



Merry Christmas! Happy Hannukah!

December 2025 #14



First we want to wish every one of you a very Merry Christmas and Hannukah.

December brings us one new member. He is James Laratta (KD4ARJ). James lives in Chesapeake, VA. Welcome to the WTFDA, James!

THE CONTEST! Just when you forgot that WTFDA does contests, WTFDA does another contest. The big prize this time is an Airspy HF+ Discovery with three runner up prizes. All you have to do is read the contest details, do what they ask you to do (which is really easy) and wait for the drawing, which should be sometime before the first of the year. Read the complete rules and details elsewhere in this issue of Line of Sight.



THE DXERS. This is a photo of two WTFDA members I wanted to run ever since I found it on Facebook in October. The guy on the left is Bob Hawkins and the taller one of the right is legendary.

Perhaps you've heard of the Bolin Phase Box or maybe you're like me and own a Bolin Phase Box. That dxer's name is Andy Bolin and he's the one who built them for us. Andy is the guy who introduced FM Dxing via antenna phasing, a method that really helped FM Dxers in urban areas log new stations with a minimum of cursing. As a caption to this

photo, Bob wrote: "We have been listening to distant TV and FM signals since 1970. This is his "DX Shack", which has changed little over the decades." I have to say that my jaw dropped when I saw those reel-to-reel tape decks. I haven't owned one for at least 25 years, and yet here are six of them, if I counted correctly. No cassette decks; no mp3s. Look at those analog tuners! And was that a Sony ST-5130 just above Bob's head? No, it can't be.

Bob, by the way, is the owner of the TV&FM Dxing group on Facebook, a group I originally started but handed over to Bob a few years back. That group is doing well, now with over a thousand Facebook users.



December. It's that time of the year when rotors in the north begin to freeze up when the outside temperature drops below freezing and they don't work right again until April. Bah!

See you next month with the contest results!

-Mike



WHAT RADIO STATION PLAYS CHRISTMAS MUSIC?

Get into the spirit of the season with timeless classics and merry melodies.



The 2025 WTFDA Holiday Radio Station Prize Giveaway Contest

One entry will WIN a cool prize!

Three runners up will win
a swag package from MeTV FM!

DEADLINE

December 21st
@ Midnight EST

Submit your entry to
jim@wtfda.org

STEP ONE

Find local FM stations playing
non stop holiday tunes

STEP TWO

Submit your list of stations for
the Holiday Radio Station Contest
and you're automatically entered
for a chance to win a prize!

FM100.3
BETTER MUSIC BETTER HOLIDAY

103.9 Wayne FM
THE CHRISTMAS STATION

105.9 KGBX
The Christmas Music Station

REWIND 92.1
Modern's 24/7 Music Station

iHEART CHRISTMAS

98.5 TRY
GREATEST HITS OF CHRISTMAS

FCC GRANTS AND ACTIONS

From fcc.today and the FCC

December 2025

AK	KRAK	102.1	Anchorage	ex KTMB
AL	W254DK	99.3	Valley Head	license cancelled (along with WQRX-AM)
AL	WHGR	91.5	Hurtsboro	mod, 43kw/50m, 32-13-12 85-31-35
AL	W220BI	91.9	Eufaula	Ex 91.3 (W217CM)
AL	W247AT	97.3	Huntsville	Silent 9/1/25 pending completion of construction
AZ	KVGS	102.7	Meadville	was KCYE
CA	KWJE	101.3	Barstow	resumed ops.
CA	KFUT	89.5	Twain Harte	mod,
CA	K281CV	104.1	Fort Bragg	Silent 9/19/25 financial problems
FL	WNRH-LP	107.9	New Port Richey	mod, 100w, 21-10-34 82-44-28
FL	NEW	93.3	Ocala	mod, 11w, 29-10-38 82-08-41 (788397)
FL	NEW	93.3	Ocala	mod, 100w, 29-10-38 82-08-41 (788224)
FL	WFRH-LP	99.5	Miami	initial calls
FL	WLPY-LP	90.1	Homestead	initial calls
GA	WEGG	95.3	Royston	mod, 33kw/137m, 34-15-01 83-07-24
IL	W229BU	93.7	Quincy	license cancelled
IN	WLPU	91.1	Battle Ground	mod, 900w/71m, 40-31-20 86-58-57
KY	WXKY	96.3	Stanford	Mod, 4.5kw/240m, 37-31-20 84-52-13
KY	WKYY	89.1	Beaver Dam	ex WBGN
MA	WMVC	91.5	Edgartown	resumed ops.
MA	WEIB	106.3	Northampton	Silent 4/25/25 financial issues. Only now filed an STA.
MD	WDCJ	92.7	Prince Frederick	requests WPRS
MD	WLNO	92.7	Prince Frederick	ex WPRS
ME	W252DS	98.3	Rumford	license cancelled
MI	WHHQ-LP	97.7	Escabana	initial calls
MO	KOLP	90.5	Windsor	resumed ops.
NE	K218DL	91.5	Scottsbluff	change primary to KHRI-HD2 (R. Nueva Vida)
NH	WWBJ	88.5	Hillsboro	initial calls (WWBJ-LP deleted)
NJ	NEW	107.9	Atlantic City	new cp, 100w/29m, 39-21-09 73-26-40 (788673)
NJ	NEW	107.9	Atlantic City	new cp, 100w/28m, 39-21-45 74-25-07 (788210)

NV	KCYE	107.9	Boulder City	was KVGS
NV	KVKL-FM1	91.1	Las Vegas	license cancelled
NY	WTEV-LP	93.1	Andes	mod, 100w, 42-11-30 74-47-07
NY	WINO	91.9	Watkins Glen	resumed ops.
NY	WOBI	89.7	Oak Beach	mod, 150w/11m, 40-38-04 73-19-55
NY	W248CG	97.5	New York	mod, 75w, 40-42-19 74-00-33
OH	WWBJ-LP	92.1	Hillsboro	license cancelled
OK	KOKT-LP	90.1	Tulsa	Silent 11/17/25 transmitter & financial issues
OK	KXBL	98.5	Tulsa	ex KVOO-FM
OK	KVOO-FM	99.5	Henryetta	ex KXBL
OR	KCBP	90.9	Warrenton	Silent 10/1, loss of funding
OR	K215CR	90.9	The Dalles	change primary to KHRI 90.7 (Air1)
PR	WZET	92.1	Hormiqueros	Silent 10/28 equipment damage
PR	WJVP-FM2	103.3	Fajardo	license cancelled
RI	WQNP	88.5	Narragansett	silent STA extended, lost site
TX	KWAH	95.5	Ennis	requests KNHR-LP
TX	NEW	91.9	Gonzales	mod, 11kw/37m, 29-30-36 97-24-52
TX	KHID	88.1	McAllen	resumed ops.
TX	KGZT	91.9	Gonzales	initial calls
UT	KXQX	97.5	Bigwater	mod, 3.2kw/303m, 37-00-37 111-40-51
UT	KXUT	93.1	Orderville	mod, 17kw/574m, 37-17-43 112-50-45
WA	NEW	89.3	Cathlamet	mod, 550w-H/547m, 46-27-51 122-33-11



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TV DX and Photos

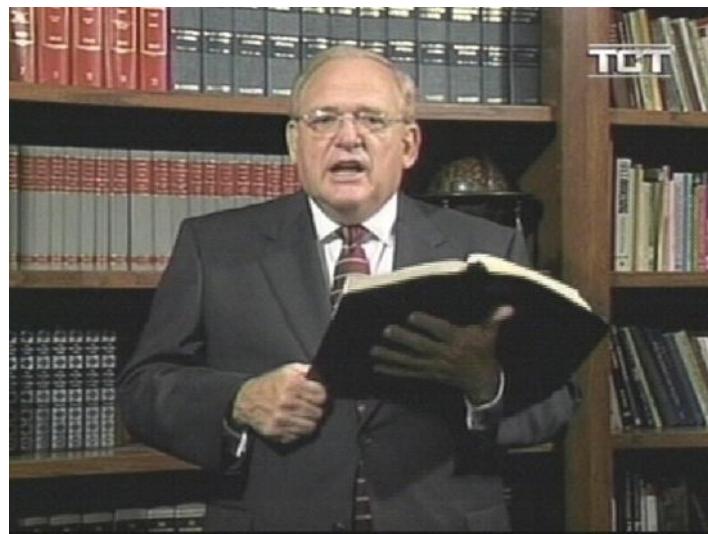
Eric Bueneman N0UIH 631 Coachway Ln, Hazelwood, MO 63042-1347
Email: n0uiheric@gmail.com - Deadline the 10th of the month



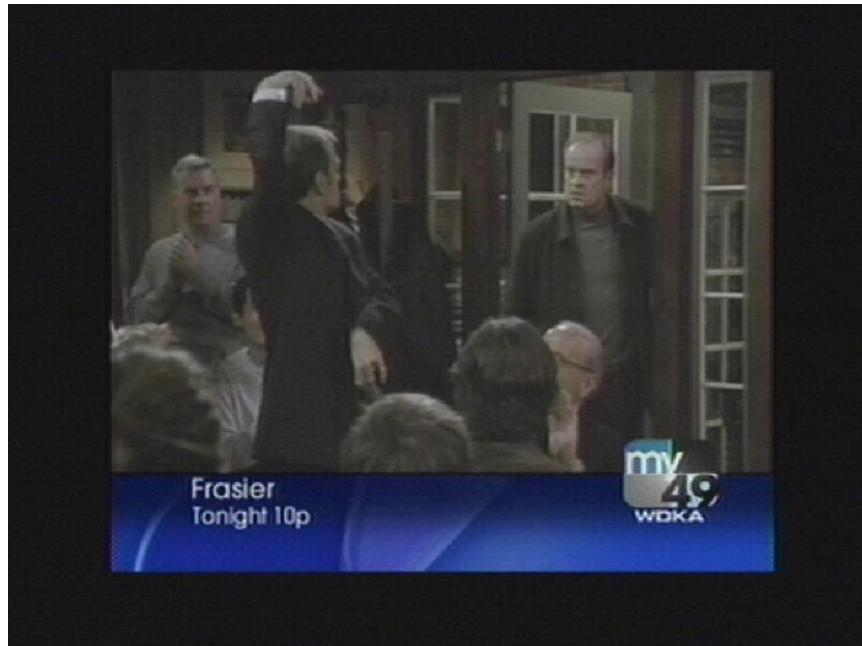
This month, I will be profiling the best video captures from my fourth year of DTV DXing, 2008, the final year before the completion of the digital transition for full power stations.



KNLJ 20 (25) Jefferson City, MO
100 miles (161 km) tropo
Seen July 31, 2008
(Station is now KFDR)



WTCT 17 (27) Marion, IL
100 miles (161 km) tropo
Seen July 31, 2008
(Now on RF 30)



WDKA 50 (49) Paducah, KY

155 miles (249 km) tropo

Seen July 31, 2008

(Now on RF 25)



WFIE 46 (14) Evansville, IN

165 miles (266 km) tropo

Seen August 3, 2008

(Seen in null of WRBU analog, WFIE now on RF 26)



KOZK 23 (21) Springfield, MO
195 miles (314 km) tropo
Seen July 31, 2008
(Now on RF 16)



KSFX 28 (27) Springfield, MO
195 miles (314 km) tropo
Seen July 31, 2008
(Now KOZL on RF 22; RF 28 used for ATSC 3.0 service)



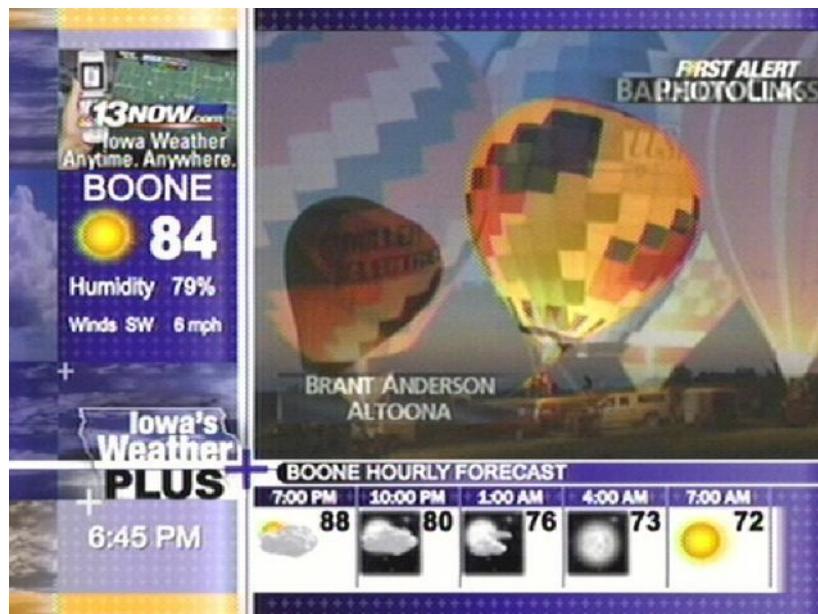
KSMO 47 (62) Kansas City, MO
225 miles (362 km) tropo
Seen July 31, 2008
(Now on RF 32; local WRBU nulled)



WDAF 34 (4) Kansas City, MO
225 miles (362 km) tropo
Seen July 31, 2008



WMAQ 29 (5) Chicago, IL
255 miles (410 km) tropo
Seen August 3, 2008
(Now on RF 33, sharing with WSNS)



WHO 19.2 (13.2) Des Moines, IA
255 miles (410 km) tropo
Seen July 31, 2008
(Now on RF 13)

In the next edition, I'll take a look back at 2009, the year of the completion of the digital transition for full power stations. December is a good month for off-season tropo...December 26-27 marks 31 years since that huge tropo opening into Michigan and SW Ontario from my location. I look forward to your logs and photos! 73 and good DX from the Florissant Valley Dial Twister.

Are Preamps Needed for FM Reception?

AND IF NOT, WHY NOT?

For most users, **preamps are not necessary** for FM reception. In fact, adding one can often degrade your signal quality rather than improve it.

A preamp (RF preamplifier) is generally only required in specific "fringe" scenarios where you need to overcome signal loss from long cable runs or splitters.

Here is the detailed breakdown of why they are usually unnecessary and when they might actually be needed.

Why Preamps Are Often Unnecessary (The "Why Not")

If you are struggling with static or poor reception, your instinct might be to "boost" the signal. However, a preamp is not a magic wand that cleans up a signal; it is a "dumb" device that amplifies everything fed into it—including the noise.

1. You cannot amplify what isn't there

A preamp cannot create a signal. If your antenna is not picking up a usable signal from the air, the preamp will simply amplify the static (noise) along with the faint signal, resulting in a louder version of the same static-filled audio.

2. Modern tuners are already sensitive

Most modern FM receivers and tuners already have high-sensitivity internal amplifiers. If your receiver can "hear" the background noise floor of the atmosphere, adding more gain (volume) in front of it won't uncover new stations; it will just shift the levels up.

3. The Risk of "Overload" (Desensitization)

This is the most common problem. FM broadcast signals are often very powerful (thousands of watts). If you live near any strong FM station, a preamp can be overwhelmed by that strong signal. This causes the amplifier to clip or distort, creating "ghost" signals across the dial (intermodulation distortion) and actually drowning out the weaker stations you are trying to hear.

4. The "FM Trap" Issue

If you buy a generic "TV Antenna Preamp" from a hardware store, it may actively block FM radio.2 TV signal amplifiers often include an FM Trap—a filter designed specifically to kill FM radio signals so they don't interfere with TV channels (VHF 6 and 7).3 If you use one of these, you will kill your FM reception completely.

When a Preamp IS Necessary

A preamp is useful in one specific role: **preserving a signal** that is about to travel through a long wire. It does not "pull in" signals; it pushes them down the line.

You likely need a preamp if:

- **You have a long cable run:** If your antenna is 50-100+ feet away from your radio (e.g., on a roof or tower), the coaxial cable itself absorbs some of the signal (attenuation). A preamp mounted at the antenna boosts the signal *before* it enters the cable, ensuring it survives the trip down to your radio.⁴
- **You are using splitters:** If one antenna is feeding 3 or 4 different radios in your house, the splitter cuts the signal strength significantly (cutting it in half or quarter). A distribution amp or preamp can compensate for this loss.
- **You are in a "Deep Fringe" area:** If you are 60+ miles from towers and using a high-gain directional antenna, a specialized "Low Noise Amplifier" (LNA) can help, provided its "Noise Figure" is lower than your receiver's internal specs.

Technical Note: Signal-to-Noise Ratio (SNR)

Reception is defined by the Signal-to-Noise Ratio (SNR).

- **Scenario A (No Preamp):** Antenna picks up (Signal + Noise). The cable reduces both slightly. The Radio receives both. **Result: Unchanged SNR.**
- **Scenario B (With Preamp):** Antenna picks up (Signal + Noise). Preamp adds its own internal electronic noise (Noise Figure).⁵ Then it amplifies everything. **Result: Worse SNR** (because you added the preamp's electronic noise to the mix).

Summary Checklist

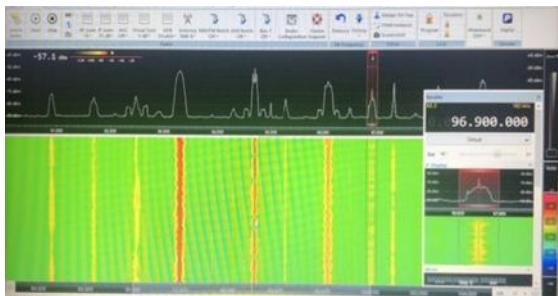
Scenario	Do you need a Preamp?
Indoor antenna (dipole/wire)	No. Move the antenna near a window instead.
Roof antenna, <50ft cable	No. High quality coaxial cable (RG6) is better.
Roof antenna, >100ft cable	Yes. To overcome cable loss.
Splitting to 3+ radios	Yes. To overcome splitter loss.
Living in a city / suburbs	No. High risk of signal overload.

Recommendation

If you are suffering from poor reception, **do not buy an amp yet.** Instead:

1. **Check your antenna:** An outdoor or attic-mounted directional antenna will always outperform an amplified indoor antenna.
2. **Check your cable:** Ensure you are using shielded RG6 coaxial cable rather than thin, older RG59 wire.
3. **Upgrade the Antenna:** A better antenna increases "Signal" without increasing "Noise." A preamp increases both.

Would you like me to recommend a specific type of passive antenna based on your distance from the broadcast towers?



Format Flips

and branding, too

John Zondlo - fmdxweb@cox.net

December 2025

AL

YoYoYo! W263BX Montgomery AL has gone from Rhythmic Throwbacks as “Yo 100.5” to Hip Hop as “Streamz 100.” The station is programmed based on music charting on streaming charts. They position themselves as “Powered by what you Play.” The station is fed by WQKS-HD2 96.1 Montgomery.

WBHM-HD2 and its translator, W291DC, both Birmingham, are now known as “106.1 The Hub.” The slogan is “Arts. Culture. Community.” with the station airing a mix of local and national shows. Me, I would’ve named it “106.1 The Blazer” since it’s owned by the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

AZ

A market without a K-Love or Air 1 station? I didn’t think it was possible, until EMF recently bought KTTI 95.1 and KQSR 100.9, both in Yuma. Watch for them to both be changing formats soon. The KQSR calls were once upon a time on 94.7 here in OKC, with a soft rock format.

GA

WMOY-LP 94.9 is now on in Dalton GA. The format is Spanish Religious.

ID

In Post Falls ID, KICC-LP 102.7 is now on the air with Religious programming.

LA

KJMG 97.3 Bastrop LA is ballyhooing a new format to launch after the holidays. What that will be is a good question. They’re currently playing Christmas music as “97.3 Wink FM.” The previous format was Adult R&B as “Majic 97.3.”

Here’s a radical change in Louisiana. KNOX 1450 and its translator, K240EY, both Natchitoches, have switched from Classic Country as “95.9 Kix Country” to Rhythmic Throwbacks as “95.9 The Bounce.” They bill themselves as “Natchitoches Home for Urban Vibes.” Only time will tell if they get bounced to another format.

MD

“98.3 The Seagull” sounds like a nice, relaxing format, eh? It’s now the name for WXQA-LP Barclay MD. The format is Classic Hits.

MI

Audacy now has a statewide sports network in Michigan known as the “97.1 Sports Radio Network.” It’s feeding “97.1 The Ticket” WXYT 97.1 Detroit to stations including WBCK 95.3 Battle Creek, WJIM 1240/W295BP 106.9 in Lansing, WFGR 98.7 Grand Rapids and WGRY 101.1 Roscommon.

Up in Cadillac, WLXV 96.7 is now simulcasting with WLXT 96.3 Petoskey. The format is Adult Contemporary, tho for now they’re both airing Christmas music.

Format Flips continues on page 14

TEF Talk

with Bill Hohnstein

There has been a variety of new small TEF6686 radios appearing lately. Rather than a normal looking TEF6686 IC being inside of them, most models have an IC-like module which hopefully has a TEF6686 inside. My tests have produced figures matching TEF6686's. I will start by reviewing the smallest one.



It is just 3-1/8" x 1-13/16" x 0.75" (+0.5" for the frequency adjust knob). All the NXP logos on the front and back panels plus the circuit board make me wonder if they were involved with the design and/or construction of it. NXP is the maker of the TEF6686 IC.

With the radio's small size comes a smaller display, knobs and battery. While the frequency adjust knob is reasonably sized, its volume and squelch controls and power switch are micro-sized. The battery is just 800 mAh and the speaker is that black module beside it. It won't win any audio fidelity contests, but it is reasonable under the circumstances. Rather than the normal 1¢ LED showing that its battery is being charged, it has a bar LED for that, leaving no doubt when it is lit.

While I originally called it the Front Controls model, the Clear Plastic Case version is probably a better name. While it obviously doesn't provide much shielding, it hasn't been much of a problem for my use. The fully shielded versions suffer from poor WiFi range due to their shielded WiFi antenna. The upgrade software appears to be a bit different for this model. I am currently investigating this.

The measured receive sensitivity figure surprised me. Of the 15 TEF6686 radio's that I have tested, it was one of the most sensitive ones tested. Its dynamic range was measured in the high typical TEF6686 range (much higher than the SDR radios).





I measured the radio's RDS sensitivity using my Si4713 test transmitter. That sensitivity was in the center of the excellent TEF6686 range. The RDS test info used is shown below.

This radio gets my thumbs up rating. What might make it two thumbs up is its current price on eBay: \$49.60 plus \$3.68 shipping. See: [TEF6686 DSP Radio ESP32 Full Band Radio FM/LW/MW/SW Radio Receiver 2.0" Display | eBay](#) Mine arrived from China in 12 days. Currently there are only 4 left available at that price. Others have it available at a bit higher prices. I I have more on other small TEF6686 models later.

Format Flips & Branding continues from page 12

MS

In Gulfport, Oldies "Cruisin" 1240 WGCM and its translator, W265DH 100.9, are now airing Rhythmic Throwbacks as "Hype 100.9." It's positioned as "South Mississippi's Hottest Throwbacks," featuring music mostly from this century.

NV

A couple stations in Vegas are exchanging dial positions. Hot AC KVGS has moved from 102.7 to 107.9, which is licensed to Meadview AZ, and Country KCYE moves to 102.7 Boulder City NV. Branding has also changed slightly, with KVGS now being "107.9 VGS," and KCYE calling itself "102.7 Coyote Country."

OR

KODL 1440 The Dalles has switched from Classic Country to News/Talk. It affects their translator, K264DF 100.7 The Dalles.

SD

Midwest Communications is shaking things up in Sioux Falls. KELO has moved from 101.9 to 95.7 and is airing Christmas music now, as it does yearly. Moving to 101.9 is KQSF as "Q101.9." 101.9 is licensed to Dell Rapids, with 95.7 calling Sioux Falls its CoL. Slight format changes also accompany the move. KELO goes from Hot AC to Adult Contemporary, and KQSF from AC to CHR.

TX

Tomball has welcomed KRLY-LP 104.5 to the air. It's on with a Variety format.

With January on the horizon, look for a lot of format changes after Christmas and as we begin the new year. And remember, the mid-winter Es season is nearly upon us. We had some great skip days last winter as December gave way to January. See you next month!

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Sources: Indianaradio.net, Northpine, RadioInsight, Hisair.net, LPFM Database, IRCA's DX Monitor, InsideRadio, RadioInk, and radio biz connections