that the rent price was unreasonably low and it should be raised to a level the group felt was more consistent with current market conditions.

“Two to three times more than what I was paying,” said Reiten.

Though the construction permit obtained from the FCC to get the FM broadcast working gave a three-year time limit, the station’s owner and staff felt there was time to postpone the project.

“When we found out that we were going to have to move from our old facility to our new facility, with financial considerations that sort of put the FM on the back burner,” Reiten said. “So then we got into the new building, and we were just about ready to jump back on the FM train again and finally get back going when, well, along comes a global pandemic.”

The financial toll on the community had a deep impact and the radio station was not immune.

Once again, FM was relegated to the back burner.

Presently, as COVID-19 restrictions have lifted and with the construction permit nearly at its deadline, the station decided it was time to make its move. A

little aid from counterparts swung in to the rescue as well.

“We finally got back on it with the help of some radio stations in Eugene that generously passed on some equipment that they had upgraded and were no longer using,” said Reiten. “They let us have an old transmitter and a processor and an amplifier that we needed to make this work.”

Following some construction and awaiting approval from the FCC, the new FM broadcast fired up for the first time on Saturday, July 24.

“It’s already showing some promise,” said Reiten. “We’re getting lots of calls from people saying we love the FM and obviously, at the end of the day, what we really hope that will turn into is not only a better product for our listeners to enjoy, but more revenue for the station – because small, standalone independents like us are getting to be fewer and

further between at this point.”

While excited to show off the station’s new feature, Reiten was clear that had no intention of abandoning AM broadcasting.

“I grew up on AM radio,” he said. “AM radio, if you have the right radio, is absolutely phenomenal. There’s honestly, I think, something magical about the sound of AM radio.”

AM broadcasting has a place in the culture as a retro artifact, though it serves useful purposes beyond its reputation for local talk radio – emergency conditions, weather and traffic coverage can offer listeners valuable information.

Still, it is getting pushed to the margins due to the popularity of newer technologies.

Reiten added that he thinks radio manufacturers tend not to invest much in providing quality AM equipment on modern radios, if at all.

“I mean, I understand

why people don’t want to listen to AM on many of the new AM radios because it’s bad,” he said. “But now, if you’re somebody like me and you’ve got 40-year-old receivers in every room in your house, you turn on the AM radio, it’s fantastic. But those are getting to be lesser and lesser all the time. So, FM is obviously a clearer sound for a lot of people.”

While KNND’s signal offers this clearer option, the station’s coverage area is staying roughly the same, extending as far north as the southern end of Springfield.

The addition of FM is likely to help with the station’s ad revenue as well.

“Advertisers are unlikely to advertise on strictly AM stations, because that’s what their marketing data is telling them – that people don’t listen to AM anymore,” said Reiten. “But we’re also FM now, so we’re attracting a lot more listeners that way – at least

that’s the hope.”

Reiten said that he had checked in with other stations which had taken advantage of the same FCC program. The stations reported a noticeable change in their business with other companies, indicating the upgrade may have similar benefits in store for KNND.

Though FM brings with it new opportunities, Reiten emphasized that KNND has no plans to change the programming structure of the station.

“We aren’t planning any program changes at this time. We’re still going to keep our emphasis on local [issues], all the personalities are going to stay the same, all the same programming is going to be at the same times,” he said. “So it’s basically the KNND that people have come to know and love. Now just over on the FM dial as well as the AM.”

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