

New format, new DJs give WLOL ratings boost

WLOL-FM, with a big promotional push and a Top 40 format that recalls the good old days of rock 'n' roll radio, made a stunning leap in the local Arbitron ratings for March-June, improving 5.8 points to a 10.0 share.

Leaders WCCO-AM, with a 20 share, and KS95, at 12.2, both lost more than 2.5 share points, while third-place WLOL becomes only the third station in recent years to post a 10 share.

WDGY-AM, the country music leader in the market, also did well, improving by 2.1 to an 8.5. The fifth place station, Stereo 101 (KDWB-FM), was at 6.0, down 0.6.

Promotional director Jay Philpot of WLOL called his station's March-June performance "the largest gain I've seen in any market." He attributed the jump to a variety of elements.

"Promotion of the station, the acquisition



Rick Shefchik

of (disc jockeys) John Hines for mornings and Pete Thompson for afternoons, and our shift to a very current, mass-appeal format (helped the ratings)," Philpot said. "We made gains in all demographics, but particularly in men and women (age) 18-24 and 18-34.

"It looks like we pulled listeners from almost everybody. Adding what KQRS, 101, and KS95 dropped, it doesn't even compensate for our gain, so we pulled from other areas as well."

The figures that came out Thursday were

the Arbitron advances. The full breakdowns on cumulative listeners, day parts and age groups won't be available for several weeks, so a complete picture of local listening can't be drawn. But one thing can be predicted for sure.

"Our (advertising) rates will go up," Philpot said. He also said WLOL would not change its 10-records-in-a-row format to get more ads on the air. "Any radio station that does this well would be foolish to try to cash in by increasing the commercial time as well as raising the rates. The air sound will be improved, but the format will stay just the way it is."

While admitting there's "quite a bit of joy at the 'Cavern on Davern,'" Philpot realizes that coming out of the pack isn't the hardest thing to do in radio. Staying ahead is much harder.

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WLOL promotional director

"It's a victory, but the battle never ends," he said. "The biggest challenge is to maintain this 10 share. If we go back down to a five, everybody's going to say 'fluke.' It will take constant promotion. I know everybody here, and we're not going to sit down and say, 'We made it.'"

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