

July 25, 2011



Radio TechCheck



The Weekly NAB Newsletter for Radio Broadcast Engineers

FCC Seeks Comments on Implementation of Local Community Radio Act

A new FM radio service called “Low Power FM” ([LPFM](#)) was established by the FCC in January 2000. As originally authorized by the FCC, LPFM stations were exempted from providing protection to third-adjacent channel full-service stations, but an Act of Congress in 2001 restored third-adjacent channel protection and also prohibited the licensing of an LPFM station to any applicant that previously engaged in the unlicensed operation of a station.

More recently, Congress’ passage of the Local Community Radio Act of 2010 ([LCRA](#)) has re-established a relaxation of the third-adjacent channel protection requirement for LPFM stations (except to stations which are transmitting radio reading services – see highlights of LCRA in sidebar). Earlier this month, the FCC took initial steps to implement the LCRA with the release of a Third Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making (FNPRM) on July 12, 2011.

In the FNPRM, the Commission is seeking comment on a number of proposals including:

- A proposed processing policy for pending Auction No. 83 FM translator applications based on the spectrum available for LPFM in specific markets. The proposed approach would permit the Commission to immediately lift the freeze on the processing of translator applications (filed in 2003) and resume the licensing of FM translator stations in most smaller markets and rural communities, while requiring the dismissal of pending translator applications in markets where little spectrum remains for new LPFM stations.

Note that in developing this policy the Media Bureau of the FCC conducted a nationwide LPFM spectrum availability analysis, the results of which were included with the FNPRM as an [appendix](#). Three approaches, detailed in the FNPRM are considered: 1) opening of a joint FM Translator/LPFM application window; 2) establish a priority for future LPFM applications, or 3) adoption of a market-specific translator application dismissal proceeding policy.

- Relaxation of restrictions on the use of FM translators to re-broadcast AM station signals – in 2009, the Commission authorized the use of FM translators with licenses or permits in effect as of May 1, 2009, to rebroadcast the signal of a local AM station. The limitation of cross-service translator usage to already-authorized FM translators was adopted with the intention of preserving opportunities for future LPFM licensing. In the FNPRM, the Commission believes it is now appropriate to consider whether to remove this limit on cross-service translators with respect to the pending FM translator applications. The new AM/FM translator service rule has proven to be a very successful deregulatory policy. According to information contained in the FNPRM, approximately 500 AM stations currently use FM translators, providing hundreds of these stations with their first nighttime authority and the opportunity to operate viably at night. Anecdotal reports from many AM licensees repeatedly emphasize their vastly increased ability to cover local community, governmental and school events, and, generally, to better serve the needs of their communities by using FM translators.

One Hundred Eleventh Congress
 of the
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Highlights of Local Community Radio Act

- Eliminates third-adjacent minimum distance separation requirements between LPFM stations and full-service FM stations, FM translator stations, and FM booster stations;
- Prohibits the FCC from amending its rules to reduce the minimum co-channel and first- and second-adjacent channel distance separation requirements between LPFM station and full-service FM stations;
- Allows the FCC to grant a waiver of the second-adjacent channel distance separation requirements to LPFM stations if it can be shown that the LPFM station will not result in interference to any authorized radio service (and requires the LPFM to cease transmission if interference is being caused);

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

- Stations which broadcast radio reading services will still enjoy third-adjacent channel protection from LPFM stations;

SEC. 2. AMENDMENT.

- FM translator stations, booster stations and LPFM stations remain equal in status and secondary to existing and modified full-service FM stations.

Sec. 632. (a) The Federal Communications Commission shall modify the rules authorizing the operation of low-power FM radio stations as proposed in MM Docket No. 09-25 10--

The Third Further Notice also asks whether the Commission should take additional steps to prevent trafficking in FM translator construction permits. The full text of the FCC's Third FNPRM is available on the Internet [here](#). Comments on this matter are due in 30 days, and replies, 45 days after publication of the FNPRM in the Federal Register.

Radio Show Engineering Program September 14 – 16, 2011 Chicago, IL

The Radio Show Engineering Program begins on September 14 with Studio/Production Day. The modern multiplatform radio station is the focus. A variety of perspectives from industry experts will show how technology is offering stations new options for studio flexibility and air personality comfort. Techniques for modern remote broadcasts, streaming and social media activities will be covered. Presenters include: Brian Janes, ESPN Radio; Gary Kline, Cumulus; Jim Roberts; BE; Paul Shulins; Greater Media and Glynn Walden, CBS Radio.

On September 15, Transmission/Distribution Day, the focus turns to operational efficiency beginning with the radio transmitter plant and associated hardware. A key topic will be energy savings brought about by creative design and new developments in broadcast transmitters. Moving into the distribution area, experts will cover complementary practices that break from traditional broadcasting and show some of the new opportunities available with digital broadcasting. Presenters include: Gary Cavell, Cavell/Mertz Consultants; Steve Lockwood, Hatfield & Dawson Consultants; Paul Brenner, Emmis Communications; Jeff Littlejohn, Clear Channel; Nick Piggott, RadioDNS and John Ousby, IMDA. Also on September 15, the National Radio Systems Committee will hold meetings of its Digital Radio, RBDS, and AM & FM Analog Broadcasting Subcommittees. All attendees (except members of the press) are welcome to attend these meetings.

Management issues related to broadcast towers are addressed on September 16 during Tower Day. A team of experts will explain maintenance and safety concerns relevant to all broadcasters. The demand for tower space is creating incentive for broadcasters to examine their towers to determine if they can become a source of new revenue. You will learn about the requirements of cellular operators, the challenges they face and the possible opportunities for you as a tower owner. Rich Biby, CEO, AGL Publications will lead this interactive session.

[The Radio Show](#) is jointly produced by NAB and the Radio Advertising Bureau (RAB). The Radio Show will include an enhanced schedule and expanded Radio Show Marketplace featuring exhibitor booths. To register go the Radio Show [website](#).

Proposals Now Being Accepted for 2012 NAB Broadcast Engineering Conference

Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nevada USA
Conferences April 14 – 19, 2012 // Exhibits April 16 – 19, 2012

The 2012 NAB Show will host the 66th NAB Broadcast Engineering Conference. This world-class conference addresses the most recent developments in broadcast technology and focuses on the opportunities and challenges that face broadcast engineering professionals around the world. Each year hundreds of broadcast professionals attend the conference. They include practicing broadcast engineers and technicians, engineering consultants, contract engineers, broadcast equipment manufacturers, distributors, R&D engineers plus anyone specifically interested in the latest broadcast technologies.

If you feel qualified to speak at the NAB Broadcast Engineering Conference, we invite you to [submit](#) a technical paper proposal. The deadline for submitting your proposal is October 21. If you have any questions, contact John Marino, vice president, NAB Science and Technology at 202 429 5346.

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