

# WSMB Signals

Western States Museum of Broadcasting

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Southern Oregon University (SOU) and the JPR Foundation continue their cooperative efforts to facilitate the Museum's construction. In June, 2003, SOU leased, without charge, to the Foundation a parcel of land on the SOU campus enabling the Foundation to construct the Museum on the site (which is located at the corner of Ashland Street/Highway 66 and Walker Street). This prime commercial location was identified by Economics Research Associates (ERA) as a significant component of the Museum's economic

capability. (see page 3)

The Museum will occupy a portion of the 2.6 acre lot in a building containing both the WSMB, a new home for Jefferson Public Radio (JPR), and a café to serve both the Museum and JPR's patrons.

Under the terms of the lease, which was ratified by the Oregon State Board of Higher Edu-

cation in September, 2003, the Foundation has until 2011 to complete construction of the new building. The parties anticipate completing an ancillary operating agreement later this year.

Architectural design of the building is expected to commence early in 2005.

(right) The Electric Word – a WPA-art style mural commissioned from New York's Evergreene Painting Studios, it describes the evolution of the electronic media. Rendered as a fired tile mural, it will hang above the main entrance to the WSMB.



## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Early television broadcasts and receivers were hardly what we are now accustomed to in our 'cable-ready' world.
- One of Oregon's oldest radio stations, KWJJ, has donated its archives to the WSMB.
- 91-years old and on the air each day for the past 41 years, a profile of KTIL's Mildred Davy.

## WSMB FEATURED IN ASSOCIATED PRESS NATIONAL STORY

A January, 2004 wire story featuring the WSMB, written by AP reporter Julia Silverman, was carried in AP subscriber newspapers across the country. Silverman's story, headlined "Oregon Radio Station Enters Business Sector," described Jef-

erson Public Radio's various non-public radio ventures, while focusing on plans for the WSMB. Mark Handley, Chairman of the National Public Radio Board of Directors, described the vision saying: "It is unusual. They have a vision

for an institution in the community, not just an invisible provider of programs."

The coverage has subsequently stimulated a number of other opportunities, including donations, for the WSMB.

## ITEMS RECENTLY DEPOSITED WITH THE WSMB



(above) Logo used to promote KWJJ's 50th anniversary in 1972. (below) This neon sign (unlighted in this view) was taken on remote broadcasts to promote the station. (WSMB collection)



Following the WSMB's 2002 exclusive interview with then 101-year old Wilbur J. Jerman (reported in Signals Volume 1 Number 1), who built Portland radio station KFWV in 1922 (which became KWJJ in 1925), KWJJ was purchased by Seattle-based Entercom Broadcasting. Over many years KWJJ had accumulated a unique archive of the station's history including correspondence, FCC records, sales material and photographs dating back to the 1950's. For many years KWJJ had the distinction of being

housed in a large converted downtown Portland mansion which included abundant storage space. It was the luxury of that space which allowed the station to retain this valuable collection of materials for so many years.

In July, 2004 Entercom donated this unique collection of materials to the WSMB along with several pieces of vintage KWJJ equipment—all of which have now been placed in the WSMB's collection.

Another recent donation, re-

ceived from a Rogue River resident, is an early Ampex 402 tape recorder originally used in Los Angeles for radio station remote recording. Weighing over 50 pounds, this unique recorder was a challenge to maneuver into remote broadcast locations! The Ampex complements the Museum's Webcor Model 80A-1 1947 wire recorder, the recording medium which preceded tape recording by storing signals on a spool holding wire no thicker than a human hair.



Television was originally predicted to be right around the corner when the radio industry dawned in the early 1920's. Developing television actually turned out to be a daunting technical challenge.

Early experiments used a mechanical TV system instead of the cathode ray tubes which eventually were adopted. NBC conducted experiments which

## FROM THE MUSEUM'S COLLECTION—EARLY TELEVISION!



(above) Felix the Cat in a 1930 experimental NBC television transmission. (above right) 1939 Worlds Fair Exhibit card. (WSMB collection)

placed in front of the screen to allow convenient group viewing.

NBC launched the Texaco Star Theatre, starring Milton Berle, in 1947. Berle (known as "Uncle Miltie") was phenomenally popular, fueling the sale of millions of sets and helping shunt radio aside as television ascended to the role of America's primary entertainment medium.

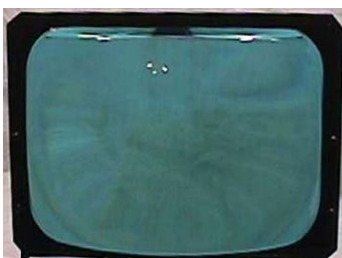
Most viewers first saw television either on retail store floor models or in bars. Oregon's



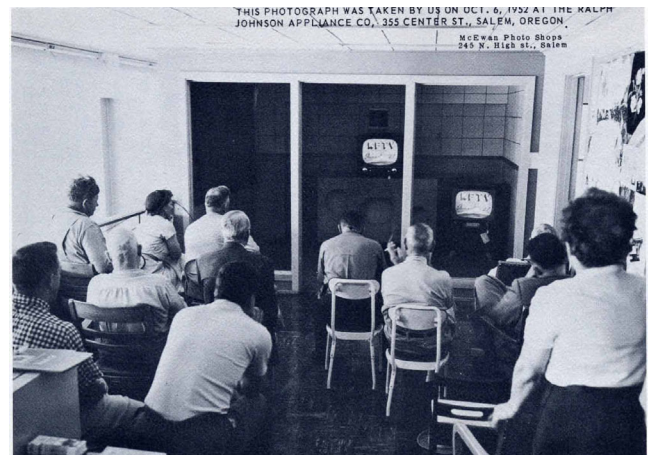
first television station was KPTV, Channel 27, which signed on September 20, 1952. KPTV was also the first UHF television station in the nation.

(below) Viewers watching KPTV, Portland, in a Salem OR store shortly after the station first signed on. (WSMB collection)

(above) Pilot TV-37 1947 early television with 3" screen. (below) Liquid-filled magnifier optionally available to enlarge the small picture of early televisions. (WSMB collection)



used the Felix the Cat cartoon image for test transmissions. Eventually, NBC inaugurated a regular television service which opened at the 1939 Worlds Fair (where fair attendees could see themselves televised). World War II interrupted television operations and, when TV resumed after the War, sets (like the Pilot TV-37 at left) were expensive. They also had tiny 3" screens - so small that a large liquid-filled magnifying lens would often





## WSMB FEASIBILITY STUDY COMPLETED

In 2003 the WSMB commissioned Economic Research Associates (ERA) to conduct an economic feasibility study of the Museum's anticipated operations. ERA is a multi-national consulting firm specializing in developing financial projections for cultural facilities. Previously, ERA has planned for the Getty Center, Los Angeles, Colonial Williamsburg, the Kennedy Space Center, the National Aquarium, Baltimore, the Ben and Jerry's Visitor Center and the NBC Experience Store in

Rockefeller Center.

The ERA study will help guide financial planning, staffing development, collection and exhibit scope and associated capital planning.

ERA's analysis of the WSMB's plans comment favorably upon the WSMB's projected level of public interest compared to medium-sized museums in communities of comparable size.

In particular ERA was impressed with the synergistic capability of the combination of

the WSMB and Jefferson Public Radio broadcast operations in a common space and the programmatic interplay between the two. Using assembly spaces such as the JPR café and an auditorium, both of which will be used to originate programming before the public, ERA concluded that the facility will create a broad "public radio media experience" which will help extend the value and vigor of both JPR and the WSMB to create a powerful community service result.



The Radio Corporation of America (RCA) pioneered the development of color television which it introduced in 1956. The NBC peacock was adopted to identify color telecasts and promote the growth of color TV. The peacock originally had 6 "feathers" - one for each of RCA's corporate divisions.

## OREGON BROADCAST HISTORY BOOK PROJECT

The WSMB and the Oregon Association of Broadcasters (OAB) are jointly pursuing the research and publication of a book devoted to the history of radio and television in Oregon. Research is being conducted by Executive Director Ron Kramer. Ron recently interviewed 91-year old Mildred Davy who has been broadcasting a daily interview radio pro-

gram at KTIL-AM, Tillamook Oregon over 41 years.

Never formally prepared for a radio career, Mildred came to KTIL late in life and it just "got into her blood." She's interviewed everyone from Presidents to local citizens on her daily program.

An avid traveler, Mildred keeps a world map on her office wall

with push-pins identifying all the locations from which she's broadcast including cities in Brazil, Germany, England and Australia.

Davy conceivably holds the Oregon record for current longest continuing radio program. The KTIL staff says: "We all want to be like Mildred when we grow up."

Interviewed in "Mildred's Studio" at KTIL, Tillamook OR, in July, 2004, Mildred Davy, 91, has been broadcasting her daily interview program for 41 years.



**"We all want to be like Midred when we grow up."**

## WSMB VISION AND LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

Individuals who have agreed to participate in establishing the WSMB through service on the Vision and Leadership Committee are:

- Les AuCoin, former Congressman
- Diane Gerard, member of the JPR Foundation Board
- Ron Kramer, JPR Foundation Executive Director
- Patsy Smullin, California Oregon Broadcasting

- Greg Walden, United States Congressman
- Ron Wyden, United States Senator

Television excited the public for both scientific and programmatic reasons as described in this 1928 magazine. (WSMB Collection).



## Western States Museum of Broadcasting

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**Preserving and Interpreting the History of  
Radio, Television and Recording Industries**



The WSMB is an affiliate of the non-profit JPR Foundation and is dedicated to preserving and interpreting the history of the radio, television and recording industries. When completed the WSMB will include a research library and archive, displays of equipment and artifacts, including radio and television receivers and broadcast equipment, displays of typical historical radio and television programming and a variety of interactive exhibits.

In addition to the Museum's exhibits and collections, its programs will include an active education program including visiting lectures and performances by persons drawn from the broadcasting industry.

## METROPOLITAN OPERA AND WSMB FORGE NEW AGREEMENT

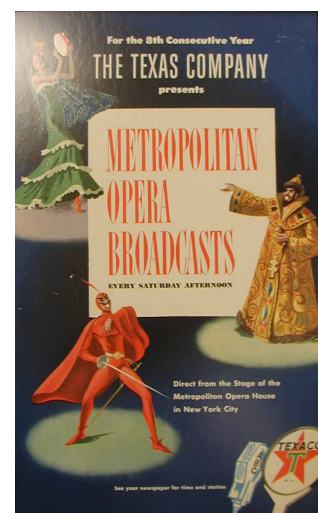
**"The WSMB will be one of three  
locations in the nation to hold  
the Met broadcast audio  
archive collection."**

The WSMB has exchanged letters of mutual intent with the Metropolitan Opera covering the archival deposit of the Met's audio archive of its radio broadcasts with the WSMB. The letters follow the March 2002 donation by ChevronTexaco of that company's archival materials associated with its exclusive broadcast sponsorship of the Metropolitan Opera radio broadcasts. ChevronTexaco ended its record 64-year exclusive Met sponsorship in 2003 and the archive, donated exclusively to the WSMB, chronicles that important period of Met radio activity.

Unlike the donation from ChevronTexaco, the new project di-

rectly involves the Metropolitan Opera itself. Under the terms of the letter of intent, upon construction of the WSMB's home, the Met will deposit with the WSMB its complete archive of Met broadcasts recordings which will be available on-site for scholarly and musicological research.

The WSMB will be one of three locations in the nation to hold the Met collection.



(above) Poster promoting the 1948 Met Opera Broadcast season sponsored by ChevronTexaco (then called the Texas Company) (WSMB collection)