

Radio TechCheck

The Weekly NAB Newsletter for Radio Broadcast Engineers



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2013 Radio Show Wrap-up

Last week the radio industry gathered in Orlando, Florida for the [2013 Radio Show](#), produced by NAB and the [Radio Advertising Bureau](#) (RAB). A few of the highlights from this annual event are provided below. The data and location for next year's Radio Show were also announced last week – it will be held from September 10-12, 2014 in Indianapolis, IN.

AM radio front-and-center – it was at last year's Radio Show in Dallas, TX that then-new FCC Commissioner Ajit Pai told the radio industry of his passion for AM radio and his desire to see it revitalized. Since then, AM radio revitalization has been a hot topic both inside and outside of the FCC. At this year's Show, acting FCC chair Mignon Clyburn (pictured here) offered some exciting news about this topic in [her keynote speech](#) on Wednesday. She announced that her office has circulated a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) which "...will represent the next major step in the Commission's review of AM service." She highlighted some of the key provisions in this NPRM including:



- Opening a one-time filing window, limited to current AM licensees and permittees, which will allow each to apply for one new FM translator station to fill in its service area;
- Relaxing the AM daytime community coverage rule to allow existing AM broadcasters more flexibility to propose antenna site changes;
- Relaxing the AM nighttime community coverage standards, which will provide broadcasters who may have difficulty finding suitable sites, relief for towers and directional arrays;
- Eliminating the AM "ratchet rule," which requires an AM station to "ratchet back" its nighttime signal to reduce interference to certain other AM stations. The rule, while intended to reduce nighttime AM interference, has instead discouraged service improvements and has apparently resulted in a net loss of interference-free AM nighttime service;
- Permitting wider implementation of Modulation Dependent Carrier Level (MDCL) control technologies, which allow AM broadcasters to reduce power consumption;
- Modifying AM antenna efficiency standards by reducing minimum effective field strength values by approximately 25 percent, thus allowing the use of shorter AM antennas.

There were two panel sessions on AM radio as part of the Radio Show technology conference, including the "Revitalizing AM Radio" panel, shown in the photo below at left, which was standing-room only. Participating in this panel were (shown in photo below at right, from left to right) moderator Ben Downs, Vice President and General Manager, Bryan Broadcasting Corporation, Glynn Walden, Sr. VP, Engineering, CBS Radio, Mark Denbo, Of Counsel, Telecommunications & Mass Media and Government and Regulatory Affairs, Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP, and Michael Cooney, Vice President of Engineering & CTO, Beasley Broadcast Group, Inc.



NextRadio – also on Wednesday, a session entitled “State of the FM-enabled Smartphone” was held, with Emmis Communications CTO Paul Brenner offering the industry a detailed update on the industry’s initiative with cellular carrier Sprint to make more FM-enabled smart phones available to consumers. Brenner said that since the launch of the [NextRadio app](#) in late August, there have been nearly 4,000 active users, adding that Sprint is very pleased with the results of this initiative to-date. Emmis CEO Jeff Smulyan was also on hand for the session to offer his insights and encouragement to the industry on this important project. NextRadio was also on the exhibit floor – shown in the photo below at left is Emmis Director of Product Development Ben Husmann (facing the camera), demonstrating the NextRadio app to a Show attendee. Shown in the photo at right are (from left to right) Paul Brenner and Jeff Smulyan giving NAB President and CEO Gordon Smith a briefing on the NextRadio initiative during his visit to the booth.



HD Radio developments - iBiquity Digital Corporation, the creators of HD Radio technology, hosted the largest exhibit on the show floor including five vehicles that were factory-equipped with HD Radio receivers – the 2014 Lexus IS 250 and 350, the 2014 Chevy Traverse, the 2014 Mitsubishi Outlander, and the 2014 Toyota Corolla. At this year’s Show, iBiquity launched a new [HDRadio.com](#) web site as well as the first-ever HD Radio Guide “app,” and in conjunction with this announced a nationwide car sweepstakes in the US. iBiquity has partnered with Scion to give away a [2013 FR-S](#) equipped with HD Radio Technology as part of the six and a half-week sweepstakes.

US residents will have three opportunities to fill out an entry into the sweepstakes, either by visiting [HDRadio.com](#), downloading the HD Radio Guide App, or by liking the ‘HD Radio’ Facebook page. Participants have until October 29 to



enter using at least one of the three entry methods above. The HD Radio Guide App is available by texting APP to 25859 or downloading it directly in the iTunes App store or the Google Play Android Market.

Additional announcements were made by iBiquity at the Show regarding the recent significant growth in HD Radio audience, receiver sales and digital broadcast services. According to [iBiquity](#), as the installed base of HD Radio receivers rapidly increases, so has listening to HD2/HD3/HD4 programming. Arbitron has reported in their Spring 2013 nationwide audience estimates that over 4 million people listen to an HD2, HD3 or HD4 channel in an average week. This represents a 238% increase in Average Quarter Hour audience from the Fall 2011 survey. During the same period, Cumulative audience grew at over 200%.

iBiquity is also reporting that HD Radio receiver sales growth has accelerated, with a new radio sold every 6 seconds. iBiquity estimates that almost 15 million HD Radio receivers have been sold, with over 12 million factory-installed in new cars or auto aftermarket units, noting in particular that:

- 33 car makers now include factory-installed HD Radio technology on 165+ different models;
- 80+ different models include HD Radio technology as standard equipment;
- An estimated 5 million HD Radio-equipped cars will be sold in 2013;
- About 30% of all new cars sold this year include HD Radio technology.

Regarding "Artist Experience," which enables stations to provide synchronized images such as album cover art with their audio programming, iBiquity reports that over the past year, broadcast groups large and small, including Beasley, Hubbard, Clear Channel, CBS, Emmis, Entercom, Bonneville, Journal, RTN, Merlin, Carter, Hall and Greater Media have all worked to implement Artist Experience on their stations. Currently some 500 stations are now supporting Artist Experience on over 900 digital broadcast programs nationwide. Artist Experience is now widely available in new HD Radio car receivers from BMW, Buick, Chevrolet, GMC, Lexus, Toyota and Volkswagen as well as in receivers made by CE manufacturers Alpine, JVC, Kenwood, Pioneer, SONY and Insignia.



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