

For Immediate Release
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GOOD NEWS KEEPS GROWING FOR BLACK SHEEP RADIO Community Station WOOL wins grant and selection for full power.

“We couldn’t be happier,” said Gary Smith, president of Great Falls Community Broadcasting Company, the organization that operates WOOL. “Our community has pulled together and we have been richly rewarded for our efforts.”

This week, the radio station, operated almost entirely by volunteers, finally raised enough money to meet a generous challenge grant by an anonymous donor. In early May the grantor came forward with the offer to donate \$2000 if the station could raise another \$2000 by July 15. A series of fundraisers, capped by a fifth-anniversary Black Sheep Radio Block Party, raised the funds of nearly \$2800.00 and won the Challenge Grant for the station.

Smith notes that congratulations are tempered by reality, “While we are a long way from Easy Street, this funding helps us immensely and represents a significant portion of our annual budget.” WOOL will need every penny it can raise as it moves toward a new license to broadcast to a larger audience. The long wait for that move is nearly over.

This month, the organization crossed another hurdle in the years-long process of becoming a full-power Non-Commercial Educational station, a category of broadcast license considerably more powerful than their current LPFM license. They were selected by the FCC as the winning applicant for their new license from a pool of eight other area applicants. While the current LPFM license keeps the Black Sheep Radio signal confined to the region just around Bellows Falls, VT, and Walpole, NH, the new license should push their broadcasts much further in all directions as well as increase the reliability of reception in the immediate area. Once operating with the new license, WOOL will also broadcast in stereo for the first time since coming on air in 2005.

After a month-long comment period, during which the awarding of this permit can be debated by other applicants, the station hopes to receive its Construction Permit which will allow it to begin building the resources to go on air with their new NCE license sometime in 2011, it is hoped.

“We are in no way out of the woods yet,” cautions Smith, “this is a process that requires patience and persistence but also gives us time to unite our community as we go. Seeing people come together to achieve this amazing thing is a serious accomplishment in itself and I think we are all very proud of what’s happened.” Smith notes that there is no private ownership of this station or its licenses. What seems to have brought all these people together is a simple desire for a community voice in a media landscape that desperately needs one.

“We’re a very diverse group of people - the members and on-air hosts of Black Sheep Radio. Watching our progress together makes one think the good guys might still yet win.”

For more information about WOOL, Black Sheep Radio, and its accomplishments, contact Kristen Fehrenbach at kristen@blacksheepradio.org or at www.wool.fm.

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