

SPECIAL REPORT

# Painting The Airwaves Green

Forward-Thinking Broadcasters Embark On Environmentally Responsible Road **By Ken Tucker**

12

From artists building sustainable studios to labels creating biodegradable shrink wrap, to an environmentally responsible live venue, to Willie Nelson's biodiesel fuel, to this summer's Live Earth concerts, the music business is definitely starting down the green path. But what about radio? A few broadcasters are taking steps on the environmentally conscious road.

In February, CBS Radio flipped classic rock WARW (the Arrow)/Washington to triple A WTGB (the Globe). In addition to musical changes, the station began using its airwaves and Web site to promote an environmentally friendly lifestyle.

Several months later, Clear Channel liberal talk KQKE (the Quake)/San Francisco kept its talk programming but added green elements and became KKGN (Green 96.0).

## Pro-Environment Partners

CBS Radio/Washington senior VP/market manager Michael Hughes says becoming a green station was a byproduct of a programming update that execs felt the former Arrow needed. "We started with a basic analysis in terms of the demographic appeal and where we needed to be to be successful," Hughes says.

The decision was made to move away from

classic rock and become something between a triple A and a classic rock station. "We wanted to update classic rock," Hughes says.

The result is an outlet that is "very D.C.-specific," Hughes says. "This is a very educated marketplace... that [is] very open-minded when it comes to music."

While brainstorming the dimensions of what the new station would be, afternoon jock Cerphe, a market veteran who along with his wife has long lived a green lifestyle, suggested the station take a green approach as well. The idea made sense, Hughes says. "You're talking about a target audience that has children and are reading the daily headlines about what's happening to our planet."

Further brainstorming resulted in content ideas for on-air and the Web. "It just came together as one wonderful, beautiful, responsible package," Hughes says.

The station runs its transmitter via wind power using alternative energy credits through its local power company. "We're not leaning on coal-burning energy to power this thing," Hughes says. The station is also taking more pro-environment actions, such as asking staff to bring in their own coffee mugs instead of using throwaway cups. The Globe's two station vehicles are hybrids.

Like its listeners, WTGB has a ways to go when it comes to environmental consciousness. "We don't yet have an offsetting carbon footprint," Hughes says, referring to the practice of compensating for carbon dioxide emissions produced with an equivalent carbon dioxide saving. "We're headed there. This is a process."

The Globe has no shortage of sources for the tips it shares on-air and on the Web. The D.C. area is home to a number of organizations including the Sierra Club, the National Geographic Society and the Green Building Institute. "They've be-

## The Greening Of Emmis/New York

Emmis/New York recently launched "Project Green" on its three properties and their accompanying Web sites. The stations involved—rhythmic WQHT (Hot 97), urban AC WRKS (Kiss FM) and smooth jazz WQCD (CD101.9)—will now have dedicated, road-blocked green programming on the first Friday of every month. The project includes on-air interviews with artists about their favorite environmental initiatives, information tips on energy efficiency and recycling, and spotlights on those who make a conscious effort to improve the environment.

The stations will also feature green content online and be involved with grass-roots community efforts, includ-

ing giving away energy-efficient light bulbs, cleaning up waste in parks, planting trees and composting.

There's an advertising component as well. Emmis has launched a customized program for advertising clients that support the cause and want consumers to know it.

Senior VP/market manager Dan Halyburton says the idea came from a cross-department brainstorming session. And while it's still early in the solicitation process, he says, "Early client reaction is positive. We expect it to have a positive sales impact."

On the homefront, the station group has started an internal recycling effort,

and will look into flex fuel, hybrid station vehicles and using products made of recycled materials.

"Of course, we will encourage our radio competitors to join in by reducing their transmitter power output," Halyburton jokes.

The initiative is a learning process, he says. "We outfitted the Hot 97 control room with new, high-tech LED flood lights. They were very pricey, but it was too dark. You couldn't read anything."

The initiative is a long-term commitment, and the stations won't beat listeners over the head with the green message, according to Halyburton. "It's about education and higher awareness." —KT



Volunteers at KMTT (the Mountain) Seattle's summer concert series let concertgoers know which items could go in the recycling bin and which into composting.

come partners," Hughes says.

The station has also become a forum for businesses interested in reaching an audience "with a bit of a conscience," Hughes says. In fact, he says the Globe has picked up 60 new advertisers that want to reach a like-minded audience. "Some on a smaller scale, some on a larger scale," he says, citing hybrid automobile advertising and fair-trade coffee as examples.

Hughes is particularly proud that advertisers stayed through the flip. "There were no cancellations when we made the change. This was really presented as an evolution of the radio station. The appeal was not going to be much different from a demographic standpoint than what we were doing before. It may migrate a little younger, but it's not hugely different."

While the station did ultimately lose a few advertisers, Hughes says that "attrition is part of what every radio station faces."

As committed as the station is to its green initiative, the Globe still needs to entertain. "People aren't going to come to your radio station because you're green," Hughes says. "It's still about entertaining. It's still about the music and the personalities and all the things that we do to make a radio station great. We happen to think a going green position is part of that."

The Globe's message about being environmentally conscious is "not in your face," Hughes says. "It's not about making you feel guilty." Instead it's more about letting listeners know that being green is "actually easier than you think."

WTGB is careful not to come across as having all the answers or being the be-all and end-all when it comes to environmental consciousness. "We're not militant about it. We're just inviting lis-



WTGB (the Globe)/Washington has two hybrid station vehicles, including this Toyota Highlander.

teners on a journey to live more responsibly," Hughes says. Listeners are encouraged to share their tips as well.

"If we can motivate just 1% of our cume, the cumulative effect of all these little things has an immense positive effect," Hughes adds. "It just becomes a gradual escalation in activity. I've seen it personally . . . with our staff."

The station was involved in Earth Day and co-promoted the D.C. Green Festival, which attracted 20,000 visitors, according to Hughes.

The CBS/Washington cluster is also joining the movement. "Operationally our stations are starting to embrace more responsibility," Hughes says. "We're taking heed of the tips that the Globe shares."

### Natural Evolution in San Francisco

When KQKE (the Quake)/San Francisco decided to reposition itself as KQGN (Green 960) it was a natural evolution of the station's programming, according to PD Bob Agnew.

Launched three years ago as an Air America *Continued on page 14*

## Digital Distribution Reduces Waste

Record companies and radio stations are part of the green movement whether they realize it or not. By using such digital distribution services as Digital Media Distribution System (DMDS) and Play MPE, companies are helping protect the environment by eliminating the waste CDs create and the gas emissions caused by the delivery of those discs.

CDs are made from many nonrenewable materials—polycarbonate, lacquer, dyes and various metals including aluminum, gold, silver and titanium. The CDs are often packaged in a plastic jewel case, bubble-wrapped and shipped many miles, burning nonrenewable fossil fuel resources, as well as polluting the environment.

Although an individual may keep a CD for 20 years, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, a CD has a four-year life span and a 2% damage rate during the recording process. About 1 billion CDs weighing almost 20,000 tons are discarded annually in North America, and they do not disintegrate.

While the jury may still be out on whether commercial digital downloads a la iTunes make a difference environmentally—consumers are buying fewer CDs at record stores, but they're buying more blank recordable CDs to burn their own discs from music acquired digitally—CD-pros become expendable as soon as the song is loaded into a station's hard drive. "We're completely eliminating the need for CD-pros," DMDS chairman/COO Cliff Hunt says.

Toronto-based Hunt says that he believes the Canadian music industry is the only one in the world that no longer manufactures CD-pros, instead relying solely on digital distribution. —KT

## Green Mountain

Entercom triple A KMTT (the Mountain)/Seattle has been raising money for the Wilderness Society for the past 13 years with its "Live From the Mountain Music Lounge" CD collection. Through CD sales and the station's annual Earth Day concert, Mountain listeners have contributed more than \$1.2 million to the Wilderness Society, which is used for local protection and conservation efforts.

Damien Rice and Brett Dennon played the sold-out Earth Day concert April 24 at Seattle's Benaroya Hall, which was made carbon neutral (including the estimated driv-

ing emissions for listeners) by strategic sponsors and partnerships. "We used the sponsor mentions as a platform for informing our audience about carbon footprints and had a half dozen or so green clients on-site supporting the cause on a local level," the station's Dan O'Shea says.

The station took a similar tack with its Marymoor Concert Series—12 shows at local outdoor venue Marymoor Park. Through a cooperative arrangement with event organizers and venue management, as well as sponsors and local government, concertgoers were offered recycling oppor-

tunities, including food composting. "We were able to collect 45 cubic yards of food waste, which did not go to a landfill but instead to a composting facility," O'Shea says. "That's about 22 standard-size pickup trucks full of waste diverted from a landfill."

Preferred parking for the concerts was provided for hybrids and biodiesel vehicles.

The station, which prints its business cards on recycled paper, has also launched "green pages" on its Web site, which are meant to be a resource for the community to learn more about the topics discussed on-air. —KT



Food composting and recycling bins at KMTT (the Mountain) Seattle's summer concert series.