

"One of America's Finest Small Market Radio Broadcasting Companies"

HEARTLAND EARNS 14 AWARDS 2016 WBA Awards Gala

Hundreds of successful Wisconsin Broadcaster's Association (WBA) radio and television broadcasters gathered at the Madison Marriot on Saturday evening, May 7th for the WBA's annual "Awards Gala." The suits, ties and flowing dresses all came out to enjoy the evening as a member of the WBA, one of the nation's leading broadcaster associations. It was a festive occasion with dining that featured a fare of filet mignon, crab cakes and a chocolate dessert.

Heartland's stations were among the award winners taking home 14 awards for such entries in spot news for 'New Years Llama,' the 'WRJO Polar Bear Plunge' and the 'Salvation Army Christmas Meal.'

The annual WBA event is the brain-child of Michelle Vetterkind, the ladies of the WBA and Lindsay Wood Davis who, in the past, has served as the main speaker of the Heartland Communications Group Fall Sales Seminar. Davis was in-



Above right: Reid and Dave Magnum with Jim Coursolle. Bottom photo: (L to R) Craig Whetstine, Jim Coursolle, Mike Wolf, Stephanie Griffin and Bruce Marcus.

ducted into the WBA's Hall of Fame this year as well. According to Heartland's Jim Coursolle, "There is no one more deserving of induction into the WBA Hall of Fame than Lind-

say Wood Davis. He is one of the most passionate radio broadcasters I have ever met. He truly loves this business."

The Heartland team was also honored to have Magnum

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Jim Coursolle, CRMC
President and CEO

Wendi Ell, newsletter
designer and
publisher



www.heartlandcomm.com

Media CEO Dave Magnum and his two sons Reid and Ty Magnum – who have joined with their father in building the Magnum group – as guests at our table. "I don't want to make myself any older than I am, but Dave mentioned that I held both of his sons in my arms as babies and now they are very talented broadcasters at such a young age," said Coursolle.

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2016 Advantage Systems is Huge Success

Now that the bats are swinging again, using a baseball slogan, "Heartland hit it out of the Park" with the Advantage Systems, Inc. (ASI) merchant radio marketing seminars this past March.

2016 was the seventh year for Heartland's ASI merchant marketing seminars. Literally hundreds of area merchants gathered in Eagle River, Minocqua, Ashland and Ironwood, MI as guests of the six Heartland stations. ASI's Keith Fader was on hand to explain how the combination of



Keith Fader
Advantage
Systems

Ashland stations posted a solid 47% ASI

radio with digital and social media advertising would increase the merchant's top- and bottom-line.

The Heartland Eagle River stations accomplished a tremendous 56% revenue increase over the 2015 ASI marketing programs. Heartland's

revenue increase over 2015.

Following these seminars, ASI's Keith Fader told the HCGazette, "Thank you for this opportunity. Your management and sales teams did a FANTASTIC job." Heartland Eagle River GM Craig Whetstine said, "I am very proud of my team, they went all out this year to put together a successful ASI program." Ashland GM, Scott Jaeger, was quick to compliment his sales team as well, "Our Advantage System's growth was just excellent, our salespeople really did a nice job!"

Pres. Release

May and June are the months set aside to celebrate mothers and fathers throughout our country. As I was thinking about what to write in my column this quarter, I couldn't help but roll back the calendar a bit to the days when I was living at home with my parents and siblings. When we were kids and at home, my guess is we were busy being kids and students and, not often enough, thought about the gift of our parents. As a matter of fact, I confess that sometimes their rules and discipline got me to thinking about my Mom and Dad, but back then, probably not in a positive way. Being 'grounded' or punished by our parents for something, I am sure you'd agree, usually doesn't inspire loving thoughts.



Jim Coursolle
President, CEO

But today, those negative moments have turned to positive thoughts because after you have been a parent, you certainly 'get

it' and understand why parents did what they did. Today, most of us know that our parents disciplined, not for their sake, but to teach us some lesson they deemed important. Many of those 'lessons' have become a part of us and today we are now teaching our children those same lessons.

When you stop and think about all the things, some more important than others, that our parents taught us, you just have to turn to positive and loving thoughts and memories of your parents doing their job to nurture and foster all of us. We grew up knowing how to tie our own shoes, sing the 'itsy-bitsy' spider song, pick the right fork at a fancy dinner and to carry on with the love and care of our own kids as they begin to find their way to adulthood.

In the ranks of Heartland, there are many 'Moms and Dads' who balance their time between being a spouse, parent and contributing member of the Heartland staff. It's a balancing act for sure. Time management, so you get in all of the hugs at home and the encouragement and "Atta' boys/girls" at work, is a real skill that has to be learned over and over again. We are probably all guilty of missing a

recital or baseball game. But when that happens, you just have to get back and manage your time so your next opportunity is not missed. I think most kids know how much their parents love and care for them. Having said that, it's important to reassure them of your love every chance you get.

Mother's Day was Sunday, May 8th and the flowers or candy and that special (hand-picked) card sure meant a lot to your Mom or wife. Father's Day is set for Sunday, June 19th and, being a Dad, I sure enjoy getting a nice card from my daughters and grandkids. Without asking, I am sure you feel the same way.



April Top Sellers



Market Managers

Scott Jaeger	\$18,310
Craig Whetstine	\$10,590

Sales Reps

John Warren	\$30,178
Trish Keeley	\$12,804
Sally North.....	\$12,149
Tammy Holister	\$10,686



BIRTHDAY "BROADCASTS"

MAY

- 2nd – Mike VandeVusse – *Ashland*
- 24th – Bruce Marcus – *Eagle River*
- 28th – Samantha Hytry – *Eagle River*

JUNE

(no employee birthdays)

JULY

- 7th – Stephanie Griffin
– *Eagle River*
- 31st – Tammy Holister
– *Ashland*



Coursolle's Celebrate Sixth Anniversary

It was just a little over six years ago on May 10, 2010, that Jim and Diane Coursolle finalized the purchase of Heartland Communications Group from Granite Equity Partners, a St. Cloud, MN private equity firm. A year later, the couple purchased the remaining equity from Granite Equity Partners.

"We both remember signing paperwork about the size of the New York telephone directory; and then I drove to the markets to begin the transition. It was an exciting, but scary time for me," said Heartland owner Jim Coursolle.

"I had to basically sign away our family's life savings and our family home. We were not sold a financially successful company – there was lots of work to be done and a culture that had to be transitioned into the belief that Heartland could actually win.

Any change is always met with resistance, but 'culture change' is the most difficult thing in the world to accomplish. Much change has taken place to date, but much more has to take place before we feel our success goals have been met. Our lender forces us to move in the right direction."

In 2015, following the sale of two marginal markets which allowed the company to reduce debt and position itself for growth, Heartland completed a successful recapitalization. In consideration for the professional experience and recapitalization direction the Coursolle's received from long-time friend and mergers & acquisition expert Frank Coan, Coursolle invited Coan to join he and his wife Diane, as a minority owner. The Heartland succession plan was now in place; a plan that would assure a solid future for the company.

Several Heartland employees commented on the Coursolle anniversary:

Kathy Wawiora, Heartland



Business Manager said, "Jim and Diane, Congratulations to you both. We have accomplished

many great things over the years. I can't believe how quickly the time has flown. I'm glad to be part of this great "Heartland Family."

Skip Hunter, Heartland Director of Engineering and IT

stated, "Thank You Jim and Diane! It has been a pleasure working for and with you the past six years."

Scott Jaeger, General Manager of the Ashland cluster said, "Hard to believe it has been 6 years!!! Thank You."

"Congratulations! It's nice to be a part of it as well. Thanks," said Mike Wolf, Heartland's HQ Program Director.

When asked about their sixth anniversary, Jim and Diane told the HCGazette, "We feel very fortunate to be able to be a part of the Heartland family and to be able to contribute to our broadcast communities. I guess the thing we're most proud of is the fact that Heartland provides so many jobs which affect so many families throughout Heartland. It's a good small market radio broadcasting company with a lot of terrific people in it. Thank you everyone in Heartland for all of the help you have provided us in the last six years!"



WJJH Web TV via City Link TV

IT NOTES...

By Skip Hunter, Ashland Program Director

Heartland Communications Group, Ashland, has moved further into the digital market with the launch of WJJH-TV on City Link TV dot com.

I have been testing cameras and A/V devices to find a set of equipment that anyone can setup and run.

Currently we broadcast a live studio cam in the WJJH studio during the morning show. The platform has fantastic potential for NTR.



Skip Hunter
Ashland
Program Director

We have streamed video from remote broadcasts and our Home Shows in Ironwood and Ashland. Travel Talk on May 5th will be the first show we broadcast solely on WJJH TV. The list of sales for Web TV is limited only by a good internet connection. High School sports road games, remote broadcasts, long-form programs like a car dealer's inventory.

One of the features is each broadcast is automatically archived when broadcast. You can then set that as the default to play when someone visits our page.

All banner ads are ours to sell. With each channel comes a separate channel that we can sell or give to a church or funeral home and we keep what we charge. We can sell a channel to a business or whomever we want at whatever we price it. City Link gets a set amount for each channel and does not make us charge extra. We purchase the rights for each city we want and any new channels must go through us.

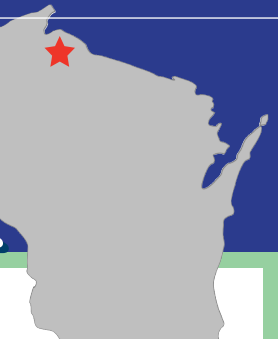
The sales potential is there and I am confident it can make substantial profits.

Awards, from Page 1

Attending this year's event from Heartland were Eagle River GM Craig Whetstine, Heartland and Eagle River Program Director Mike Wolf, Heartland and Eagle River News Director Bruce Marcus, air personality Stephanie Griffin and Jim Coursolle.

Just two years ago, Heartland was named the "Small Market Broadcaster of the Year" and "News Operation of the Year" by the Wisconsin Broadcaster's Association at this event. Mike Wolf, Heartland HQ Program Director said, "We have been so fortunate over the years to be a part of this amazing event and to be recognized by the WBA and our peers as a formidable small market broadcaster in the State of Wisconsin."

Ashland



“By The Big Bay”

GM NOTES...

By Scott Jaeger, GM
WBSZ/WN XR/WJH/WATW

The first quarter is now in the books. It definitely had its challenges with one of the strangest winters in a long time. We are now into May and things are starting to move in the right direction!!

We held our Advantage Plan Seminars the week of March 7th. The sales reps did a great job of getting clients into the seats and it paid off big time. We had a very nice increase in sales. The Brand Booster element of the program was a welcome addition to the program. Our clients really liked that option, it really added to an already well rounded marketing plan for our clients.

The next week, we moved on to our Ironwood Spring Home Yard and Sport Show March 18th through the 20th at the Pat O’-Donnell Civic Center. The numbers were very good and our exhibitors did very well!

April 15th through the 17th, it was our Spring Home Show in Ashland at the Bay Area Civic Center. The weather pushed upper 70s all weekend, which was a little disconcerting. In the long run, it really didn’t affect our numbers very much at all. It was a very strong Show for us!

I would like to thank the entire staff for all of their hard work through all of these events.

We have teamed up with the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center in Duluth to put together a party bus to see the



Beach Boys and The Temptations on Saturday August 6th.

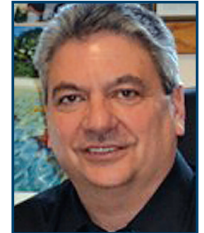
The DECC is celebrating their 50th Anniversary and we are having a lot of fun helping them promote it!!

We have also been asked by Northstar Beverage, our local Pepsi distributor, to help give away a brand new Polaris side by side valued at \$15,000! We will kick it off Memorial Day weekend at the Iron County ATV Rally in Hurley and give it away on October 8th, the Pumpkin Run ATV Rally!!

We are really looking forward to June, for the 3rd year in a row,



we will be giving away our MANCAVE valued at over \$4,000!! I will have a lot more information on the MANCAVE in the next issue!!



Scott Jaeger
Ashland
General Manager

www.wbszfm.com
www.wnxrfm.com
www.wjihfm.com



Skip Hunter
Ashland
Program Director

Eagle River



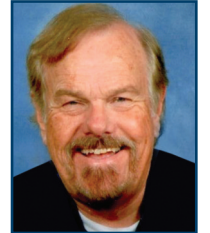
Awards, honored at annual WBA dinner

GM NOTES...

By Craig Whetstine,
General Manager WJRO/WERL

WRJO brought home 13 awards from the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association annual awards dinner held Saturday, May 7 in Madison.

The awards covered a range of programming, from news to promotion. Our Polar Bear Plunge/30 Hour Broadcast, which raises funds for Angel On My Shoulder, took first place in the category of Significant Community Impact. WRJO News Director Bruce Marcus won six awards and Program Director Mike Wolf's on-air team brought back a total of seven awards in the categories of commercial production and promotion.



Craig Whetstine
Eagle River
General Manger

www.wrjo.com

Significant Community Impact

1st Place – 30-Hour Polar Bear Pledge-A-Thon

Specialty Programming

2nd Place – Memorial Day Veterans Cemetery

Best Hard News/Investigative

2nd Place – Kohler Corporation Workers Strike

3rd Place – Land O'Lakes Tree Removal

Best Use of Audio In Radio News

3rd Place – Salvation Army Christmas Meal

Promotional Announcement

3rd Place – WRJO Shopping Show

Public Service Announcement

3rd Place – 2015 WRJO Polar Bear Plunge

Best Commercial

2nd Place – River Valley Phone Wash

Best Continuing Coverage

2nd Place – Right to Work

Best Interview – 3rd Place – UFFDA

Spot News – 2nd Place – New Years Llama

Most Entertaining Client-Recorded Commercial

3rd Place – Potrykus Dental Ethan – Funnest



Mike Wolf
Corporate
Program Director



At top: Craig Whetstine and Mike Wolf.
At right: Stephanie Griffin and Bruce Marcus.