

Cox partners Valpak with radio in Jacksonville. Cox Media Group is taking control of the Jacksonville market Valpak franchise from its corporate parent to begin cross-selling it with radio. The company believes there are sales synergies between the direct mail couponing business and the cluster of five radio stations in the Florida market. Market manager Bill Hendrich calls the deal a “perfect opportunity to cross-promote its business and extend the reach of its advertisers.” Valpak’s Jacksonville general manager Ken Harrivel will join Cox Media Group to continue running the day-to-day operation of the coupon business. Valpak currently mails its signature blue envelopes to 170,000 households in Jacksonville, made up of 17 zones consisting of 10,000 households each. That’s something that could be helpful if a Cox radio station is looking to boost its marketing efforts in key Zip codes.

Cracker Barrel feeds radio another success story. Radio will continue to be part of Cracker Barrel’s core media strategy. CEO Sandra Cochran says the restaurant chain will use spot radio to tell customers about menu “updates” and to drive home national cable television messages. “We continue to believe this media approach is working and contributed to our positive traffic performance,” she recently told investors. And while Cochran says the chain plans to expand digital media efforts, radio is still bringing people through the door. For instance, Cracker Barrel introduced a new line of salads in recent months, supporting the menu change with new radio creative. Cochran said the resulting sales “exceeded expectations.” The company — which operates 620 locations in 42 states — will continue to focus most of its radio ad spending on the December-January and May-July periods. “So while we do intend to run radio again in the fall, we won’t be running TV this quarter,” Cochran added.



A Syracuse morning show dust-up may test New York State’s non-compete ban. Since it was signed into law more than four years ago, New York’s ban on non-compete clauses for broadcast employees has been untested in the courts. But a brewing dust-up between Galaxy Communications and Cumulus Media over two Syracuse, NY morning show hosts may bring that challenge. Hunter Scott and Josh Grosvent exited Cumulus rock “95X” WAQX last week after they were unable to reach agreement with Cumulus on a new contract. Their previous deal expired at the end of August. The pair jumped to Galaxy Communications’ rival “K-Rock” WKRL-FM (100.9) and began broadcasting from their new home on Friday. Cumulus attorneys fired a cease-and-desist letter off to the personalities threatening legal action, but with the backing of Galaxy CEO Ed Levine the pair has remained on the air. In a letter sent to Cumulus yesterday, Galaxy’s legal team cites the 2008 Broadcast Employees Freedom to Work Act, which has now become part of New York’s labor code. Attorney John McGowan says attempts to claim a right of first refusal to match the Galaxy deal also “look a little silly” since the employees were never given the required 60-day notice that Cumulus was interested in renewing their deal. He also alleges the company “ignored” the personalities’ attempts to open new contract talks. And the letter goes on to say that Scott and Grosvent are unlikely to have any trade secrets about programming, sales or management strategies, and even if they did Galaxy has told them to keep them to themselves. “Slavery was outlawed 150 years ago in this country,” Galaxy CEO Ed Levine tells the Syracuse Post-Standard newspaper. “If 95X had done the right thing and offered a contract to these guys, they would still be at 95X.” Galaxy also airs the pair’s show on “K-Rock” sister WKLL (94.9) in the adjacent Utica, NY market. Cumulus didn’t respond to a request for comment.

Tom Langmyer exits WGN. After nearly eight years as general manager of news-talk “Radio 720” WGN, Chicago, Tom Langmyer exits the Tribune-owned station. “WGN is a very special place, and I’m very lucky to have spent nearly eight years as part of it,” he tells staff in a memo. Director of sales Jeff Hill has been named interim general manager. Langmyer joined WGN in 2005 after 13 years at CBS Radio’s “News Talk 1120” KMOX, St. Louis — first as program director, later rising to general manager. Langmyer previously worked in the Buffalo and Syracuse markets.

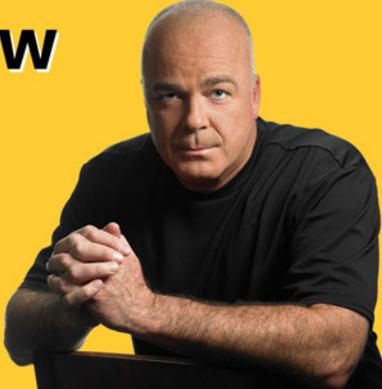
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