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## Radio DAYS

'Romance' with airwaves leads to station purchase

By Tom Henderson  
staff writer

Dale Rands, the chief executive officer of Federal Enterprises, may be a budding media mogul but not because of a lifelong desire to own and operate TV and radio stations. In fact, Federal began operation as Federal Asphalt Products Co. The firm went from selling shingles to selling jingles in 1985 only because WWJ radio came up for sale at a time when Federal was looking to convert cash into more concrete assets.

WWJ-AM and its sister station, WJOL-FM, came on the market when Gannett bought the Detroit News from the Evening News Association. Federal laws limit newspaper, radio and TV operations in a single market by a single owner, requiring Gannett to sell its radio properties here.

"We had been looking to expand (Federal Asphalt) and use our liquidity as a vehicle to acquire one or more businesses," said Rands recently from Federal's new offices in the Galleria on Northwestern Highway in Southfield. "We got into radio and TV quite by accident."

WHEN THE SOUTHFIELD radio stations went up for sale, Federal put in a winning bid of \$30.5 million. One reason Rands and his major partners, fellow law partners Larry and Joseph Jackler and prominent Birmingham investor David

Hermelin -- made the bid was their belief that area stations were undervalued. That has subsequently been shown to be true in the sale of other stations at ever-escalating prices.

Another reason for the bid had to do with a more romantic reason than bottom lines.

"We were all Detroiters, and WWJ was really synonymous with Detroit," said Rands. "When we made the decision to buy WWJ, one of the big factors was it was so identified with the Detroit community. There certainly was a lot more romance to buying a prominent property in Detroit than there was in buying a property somewhere else."

RANDS, 44, a Southfield resident, grew up in Detroit. He remembers listening to "Bob Reynolds' sports show on the bus home from Cranbrook each night. When asked to name others he listened to, Rands quickly reels off the names of such legendary disc jockeys as Ed McKenzie, Tom Clay and Mickey Shorr. "I remember I was in college when J.P. McCarthy came to Detroit."

So, though the acquisition was made on sound business principles, there are other reasons for being glad for having made it. Yet, though Rands admits to being a longtime radio buff, he will not interfere in the day-to-day operations of his stations.

"I'd be the first one to tell you that



JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer

Dale Rands: "When we made the decision to buy WWJ, one of the big factors was it was so identified with the Detroit community. There certainly was a lot more romance to buying a prominent property in Detroit than there was in buying a property somewhere else."

we have a lot more competent people to run the radio stations than me," he says. "At WWJ we have the best sounding all-news station anywhere, and we think the FM station is equally good in its format, which is easy listening."

RANDS IS ON leave from the Southfield law firm of Schluske, Lifton, Simon, Rands, Galvin and Jackler, where he had specialized in acquisitions and corporate law.

"At this point, this is a career

change," he said. He will oversee Federal's continued activity in acquiring radio and TV stations.

"Federal is no longer in any other business," he says.

Federal, a privately held company of about 250 stockholders, has acquired WMCA-AM in New York and is negotiating to buy two TV stations in the U.S.

"We have no present plans to go public at this time, but it's certainly not out of the question. If the oppor-

tunity presented itself, we would consider it," said Rands. "It's a means of raising capital. When making acquisitions, it's an option to consider."

RANDS, a former teacher of accounting and business law at the Detroit Institute of Technology, is a past president (at 39) of Franklin Hills Country Club and is the first president of The Orchards Children's Services, a non-profit group providing residential and foster care

for about 175 emotionally disturbed or abandoned children in southeastern Michigan.

For three years, Rands and his wife, Nanci, have co-chaired the annual Night for Sight benefit for the Eye Research Institute in Boston. Last December's benefit at the Hyatt Regency in Dearborn raised about \$100,000, according to Rands.

Nanci owns Nanci J. Rands Realty in Orchard Lake. Their daughter, Meredith, attends the University of Wisconsin.

## Right to Know Law called confusing but necessary

By Tom Henderson  
staff writer

As of Feb. 25, all employers in Michigan were required by the state's Right to Know Law to provide their workers with detailed information on all hazardous chemicals in the workplace.

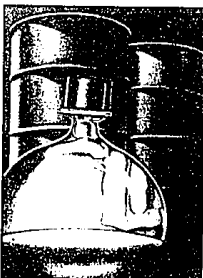
The law has been a mixing blessing for area fire departments, which under the law are required to gather information from businesses in their communities on the types and amounts of chemicals they use, make or store.

Firefighters have more information than ever on what to expect in fighting a fire at a specific location, but gathering the information has been confusing and time consuming.

The state law leaves it up to individual departments to determine how much information to gather, in what detail and how to gather it.

And the law has often been a nightmare of paperwork for many area businesses.

"This is worse than the IRS' W-4 forms," said Donna Barlow, secretary treasurer of Product-Sol Inc., a manufacturer of industrial solvents and chemicals that has spent 2000



person hours filling out the forms for the Birmingham fire department.

YET, AS EXPENSIVE and tedious as the form-filling has been, Barlow readily acknowledges the necessity of such a law and of protecting the workers who handle the chemicals and the firefighters who one day may need to put a fire out.

"The right to know is very valid,"

said Barlow. "In the past, you could tell a man to pick up a drum and mix it with another without telling him what he was picking up. I think a man should know what he's working with."

"But it has created monumental paperwork. We hired a young chemist, and that's all she does eight hours a day. We've got a qualified chemist who's almost a typist. We're hoping to see a light at the end of the tunnel. It's something that's long overdue, but they could have done it on a more efficient scale in a slower way."

Barlow estimates that her company has so far filled out 500 forms, each complete with the name of a product and detailed information on its chemical properties and potential for damage.

Birmingham fire chief Gary Whitener said the information from Product-Sol so far fills a pair of two-inch thick notebooks.

THE PAPERWORK consists of what is known as material safety data sheets (MSDS). Some communities like Garden City have sent out

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## Troy art director wins poster contest

The creative art director of a Troy communications company has been named the winner of the Small Business Administration's Small Business Week poster contest.

Stacey Skoglund of MVP Communications won the \$2,000 prize and will leave for Washington Saturday to participate in Small Business Week to be celebrated May 10-16.

Skoglund, 23, entered the contest as an assignment for a graphics art class while still a student at Wayne State University. She had one week to design the poster, incorporating the theme "America's growth industry" into the project.

"It was difficult," Skoglund said of the assignment. "I expanded on the theme, using the idea that just as the roots are the beginning of a tree, small business is the beginning of industry."

Although she is pleased with winning the contest, she says the reproduction released by the SBA distorts the artwork's dimensions. Her poster, 16 by 20 inches, is done in shades of fuchsia.

SKOGLUND IS no stranger to art competition. As a student at Mott High School in Warren, she won an honorable mention for her illustration of a swan in a contest sponsored by Cranbrook Academy of Art.

Skoglund of Warren graduated from WSU in December. At MVP, she designs computer graphics for print and video productions.

The WSU art department was given the Best School Award for overall achievement by the SBA.

For a look at local Small Business Week events, see Mary DiPaolo's column on Page 4.

### TEACHERS WANTED

In the next several years Michigan will be up against a major problem...a teacher shortage...and when a shortage occurs, quality can suffer. What's being done to make sure your children will get the quality of education they deserve? Join Debra Silberstein for a special report.

Thursday 5pm

NEWS 4

It's what people around here watch.

Small Business Week '87

MAY 10-16

SMALL BUSINESS AMERICA'S GROWTH INDUSTRY