

WDET

Radio station asks listeners' support

By Brenda Dooley
staff writer

Listeners are WDET-FM's lifeblood.

And this is the time of year Wayne State University's public radio station calls on its audience for support.

Winding down the station's semi-annual, fall fund-raising campaign, WDET staff members and volunteers — numbering 500 — hoped to raise \$380,000 from listeners.

Midway through the campaign, station officials said their goal was within reach. Just where does all the money go?

Say the words "public radio" and most people conjure images of small, student-run operations financed mostly by universities and grants.

But that's not the way it is at WDET.

"People have this myth about public radio," said Judy Adams, WDET's program director. "We are not college students by any means. About 99 percent of our hosts are on the payroll. We have professional announcers and professional news people — we're far from a student staff."

ADAMS IS quick to point out "it costs just as much money to run a public station as it does a commercial station."

"But we can't bill people."



"All Things Considered" host Nkenge Zola.



Robert Jones, host of "Blues from the Lowlands" and director of Detroit Radio Information Service.

Adams said. "So we have to use an honor system."

Adams said WDET pays \$100,000 annually in membership dues to National Public Radio. The station also spends thousands of dollars in addition for NPR programs.

But that's not all. Adams said it costs \$30,000 a year to distribute programs such as "Ed Love's Evolution of Jazz" over the satellite. Other costs include maintaining an extensive compact disc library and paying musicians who play in the popular Saturday night broadcast "Detroit Jazz Alive."

A large portion of the money raised by the station this year also will be used to buy a \$200,000 tower that will hold a powerful new radio antenna, Adams said.

"Not only that, but the electric bill alone is thousands of dollars."

To stay on the air, WDET appeals to its listeners twice a year, in fund-raisers every spring and fall. The most recent on-air pledge drive was Nov. 9-18.

LISTENER contributions account for 53 percent of the station's operating budget, Adams said. But traditionally just 8 percent of WDET listeners call in pledges.

More than 40 percent of WDET's listeners live in Oakland County, in the communities of Birmingham, West Bloomfield, Troy, Southfield, Rochester and Farmington, just to name a few.

"The majority of our listeners are better educated than the average radio audience, and their income bracket is generally higher, which you tend to find in Oakland County. But we also get listenership from Detroit, Ann Arbor and the southeastern suburban areas."

WDET's audience has quadrupled since 1984, when the station's format changed from a mostly classical and jazz format to a wide variety of programming, Adams said.

As the radio attracts more listeners, station officials stepped up their fund-raising efforts. This fall's \$380,000 pledge drive goal, for example, was higher than in previous years.

Other sources of financial support, which account for 47 percent of the station's budget, are co-sponsorships, grants, gifts from corporations and Wayne State University.



Ed Love, host of the Ed Love Program and the Evolution of Jazz.

JOANNE M. DOMKA

SEVERAL COMPANIES underwrite programs by contributing to WDET but targeted the money for a specific program.

Underwriters to WDET programs include Hudson's, Ameritech, Unisys, Harmony House, Erb Lumber, Detroit Edison, Borders Book Shop, Dana, Beresh Jewelers, It's the Ritz in Birmingham, Northwest Airlines and Union Street Saloon.

"All of our income comes from contributions," Whitney said.

In addition to the pledge drives, WDET appeals to listeners by seeking contributions by mail, conducting telemarketing surveys and including pledge forms in program guides.

Listeners see their money at work simply by tuning into the station's diverse programming schedule.

"Most people appreciate a wide variety of music and programs," Adams said. "Our programming has to be geared to everyone. We try to bring people together because the airwaves are open to everyone. Every listener is equally important to us."

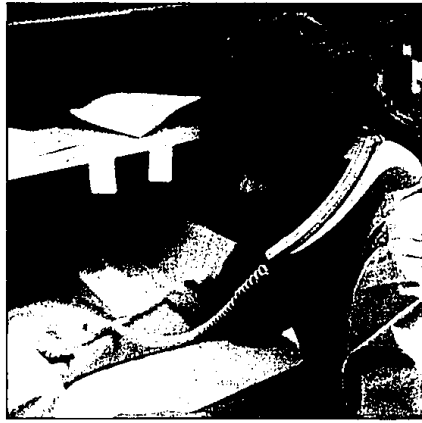


PHOTO BY ANN HEALY

Phone volunteer Norm Doerr was one of many helping fill out WDET pledge cards.




JIM JAGOFFELD/staff photographer

Tie One On

Dick Isham, vice president and general manager of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, ties a red ribbon onto a company truck in support of safe driving during the upcoming holiday season. The O&E Newspapers are one of the corporate co-sponsors of the Mothers Against Drunk Driving safe driving

campaign. They are distributing the red ribbons in all editions of today's newspaper in cooperation with MADD and the volunteers of GM, UAW No. 483 Jobs Bank. Additional red ribbons are available in the lobbies of all five offices of the O&E Newspapers or by calling 591-2300, Ext. 441.



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Hills studies condo services

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Following a number of complaints from Farmington Hills condominium associations, city officials are studying what city services should be offered to the mostly private subdivisions.

With the growing number of condominium communities in the Hills, complaints have also grown about the lack of city services that are offered to other, single family home neighborhoods.

"The issue was never reviewed before, but it will be. The city just hasn't done it," said city manager William Costick, responding to a request from the Crosswinds Condominium Association, who appeared before the city council Nov. 12. "This is an issue that should be rethought."

Costick said he would ask the city council to address the issue in a study session in the near future, and that a decision would likely be made after the first of the year. Discussion will center around whether to consider garbage removal for condominium communities, and even whether to make the streets public.

Most condominium communities built their own self-contained communities with private streets, and con-

tract privately for garbage, snow removal and road repairs.

Condominiums have become popular over the past decade, offering residents ownership in their homes, but a combined ownership in the grounds and other common areas. Residents pay a monthly maintenance fee to handle common expenses.

One of the major setbacks to any consideration is that most condominium roads are not built to city specifications, such as width, Costick said. Another concern are the growing costs of city services. Costick estimated it could cost upwards of \$500,000 per year to service the city's condominium communities for garbage services.

The city has "four or five times" the number of condominium communities than what it had in 1980, he said.

City attorney John Donohue said the city's current policy of not providing services in condominium associations was challenged and upheld in the courts in the 1970s. "But that doesn't mean the policy can't be changed," he added.

Councilman Aldo Vagorzi said the discussion would be a good idea, especially with the city encouraging recycling efforts and beginning a curbside recycling program this summer.