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WBEB Radio Pulls Plug on Online Music

Legendary Owner Protests Streaming Fees

PHILADELPHIA, PA (March 10, 2009) – Philadelphia’s B101 Radio (WBEB 101.1 FM), the city’s top-rated radio station and one of the nation’s leaders in online music streaming, today announced it will stop streaming its signal online as of Sunday, March 15. The move is in direct protest of online music royalty rates.

The rates have nearly doubled in the last three years, and even under a new agreement with music rights group SoundExchange, would continue to increase through 2015. The unprecedented rate increases are excessive, according to B101 owner and broadcast pioneer Jerry Lee, and will ultimately limit the ability of listeners to receive music on-line.

“The excessive SoundExchange rates don’t work for artists, for local radio stations, or for listeners,” said Lee. “Many stations, including mine, won’t be able to afford to stream music. Less streaming means fewer revenue opportunities for stations and ultimately less money for the artists who receive royalties. It’s puzzling why SoundExchange would want to destroy a potential growth business opportunity for the artists it purports to represent.”

Lee estimates that by 2015, nearly half of all the revenue that WBEB would be able to generate from streaming music online would go to SoundExchange in the form of royalty fees. At those levels, streaming is not a viable business option, according to Lee.

About B101

WBEB 101.1 FM (B 101) is an adult contemporary radio station broadcasting in the Philadelphia market. Owned and operated by Jerry Lee, it is the only independently owned station that has enjoyed consistent Top 10 ratings for decades.

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