



Heartland Communications Group - "One of America's Finest Small Market Radio Broadcasting Companies"

Dan Wheeler Joins Heartland



Jim Coursolle and Dan Wheeler

Former Iron Mountain Results Radio sales manager and Sovereign Communications Senior account Manager Dan Wheeler, 52, joins the Heartland Communications Group family as Vice President and General Manager of Iron River station WIKB (FM) and WFER (AM) effective February 9, 2012.

Dan has held management positions at such area firms as Coleman Engineering, Team Schierl Companies and Econo Foods in Iron Mountain. At Coleman he served as Business Development Manager, bringing the job/project to the client. Dan said, "My word is my greatest asset when it comes to dealing with clients." Jim Coursolle, Heartland President and CEO said, "Dan is all about customer service. He relates and serves customers better than just about anyone I have ever worked with in this business."

At Schierl, Dan held the position of store manager of the convenience store he led. Within two years of assuming that position, the store Dan managed became one of the best stores for gallons sold. At Econo Foods, Dan held several 4 management positions leading the Produce Department and Dairy and Frozen Foods Departments. In 2006, Dan joined the sales department for the Results Radio three station cluster in Iron Mountain where he became the Sales Manager. While in sales for the Iron Mountain Results stations he raised his goal percentage from 60 percent to 140 percent of goal.

After five years with Results, Dan then joined the sales team at Sovereign Communications in Iron Mountain where he became a leading salesperson. While in Iron Mountain, Dan has served on five different boards including The Dickinson County Chamber of Commerce, Dickinson County Economic Development Board, The Dickinson County Brownfield Authority, The Dickinson Area Partnership Board and The Dickinson County Builders Exchange. According to Dan, "To be recognized in these circles is crucial to any local marketing efforts." Dan is also involved in community ministry activities as a member of a local congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses.

"At Heartland we are very proud to welcome someone of Dan Wheeler's ability and competence to our Heartland Iron River family," said Jim Coursolle. "Dan succeeds Mike Eakin who did a terrific job reconditioning and upgrading an antiquated physical facility. Dan will now be able to take WIKB and WFER to new heights in the Iron County and Dickinson County area!"

Dan has been married to his wife Cindy for 29 years. They have four children ages 24, 22, 13 and 11. Cindy was born and raised in the Iron River area (Gaas-tra). The Heartland-owned radio stations include WIKB-FM and WFER-AM, Iron River, MI; WCQM-FM and WFPF-AM Park Falls, WI; WATW-AM, WBSZ-FM, WJH-FM and WNXR-FM. Ashland, WI and WRJO-FM and WERL-AM, Eagle River, WI. Many of the Heartland stations have been broadcast leaders in their communities for over 40 years.

Advantage Systems Helps the Heartland Stations Get "Interactive" with Advertisers



Frank Kulbertis
Advantage Systems

For the third consecutive year, Advantage Systems will be working with the stations of Heartland Communications this winter. However, there is a new twist to the Advantage Plan program this time around. Advantage Systems, Inc. has launched Advantage Systems Interactive (ASI) and is offering local advertisers their choice of a Text Messaging Campaign, two different Social Media products, Web Site Development, Mobile Web Design, or a Search Engine Optimization program as part of their annual radio advertising program.

"This goes far beyond a banner ad on the station web site or a post on the station Facebook page," says ASI's Vice President, Frank Kulbertis. "These are digital products and services designed specifically for each advertiser. We help them create their own database of potential customers. We show them how to deliver offers to their own fans and followers. We assist them in increasing exposure for their own web site. This is what advertisers really want. They want to tap into the sales opportunities available on the internet, in the social networks and via mobile phones. But, they are a little intimidated and that fear is often keeping them from taking the next step." Kulbertis serves as the program facilitator and presenter in all of the Heartland markets and adds, "The 2012 Advantage Plan presentation educates business decision-makers about the new media that are available today and explains how radio works very well with them. Then we show them a simple and affordable way to get the digital solutions they want and the advertising results they need. And, best of all, those solutions are being delivered through their local radio stations as part of the Advantage Plan."

The Advantage Plan program will be conducted in Ashland and Park Falls during the week of March 12 and in Eagle River and Iron River during the week of March 19.

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Heartland Communications Group LLC
909 North Railroad Street
Eagle River WI 54521
(715) 479-4451
Leslie Howell - Editor & Publisher
Jim Coursolle - President & CEO

Heartland Managers Become Vice Presidents

Scott Jaeger, Ashland, Darla Isham, Park Falls, Jim Hodges, Eagle River and Dan Wheeler, Iron River, MI have been named Vice Presidents of their respective markets and limited liability companies (LLC) according to Jim Coursolle, President and CEO of Heartland Communications Group LLC.

Coursolle stated that "Our four market managers will be taking on an additional role as vice president of their respective market LLCs. Each is an experienced leader and manager and this is the natural sequence for their careers."

"I am very proud of the high quality of leadership that each of our new V. P., and General Managers bring to the Heartland table. We are truly blessed with high quality and experienced leadership at Heartland," according to Coursolle Scott, Darla, Jim and Dan join CFO Deb Josephs, CPA and Jim Coursolle as the other LLC officers at Heartland.

"Pres. Release"

Jim Coursolle



Recently, I heard someone tell me, "I don't celebrate Valentine's Day." And I thought to myself, I'm not sure I do either, but I DO celebrate LOVE.

You don't have to go out and buy expensive flowers that will wilt in a week (but hint guys: Women absolutely love flowers) or chocolate (can't eat 'em anymore because chocolate doesn't agree with me), diamonds (you can never have too many diamonds

until the bill comes), dinners out (ever hear of "dinners in?").

OK folks, here is my "Scott Jaeger Romantic Dinner In" idea for Valentine's Day. Here's how you quickly throw together a nice spread:

Hit the grocery store deli: A) 1 rotisserie chicken - \$6.89; B) Produce Dept: one package of salad lettuce already cut up-in a bag: \$2.00; a couple of nice potatoes (get the white ones-they're called

"russet" potatoes, they work better) about \$2.00; C)

Frozen foods: one package of frozen California mixed veggies-make sure they're microwaveable in their own package-no pans to clean-up: \$4.00...and maybe

\$2.00 on special), D) a bottle of wine-\$8.00 and E) for dessert... strawberry shortcake (one package of strawberries - \$5.00 (remember to mush 'em up and then add a little sugar) Hostess shortcakes \$1.50 and a can of store brand "Redi-Whip" (you know the stuff...you used to spray in your mouth when your mother wasn't looking) about \$3.00. If you look around the house, you'll find some candles...if not, hit Walgreens: two for about \$3.00. This, all totaled up is \$32.39 or \$16.20 a person for a first class meal. Find some nice soft music, turn the lights down, light the candles and enjoy!

Oh, what to do with the kids? Let them play waitress, busboy and dishwasher.

You see, that's real LOVE and if you do that, you will express how you feel about the lady (or guy) that's been putting up with your "radio lifestyle" for thousands of days. It's one day (someone mentioned to me that it should be everyday, all year long. Probably true, but none of us are that smart) where you - as a boni-fide radio person - get to say to the person you share your life with, "You matter to me. I love being with you. I love you!" This whole thing is fun and should be a surprise!

For an inexpensive Valentine's Day card, I have created a "Do-it-Yourself" job that will "crack up" anyone who comes in contact with it. Just print and cut it out!

After dinner: Nothing better than a movie. Suggestion: ask around the station to find who has "Pretty Woman," or Sleepless in Seattle," or "You've Got Mail" and borrow it from them (yes, and give it back the next day too). A bag of microwave popcorn with some Jr. Mints (my wife's favorite) mixed with the popcorn - two Cokes and you have hit a homerun.

Don't celebrate Valentine's Day - celebrate LIFE and LOVE and your spouse who has been there for you whenever you've needed them. Oh, one other thing, sit right next to each other on the couch when you're watching the movie. It saves on heating costs this time of year!



Heartland Builds in 2011

2011 was a "building year" for Heartland according to CEO Jim Coursolle. "We laid the ground work or catalyst for what I believe will be the change necessary to bring lasting success - not based upon just the economy, the current business climate or the 'wind' - but based upon tried and true principles that will solidify growth results and positive direction for years to come." Throughout Heartland these many positive changes took place in 2011. The Heartland managers created a new Heartland Mission Statement which defines the Heartland objectives and goals. These are now proudly displayed in all Heartland facilities.

Under the direction of Heartland Director of Engineering and IT, Skip Hunter, Heartland entered the digital age and began streaming its six FM stations 24/7. All Heartland websites were re-created and now offer compelling information; "hits" have gone up. Heartland is now using Facebook, twitter and the social media to stay in contact with its listeners. Social Media and Digital are being added to the Advantage Plan sales programs in all Heartland markets in 2012.

Several noticeable programming changes took place lead by Corporate Director of Programming, Mike Wolf. Several of the Heartland stations now sound more "local" and professional than ever before because of these positive changes implemented by Mike and the market PDs.

All sales reps in all Heartland markets received Windows & notebooks with signature pads to facilitate order-processing, check RAB sales materials and email clients.

Two markets, Eagle River and Park Falls purchased station vehicles that proudly display the Heartland and station logos. The other two markets should be obtaining vehicles in the later part of 2012. These vehicles are a source of promotion and remotes. A relationship with "Big Deals Media" formed which provided Heartland stations with new software for their respective Shopping Shows. Heartland collections improved drastically.

Prior to Jim and Diane's ownership, Heartland was collecting between 46% and 48% of its accounts receivable. According to Coursolle, "This was one of the worst collection situations I have ever seen in my over 50 years of being a broadcaster." Steps were immediately taken to revise the Heartland Collection Policy and to begin to enforce much stricter sales and collection policies. Many seriously past-due accounts have entered into promissory note relationships or were taken to small claims court for resolution. Coursolle said, "People that buy advertising from Heartland are going to be required to pay us or face the consequences." Collections have improved by almost 15%, but, according to Coursolle, they still are below the national average. "2012 will prove to be the year that Heartland get's paid with regularity. The acceptance of weak collections by Heartland in the past, was indicative of management and sales poor belief in the viability of radio advertising effectiveness and in our company. That is changing and will continue to change," said Coursolle.

Many improvements to the physical assets of Heartland's broadcast facilities also took place with the lion's share of those being done in Iron River due to extremely poor maintenance practices by former management prior to the 2010 ownership changes. Today, the Iron River facility is one of the nicest facilities in the Heartland group.

The Iron River studio building was re-painted as was the exterior of the building. An easement for the FM tower guy wires was accomplished as it was discovered one set of guy wires were actually on adjacent land-owner's property. The main studio renovation in Park Falls was completed. Most importantly, Heartland took steps to improve revenues throughout the company. With the recent 2012 management changes in Eagle River and Iron River and the 2011 redirection of sales efforts in Park Falls, Heartland is positioned to make even greater revenue improvements in 2012. "We are entering year three of the proverbial "Business 101" - Three to Five Year re-building program in place at Heartland. Changing an unproductive culture that ultimately caused former owner Granite Equity Partners to sell to Diane and me has not been easy, but watching the successes and the 'two steps forward-one step backward' progress has been most rewarding. I believe that the current Heartland employees are some of the best I have ever seen in small market radio. Most understand the need for changing the past direction in order to succeed. Our days of just surviving are over; we not only want to survive, we need and want to succeed! Diane and I have little time for mediocrity. We are giving everyone at Heartland the opportunity to 'get with the program' and to succeed with the 'New Heartland,' said Coursolle.



January's Top Sellers

Market Managers

Darla Isham	\$17,530
Scott Jaeger	\$14,095
Jim Hodges	\$13,135



Sales Reps

John Warren	\$34,635
Sandy Berg	\$17,253
Trish Keeley	\$15,473
Amber Sarafiny	\$13,017
Ashley Krusick	\$11,088





Ashland, Wisconsin

"By the Big Bay"



Scott Jaeger
Market Manager

Here we are into the month of February, and some people say the first quarter is quiet, yet we are finding ourselves very busy and in the middle of a lot of projects.

Of course February always brings the onslaught of the Advantage Systems Marketing Seminars. This is always a great week of selling, but it's also a lot of upfront work. Then comes the Home Shows. We have the Ironwood Spring Home, Yard and Sport Show slated for March 23rd through the 25th at the Pat O'Donnell Civic Center. We are almost sold out on the booths. The Ashland Home Show is April 20th through the 22nd at the Bay Area Civic Center. That Show is now sold out and a waiting list is started. We also added a Bridal Faire the same weekend at the Bretting's Center right next door. So far the booths are selling fast and we are receiving extremely positive feedback.

We are also involved as a sponsor for the Polar Plunge for Regional Hospice. This is a great cause and it's growing bigger and bigger every year! We helped raise over \$30,000 last year for Regional Hospice. The Polar Plunge takes place this year on March 10th. They literally cut a huge hole in the ice on Lake Superior, last year the ice was 27 inches thick. Here is a picture of Me (Scott Jaeger) jumping..or should I say, Cannon Balling a couple of years ago. By the way, the water that year was 31 degrees. Brrrrr.



Scott Jaeger takes a cold plunge

I also attended my first meeting for the Senior Expo that we work on with Memorial Medical Center, Ashland Health and Rehab and this year our new sponsor is UCARE. The Senior Expo takes place on Wednesday August 22, 2012.

Heartland Communications will be involved in a huge EMT/EMS recruitment effort for Ashland and Bayfield Counties on Saturday May 5th. We have been asked to help with selling sponsorships and marketing the event. We are also starting to work on sponsorships for our two Battles of the Bands...one in Ashland in July and September in Ironwood MI. I also found myself hiring a new sales rep on January 27th. Dave Koval is now part of the Ashland Team. Dave lives in Ashland and will be working the Chequamegon Bay area along with Ironwood, Hurley, Bessemer and Wakefield areas.

Greetings from the land of 000 11 0 1 001 (binary code).



Skip Hunter
Corporate
Engineer and IT

We'll start with the good things that are happening in I.T. / Engineering. Our digital presence is doing good, we are seeing decent hits on our FM websites, some more than others and the FM streaming seems to be doing well in all markets.

One example of streaming doing well is WVNR, Sandy & Marge Berg sold the gateway sponsor for WVNR to Iron River Poplar Building Supply for the high school sports season.

Since August when we turned the streaming on, their gateway ad has played more than 4600 times! Granted that's not the tens of thousands that a larger market station might see but for our neck of the woods I would say pretty good numbers. Also with the gateway ad package their ad is also scheduled to play during the covered commercial portions as well, and the number of plays during that time was over 4700 plays. The number of impressions was close to 12,000. What do those numbers mean? It means the ad was played more than 9300 times and over 12,000 listeners were logged in to hear it play on the stream! I think those are impressive numbers to show a client that streaming works very well in getting the clients ad out there and if you do the math it's very affordable to the client.

As for the engineering side... well the good news is WCQM is operating at full power, WIKB is stereo again and at the time of writing this all is quiet on the front lines (Skip breathes a sigh of relief). It seems the fix it gremlin has been poking around the markets and that is never a good thing, but we play the hand that is dealt us and repair what we can and replace what we cannot repair. Between Art, Jeff, myself and my ace in hole helper Leland we can conquer just about anything the gremlins toss at us.

So that brings us to things we cannot control and that is sunspots. Which is when the sun, the satellite and your dish fall in perfect alignment (didn't some doomsday calendar talk about perfect alignment? JOKE just kidding). Freedom Talk as well as any satellite delivered program will be affected by sunspots twice a year, once in the fall and again in the spring. This spring sunspots will affect us from about February 25th through March 10th between 3:40pm and 3:59pm, varying in length from 7 minutes to a much as 13 minutes. Recording the program affected by the sunspot before it happens works best but when you can't record it early, record the previous hour and play back that 20 minute section the sunspot is affecting. For WIKB and WBSZ my suggestion is load songs from the 35 up to the top of the hour and remove any stops that might be there regularly and the listener won't know the difference!

Well that does it from I.T. / Engineering for this month, enjoy the early spring!

WRJ**O**ldies 94.5 fm

Eagle River, WI



Jim Hodges
Market Manager

If you're in radio sales, you've heard the eight dirty words too often. "I tried radio once and it didn't work." I've only been on the job less than two weeks and the best thing I've heard since I started my new position as VP/GM of WRJO/WERL is "radio advertising works!" That's music to my ears! Getting results for our valued clients and providing relevant and timely information for listeners is key to our ability to grow the listening audience and station revenues. Getting results is the most important piece of that puzzle.

What I'm most impressed with so far is the quality people at this radio station. This is one of the strongest staffs I've been blessed to work with in my three plus decades in this fun and exciting business. They've been a big help to me, from the on air and programming staffs, account executives and news department to the front desk folks and corporate staff. They've welcomed me with open arms and continue to help me become better acclimated to the "Heartland way!" There's a great deal of talent in Eagle River and I'm privileged to be working with such excellent people and be the new leader of these outstanding radio stations. Having outstanding people is another piece of the puzzle necessary for success.

I've met a number of our station advertisers and community leaders who have all welcomed me with open arms, too. The only thing left for me to experience are the wonderful community events and recreation opportunities that are everywhere. I look forward to enjoying them in the coming months. Now all I have to do is keep repeating..."I love snow, I love ice, It doesn't matter, I'm a Wisconsinite!" At least until the lakes thaw.

Kudos to Mike Wolf, program director, for his reports from Sun Prairie on February 2nd, where the real groundhog, Jimmy, saw his shadow signaling an early start to spring. Mike also filed reports from the huge USA Pond Hockey tournament in Eagle River earlier this month, the first time the radio station's been able to be involved in this event. Mike is Everywhere! He was the emcee and announced the race start for the Loop Around The Lake in Minocqua.

Groundhog Day with Mike Wolf



Mike Wolf and his wife Wendi made their yearly journey to Sun Prairie Wisconsin to take part in an annual event. Jimmy the groundhog takes center stage on the big day. This is a celebration that started in Sun Prairie on the centennial of Wisconsin by a groundhog club in 1948. It is also a tradition that started with Mike and his college friends in the early 90's. Mike and Wendi keep the tradition alive.

WRJO Says Goodbye to News Director, John Helgeson

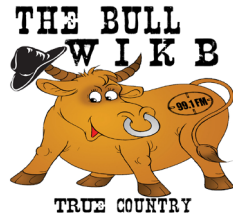


John Helgeson, News Director for Heartland Communications will be leaving his office for the last time at the end of February. John has served as the WRJO and Freedom Talk daily news anchor, out of the Heartland Corporate office in Eagle River, for the past year and a half.

John, as well and his wife Rachael, heard a calling to serve and will be joining the Peace Corps this spring. John and Rachel will be serving in Morocco.

We wish John and Rachael best wishes and commend them on their service.

John's replacement is Bruce Marcus. Bruce has served as a News Director in several markets with the latest in Battle Creek, Michigan. Bruce brings several years of news experience to Heartland. He also works as a freelance reporter for CBS news. We welcome Bruce to the Heartland family



Iron River, MI



Dan Wheeler
Market Manager

As Mike moves on, Heartland Iron River starts a new chapter, but Mikes efforts will not be forgotten. He leaves his footprint on Iron River and The WIKB, WFER office, and staff. All you have to do is step through the front door and you are reminded of Mike. The tile on the floor, the picture of the guitars in the hall way, and the clock in my office are just a few of the reminders that will live on. We want to thank Mike for what he did for WIKB and WFER when he was at the helm and for leaving us better off than when he came. Thanks Mike and good luck in your new endeavors, you will be missed.

I have been a manager and business owner in our local area for nearly 30 years. Developing relationships is one of my greatest strengths. Clearly that's what has led me to becoming the Sales Manager and top billing sales person at Results Broadcasting, a local radio competitor. For the past couple of years, I worked for Sovereign Communications in their Iron Mountain and Marquette offices as Senior Account Manager. On February 9th, I joined Heartland Communication Group as the General Manager and Vice President of their Iron River stations WFER and WIKB.. This is a wonderful opportunity to further my career and work with an outstanding staff, company, and community.



It's kind of ironic, but 32 years ago this month I just moved to Iron River to work at Caspian IGA. I met my wife Cindy (Stromberg) here and we were married Thirty years ago this coming September 11th. Now in 2012, I am back in Iron River looking forward to getting involved with the community and hopefully back living here too. The staff at WIKB and WFER has been just wonderful in helping make me feel comfortable during the transition along with all other members of the Heartland family.

Mo on the Radio



Mo Michael
PD

I've had the pleasure to work with some really outstanding radio station General Managers, the latest being Mike Eakin who recently left the helm here at WIKB/WFER. I wanted to take this time to recognize Mike and what he did for me and this station. Mike was someone I really enjoyed working with. From the first time I had a chance to speak with him at the Heartland

Christmas party in 2009 to our goodbyes a few weeks ago I found Mike to be a really great guy. I like working with nice people who care and Mike is one of the nicest out there. He always had time for me and when I needed something he always delivered. Many changes have taken place the past three years here at WIKB/WFER and those changes have been successful because of Mikes hard work and dedication. The station is so much better now, both on-air and facilities, than ever before thanks to Mike's leadership. Working with professionals like Mike Eakin allow me to be a better broadcaster and I will always remember the opportunities he made available to me. Mike plays a mean bass guitar so if you ever get a chance to see the band 'The Happy Accidents' out of Green Bay definitely check them out. I'm looking forward to working with our new man Dan Wheeler to achieve our goals of making WIKB/WFER the best stations in this market. I can tell Dan is going to take what Mike built and develop it into something even greater and that is exciting!



WIKB was a co-sponsor of Business After Hours on Thursday, February 17th at Snipe Lake Pub & Grill.
(left to right) Jim Coursolle, Amber Sarafiny, Dan Wheeler, Leslie Howell, and Mo Michael

BIRTHDAY "BROADCAST"

February

- 5th - Tim Zier - Eagle River
- 6th - Wendy Otto-Shimun - Iron River
- 16th - Patti Katz Black - Eagle River
- 18th - Jim Slagle - Eagle River
- 19th - Preston Vaughn - Park Falls
- 22nd - Rick Frischmann - Park Falls

March

- 7th - Scott Jaeger - Ashland
- 14th - Nancy Johnson - Park Falls
- 18th - Chris Oatman - Eagle River



Park Falls, WI



Darla Isham
Market Manager

State Rep. Donna Seidel of Wausau who will try to unseat Republican Sen. Pam Galloway in a recall election later this year made a visit to the Radio Station this last week. It was nice to meet her and get her views as Joel Karnick (Station PD) and myself were very inquisitive as to what she thought of our Public School systems and the latest in the mining activities. As for the Public school systems well let's just say she didn't really offer any more insight than both Joel and I already knew and for the mining all she would say was "I'm not against it, I just think we have to do things right." Well enough about politics! We'll see what happens in the election.

This last week we also received a thank you note from a retired local pastor who commended the station on our am Freedom Talk WFPF programming. He commented that he thought it was wonderful that we are bringing broader based news and politics to the area. And as luck has it the same week our Fed Ex delivery guy who lives out of the area asked us to never change the format, that as soon as he gets in signal reach he switches to WFPF to get updated on the latest in news and political views. That's refreshing since I do still get criticized for taking ESPN sports away! That's ok, folks are entitled to have an opinion.

Get a load of our new station Rig! The 98Q and Freedom Talk mobile. It really is a fantastic image builder when we are out doing Live Remotes and Station promotions. It's a driving billboard, everywhere we go people are talking. That's what we like, people talking about what a great professional image we are projecting.

The last weekend of January you see the loads of fun we had with our Radio Trivia Contest! I even got my husband Gary to answer phones this year. And it seems every year some Trivia question answers bring on laughter so uncontrollable it brings tears to your eyes, like one of the Trivia Questions answer was "the toilet" which I spoke up and said well if the caller says "bidet" (french toilet) that would be acceptable....and since not everyone was listening....like my husband...he turns around from his phone and says "is that a cookie"? I'm telling you there wasn't a dry eye in the place! Not even a caller came up with anything funnier than that one! Sorry Gary, we couldn't help ourselves and next year Shayna and I will dream up a bidet cookie for you! Thanks to all Nancy, Art, Joel, Gary, Maggy and her friends, Boomer and Carrie, Shayna, Blake for being our runner, and our Guest DJ Bryan Reneau. I know we all went home that night hearing the phone ringing nonstop and saying "Radio Trivia" in our sleep. Taking your weekend to help out was very much appreciated...you guys are the best!



Joel Doing Radio Trivia Night



Radio Trivia Phone Staff

