

News Focus

MOVER Epic Gets Gershon

Mere weeks after exiting his post as president of V2 Records, Andy Gershon has a new home at Epic Records as executive VP.



Gershon

Epic president Charlie Walk says, "Epic will greatly benefit from his creative edge and forward-thinking ability to find new and interesting platforms to develop artists."

Gershon has managed such bands as Love and Rockets, the Cocteau Twins and the Sundays. He is also credited with discovering the Smashing Pumpkins. —Mike Boyle

SHAKER KFWB Ups Ludlum, Gomez

KFWB/Los Angeles has promoted news director Andy Ludlum to PD at the CBS Radio all-news. Ludlum had served as news director at KFWB for the past three years and held various news management positions at the station since joining in 1998.



Ludlum

Assistant news director Paul Gomez replaces Ludlum as KFWB's news director, while CBS Radio/Los Angeles VP of AM programming David G. Hall will now devote his full attention to programming and operations at news sister KNX. —Al Peterson

DEALMAKER The Beat Rolls On In Austin

Border Media Partners swooped in and picked up the intellectual property, format, airstaff and even the calls of rhythmic KXBT (the Beat)/Austin from Entercom and installed all the pieces at 104.9 FM on Feb. 26. "It's been a crazy 96 hours," Border Media Partners senior VP of operations Bob Proud says. "Entercom notified staff on Thursday [Feb. 22] that they were being dismissed; we closed the deal at 3 p.m. Friday [Feb. 23] and put them back on the air Monday morning."

The Beat's former frequency, 104.3, was spun off to Univision, which flipped it to regional Mexican. —Keith Bermon

Martina McBride Replaces Mozart

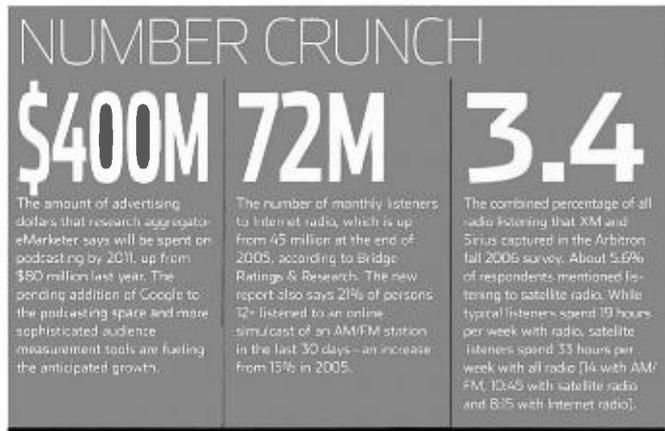
Six months after Emmis flipped country KZLA to rhythmic AC as KMVN (MOVN), iFM country radio returns to Los Angeles, as Mt. Wilson Broadcasters flips classical KMZT to KKGQ "Go Country 105." The KMZT (K-Mozart) calls and format move to 1260 AM, where the KKGQ call letters and country format previously resided. K-Mozart will also be heard on 105.1's HD side channel.

Mt. Wilson flipped Mexican AM XESURF (540) to country in October and a month later the company dropped adult standards for country on KKGQ-AM (1260).

Former KZLA staffer Shawn Parr, who signed on with 1260 in January, continues as morning host for Go Country 105, while Tonya Campos, former KZLA API(MI), joins KKGQ as MI/midday personality on March 12. In addition, KKGQ clears former KZLA afternoon personality Whitney Allen's syndicated "Big Time" show in afternoon drive.

Mt. Wilson director of marketing Michael Levine says XESURF will continue to simulcast with KKGQ and provide strong southern California coverage—important because a robust contingent of country fans resides in Orange County, which contributes approximately one-quarter of the in-tab diaries for the L.A. metro.

KZLA had been a country station for 26 years at the time of the flip, and was the only L.A. country outlet. —R.J. Curtis, with additional reporting by Ken Tucker



FCC Roadshow Promises To 'Fix Bad Old Rules'

Harrisburg—More than 100 people, mostly from Central Pennsylvania, waited as many as five hours Feb. 23 to express their opinions to all five FCC commissioners about how local media is performing in the Susquehanna Valley during the third of a planned six-stop tour of America meant to guide the FCC in its recrafting of media-ownership rules.



Martin, left

FCC chairman Kevin Martin opened the hearing by noting that part of the FCC's mission is to "find more opportunities for diverse voices to be heard," suggesting that low-power TV and low-power FM may be ways to accomplish that. Commissioner Michael Copps used the podium to attack the 2003 Michael Powell-led FCC. "Several years ago, some ill-advised new rules got through the FCC," he said. "It's time to fix some of the bad old rules that got us into this mess."

But there was also a clear undercurrent of community concern that, while local radio and TV stations are generally held in high regard by their audiences, further consolidation could tip the quantity and quality of local news and programming, leaving Harrisburg—Pennsylvania's capital and the nation's 41st media market—with, as one voice put it, "too few owning too much at the expense of too many." —Jeffrey Yorke

ON THE WEB Broadcasters Get Legislative Front Seat

The proposed \$13 billion Sirius-XM merger was the hottest topic Feb. 26 as more than 500 broadcasters packed a downtown Washington, D.C., hotel to hear a series of Capitol Hill lawmakers chat about industry issues.

"The matter is of great interest to 13 million satellite subscribers and to the government," Rep. John Dingell, D-Mich., told an after-lunch audience. Dingell, chairman of the powerful House Committee on Energy and Commerce, continued. "The Department of Justice and the FCC are interested in this and I intend to watch this. We want to make sure that consumers are protected." Rep. Greg Walden, R-Ore., said that if the merger is permitted, broadcasters should not be limited to ownership caps. He also accused the satellite companies of trying to change the rules dictated in the original licenses that prevent one company from buying another.

But beyond the merger proposal, Walden said he would not be surprised if the Supreme Court rejected the FCC's rulings on violence and indecency on TV and radio. "There is no logic" to certain FCC judgments, he told broadcasters. "How can they say when you can use certain words and when you cannot?" —Jeffrey Yorke

Cox To Encode In Houston

Now that Arbitron has achieved Media Rating Council accreditation for its Portable People Meter radio ratings service in Houston, Cox Radio has agreed to encode its four stations there.

Arbitron has been demonstrating the service in Houston since 2005 and the PPM is expected to become the currency there in the next few months. Up until August, Radio One had also refused to encode its station signals, leaving Cox as the sole holdout.

Cox, Clear Channel, Cumulus Media, Entercom and Radio One have agreed to fund a test in Houston this fall of the Media Audit/Ipsos' smart cell phone-based ratings methodology. —Katy Bachman, Medianweek

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